

COACHES' PERSPECTIVES ABOUT THE ACT OF MENTORING WITHIN A SPORT
COACHING CONTEXT

By

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PUBLIC ABSTRACT

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Research on mentoring has been taking place for decades and has spanned many contexts. In spite of this work and the widely held belief that mentoring works, very little research related to the phenomenon of mentoring has taken place in the sport context. More specifically, while some studies have examined the role of mentoring in the development of future coaches, very little has explored how coaches might serve as mentors to their athletes. Given the number of youth within sport and the roles that coaches play in sport, there is evidence to suggest that coaches might play the role of mentor to their athletes. In the quest to learn more about how mentoring takes place in this context, this study interviewed 13 coaches (4 males, 9 females) who coached with a character based sport organization in inner city Detroit. All coaches described themselves as mentors to their athletes. They also described very close relationships with athletes demonstrating the extent to which mentoring is a part of what they do as coaches. Coaches described mentoring as being made up of different functions depending on context, providing benefits to mentor and mentee and having challenges. The structure of mentoring in sport however, may be a blend of formal and informal approaches considered thus far in the research. This is exciting as we begin to examine the potential that mentoring in sport might hold for holistic athlete development and the teaching of life skills.

ABSTRACT

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A growing body of literature across a range of contexts has identified mentoring as a useful strategy for improving the personal development trajectories of youth. This is especially important for those youth who live in underserved contexts (Tierney, Grossman & Resch, 1995). Mentoring has been found to not only increase the probability that protégés will have positive developmental outcomes but also reduce the likelihood that they will engage in risky behaviors. These findings are consistent with other bodies of literature that point to the value of a significant non-parental other in the lives of youth to facilitate and enhance their development. Evidence being collected from a variety of large mentor based initiatives over two decades has also demonstrated that while the processes by which mentoring works require further elucidation, the relationship quality (closeness, connectedness) of mentor and protégé is one of the most important mechanisms in the process (Eby, Allen, Evans, Ng & DuBois, 2008).

President Barack Obama's 2014 initiative "My Brother's Keeper" was issued due to a recognition that all demographics of individuals in the U.S. do not have equal access to the resources that would allow them to realize their full potential. One major challenge to the president's initiative is the fact that there are not sufficient suitable mentors for the youth who may need them. Given the numbers of youth who engage in youth sports on an annual basis it seems logical that sport coaches may be an untapped resource to source mentors for youth. Coaches already spend a great deal of time with youth, and the work of many researchers has identified the sporting context as a useful place for the development of life skills and character

(Hellison, 2000; Fraser-Thomas, Cote & Deakin, 2005; Gould & Carson, 2008). There is also the strong possibility that coaches may also fit the evidence-based suggestion that “natural mentors” may have a greater effect on youth outcomes than “formal” ones. Additionally, in a study that surveyed 354 coaches Mac Intosh, Charlton, Gould (unpublished) found that 98% of coaches said that they considered themselves to be a mentor to their athletes.

The present study examined whether coaches in an inner-city sporting context believed they were involved in the act of mentoring. In-depth interviews were conducted with 13 coaches (4 females and 9 males) who affirmed that they are mentors to their athletes. While this itself was not surprising, the extent to which coaches were involved in the lives of their athletes was testament of the extent to which coaches mentor. Coaches also described different types of activities involved in mentoring indicating that they all do it in different ways. Mentoring in sport was found to have similar aspects found in other contexts in terms of the reasons coaches do it, the challenges they believe are involved in doing it and whether coaches believe they are providing the instrumental and psychosocial functions that mentoring has traditionally been thought to play. However, sport as context offers the potential to be a hybrid model of mentoring, one that combines the notion of group and individual mentoring and also that of natural and formal mentoring.

This dissertation is dedicated to all who have taken the time to mentor someone in whatever aspect of their life. Doing this study revealed the great deal of thought that goes into mentoring practice and the difference it makes in the lives of those who are lucky enough to have it!

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“When a young person, even a gifted one, grows up without proximate living examples of what she may aspire to become, whether lawyer, scientist, artist, or leader in any realm; her goal remains abstract. Such models as appear in books or on the news, however inspiring or revered, are ultimately too remote to be real, let alone influential. But a role model in the flesh provides more than inspiration; his or her very existence is confirmation of possibilities one may have every reason to doubt, saying, 'Yes, someone like me can do this.'”

Sonia Sotomayor (2013)

“To feel adored and supported by someone like Annie, an inner-city Detroit woman, must have been an enormous influence on the social development of children and adolescents. Indeed, a sparse but growing body of literature suggests that supportive older adults, or mentors, ranging from neighbors and teachers to extended kin, may contribute to resilience among youth who are living in developmentally hazardous settings.”

Jean E. Rhodes (1994)

“In February 2012, Izabella’s school counselor and her fourth grade teacher referred her to the Lunch Buddy program through Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southwest Louisiana. With a lot of inconsistency in her home-life, Izabella was struggling socially, academically and personally. Her father was in and out of her life, and she lacked a consistent maternal figure at home. Her teacher and counselor knew she needed someone to look up to; someone who could be there for her.”

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (2014)

“I try and make them feel normal and they will come out with things like oh this happened to me and that happened and I will say well this happened to me. And it’s I’ve done this and I’ve done that [too] and it gives them a sense that they are not on their own. Other people have been through what they have been through, and it makes them feel a bit better because they know other people have been through it. And they are not on their own, they have people that care about them and who want to have them in here and want to be in their company. And they get encouraged to do things.”

Philip et al, 2004, p39)

Quotes like these demonstrate the powerful influence that mentoring can have in the lives of young people. Additionally, these quotes highlight the range of functions that mentors can provide for their protégés (Keller, 2005). Mentors can be role models to the youth they serve, but additionally, they may be a caregiver and a provider. In many cases, the role they take on may even be more comparable to that of a surrogate parent. This is especially true for underserved youth of color who as Rhodes (1994) indicates are living in hazardous settings (Blinn-Pike, 2008). The investigator's interest in mentoring has developed out of a need to stem the increasing incidence of negative outcomes which males, especially adolescent males of color, have continually experienced.

Research in the U.S. shows that young black men are six times more likely to be incarcerated than their white male counterparts (Pew Research Centre, 2014). Further, while the average high school graduation rate in the U.S. is 69% across all students and above 75% for both White and Asian students, it is approximately 54% in the case of Black students. In fact the 12th grade proficiency reading scores for Black Males are lower than those for males or females for any other racial group (Swanson, 2010). These negative outcomes however, do not only exist in the U.S. Young men in my home country of Trinidad & Tobago face similar challenges. My decision to study the psychosocial aspects of sport came about as a result of seeing so many young men fail to develop. Given the popularity of sport for young men of color, the focus of my doctoral work is to better understand ways to use the power of sport to foster positive development in *at risk* young people. Mentoring seems to be one vehicle that can be used to do this.

Criminal statistical data on Trinidad and Tobago show an increase in violent criminal activity over the past five years (Overseas Security Advisory Council Trinidad and Tobago 2016 Crime & Safety Report). The data reveal a double-edged sword in relation to males. First, the vast majority of the victims of violent crime are male. Secondly, the vast majority of the perpetrators of violent crimes are also male (Trinidad & Tobago Police Service, 2012). It means therefore that in communities where there are high incidences of violent crime, men, young men, are being killed and or incarcerated. It has been suggested that one of the reasons for this male-on-male violence is the absence of male within those communities. That is, the lack of positive male role models and mentors has negatively impacted the family structure and subsequent child development within the families and the community as a whole (Miller, 1991).

The overall performance of the male adolescent/young adult has been and continues to be of concern to parents, teachers, coaches and employers. In most cases their academic performance is significantly below that of their female counterparts. In the fields of culture and sport their coaches complain of their apathetic attitude to high performance. Employers also claim that the females are more mature than their male counterparts. Errol Miller (1991) has posited that the male within West Indian and Caribbean society has been at risk for decades. His analysis has shown that males, primarily of African descent, are doing more poorly at school than their female counterparts. They occupy less strategic and prominent roles in the society, and in fields such as medicine and engineering where they were found in overwhelming numbers, not only have these numbers decreased, but girls are outperforming them there as well. What further compounds the situation is that the decreasing marginalization, as Miller (1991)

describes it, of males in the society has left fewer and fewer numbers of male role models in the society; fewer men to whom adolescent males growing up can turn for something positive.

While pursuing my studies I discovered that young males in Detroit faced circumstances and outcomes very similar to the youth in Trinidad and Tobago. Detroit, the Motor City, was once the gem of Michigan and the United States, with a population of 1.8 million persons and boasting the highest per capita income of all major cities in the United States. Today the city is still reeling from the effects of a worldwide recession that began in late 2007. That recession saw the near destruction of the automobile industry that is headquartered in Detroit, and with it the collapse of many jobs, homes and businesses. The city's population is now just above 700,000 persons. Unemployment is estimated at 25 – 50% and the city is 18 billion dollars in debt. In fact, the city filed for bankruptcy protection in July of 2013 to allow it time and opportunity to restructure the debt that has crippled it.

The deterioration of the city has by extension affected the citizens of Detroit. Many who were employed by the automotive sector lost their jobs. Consequently, they were forced to give up their homes; some left. Unable to pay for public services, the city cut back on many of its public services making unbearable conditions even worse for those who remained. Understandably, the persons who have been affected most severely have been the city's youth. Despite attempts by parents to shield their children, the risks and negative impacts accompanying the economic decline in Detroit trickle down and affect those who are most vulnerable; the under-served youth, most often, youth of color. One report revealed that while the overall poverty levels in the state of Michigan are less

than 25%, greater than 50% of the Detroit's youth, 18 and under, lived in poverty (Data Driven Detroit, 2012). Additionally, most of the households were single parent households; headed by women with presumably much less involvement by males. The paper also describes that of the households that had children under the age of 18 over 50 percent of them had their foodstuff subsidized through a "feeding program" again pointing to their dire need (Data Driven Detroit, 2012).

The challenges to Detroit's youth are now far worse. The infant mortality rate is double the state figure of 7.5 infant deaths for every 1000 births, and many of the schools within Detroit's Public School System have been given failing grades by the Excellent Schools Detroit, a NGO which studies the school system and evaluates each school's performance against regional and national criteria. Another factor affecting youth outcomes in the city is the crime rate that has ballooned since the recession. Violent crime is more than four times the state and national average and has led to Detroit being known as one of the murder capitals of the U.S. with 313 murders committed in 2013 (Detroit Police Department, 2013). While the city is generally dangerous, in 2015, the city was second on the list of murder rate per capita 43.5/100,000. This crime affects youth, especially male youth, in specific ways since 80% of the deaths in Detroit are males between the ages of 15 and 24. Most of these deaths are attributed to young males in the city becoming increasingly involved in gangs and violence.

Ultimately, these statistics point to a situation in which many youth find themselves. It is a case of constraining circumstances from which youths try to find any avenue that will provide them with their physical, social and emotional needs. Surveys conducted by the Detroit Police Athletic League (Detroit PAL), an organization which

administers sport-based activities to 10,000 youth in Detroit annually, revealed that over 33% of youth who had attended their Summer Camps in 2013 stated that they had a friend or family member involved in gangs. Many posit that because there are so many female-headed households that many young males lack the positive role models necessary to guide them to success. Others contend that the gangs have taken the place of the family and the community and it is the gang leader who is nurturing Detroit's youth; teaching them the skills necessary to survive in the harsh circumstances. Gang leaders therefore, are thought by many to have become mentors to youth.

Statement of the Problem

While many things will be needed to overcome the enormity of the problems facing young men in Detroit, mentoring maybe a strong place to start as it has the potential to provide children and youth with positive male models who can also serve as trusted advisors. Most importantly, given the popularity of sport for males of color, coaches serving as mentors maybe especially powerful. There has been some evidence to suggest that youth who are most at risk may benefit most from mentoring (DuBois, Holloway, Valentine & Cooper, 2002). Therefore, the purpose of this dissertation is to explore whether coaches who currently coach inner-city youth think of themselves as mentors to their athletes and to explore the ways in which they currently mentor their athletes.

Why Mentoring

Mentoring has become an extremely popular activity in the past two decades (DuBois & Rhodes, 2006; Rhodes & DuBois, 2008). In a vast number of fields and enterprises, more and more people and organizations have recognized the importance of

mentoring for the development and ultimate success of younger, less experienced persons in their fields (Hall, 2003). This appeal has been well established in terms of professional development of individuals within the fields of business, education, nursing and even medicine. In fact researchers like Hegstad (1999) and Hezlett & Gibson (2005) have made the call for mentoring to be more effectively utilized by businesses as a strategy to develop their human resource. Watson, Clement, Blom & Grindley (2009) have made similar calls for academic mentoring to play a more formal and central part in Sport Psychology programs. In fact, the role that mentoring and mentors play in the professional development of individuals has been described as fundamental and irreplaceable by many researchers (Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson & McKee, 1978; Roche, 1979, Kram, 1985; Chao, 1997; Hezlett & Gibson, 2005).

In September 2014, *Esquire* magazine featured mentoring and launched what they described as the “Mentoring Project” in which they shared the mentor “stories” of dozens of popular men across diverse fields (Esquire Magazine, 2015). Some of the names included in this project are LL Cool J, Kevin Durant, Kevin Bacon, and Bill Maher’ persons who are deemed successful and famous in diverse spheres of American life. This project and others like it, VIP Mentoring, Steve Harvey Mentoring Program and 100 Black Men of America underscore the popularity and widespread appeal of mentoring as a concept within the popular culture. There has been anecdotally, an accepted, unquestioned belief that mentoring works to help persons develop the skills, values and networks they need to be successful in their professions and by extension in life (Roche, 1979).

The workplace and spheres of professional development are not the only contexts in which there is a belief that mentoring can realize positive outcomes for those involved. The importance of mentoring in the quest to improve the developmental outcomes of youth has also been an issue of increasing prominence on the agenda of state and federal agencies and institutions across the nation. Mentoring has been identified as central to the success of adolescents in a myriad of contexts (Rhodes, 2004). It is for this reason that programs like Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) have increased in popularity and reach, and are now attracting far more funding from public and private sources. In fact there are over 3 million youth who are engaged in a formal mentoring initiative (Rhodes, 2008).

Even Federal agencies like the Office for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention have begun funding mentoring initiatives, to the sum of \$615 million between 2008 and 2014, in the hope that they can reduce the incidence of potential offenders with whom the department has to engage. (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (2015). Illustratively, President Obama in September 2014 launched the “My Brother’s Keeper” initiative which is designed to improve the outcomes for young black men of color. Mentoring has been viewed as a key component to answer the President’s challenge and many organizations have been developing mentoring programs and seeking to fund them through this initiative (White House, 2015).

The growth in popularity of mentoring as a concept is not just occurring within the fields of human resources development, youth development and larger social initiatives. There has also been a tremendous increase in the quantity of research taking place on the concept and practice of mentoring. In an effort to produce a meta-analysis of the mentoring literature and compare the fields of work, (both academic and cases of

youth mentoring to one another) Eby, Allen, Evans, Ng, & Du Bois, (2008) found a total of 15,131 articles that focused on the topic of mentoring in some form or fashion. While their stringent criteria forced them to refine their search to a final 151 articles, this initial search illustrates that the research agenda in mentoring has matched the growth of the popular, everyday, mentoring initiatives taking place in multiple contexts.

The researchers refined this large amount of studies by limiting them to those done in English, those in which there was one to one mentoring, those in which mentoring was the sole intervention, and those in which mentors and protégés were not physically or cognitively disabled. Their findings provide tremendous support for the function of mentoring as a successful developmental process, across the three contexts. There were statistically significant effect sizes (Q statistic) for behavioral, attitudinal, health related, interpersonal, and career related outcomes as it relates to mentoring across all three contexts though there were differences in the strength of these relationships.

A large proportion of the research on mentoring has focused on the functions that mentoring serves for mentors, mentees and larger institutions in which these individuals exist (Kram, 1985; Chao, 1997). It suggests that mentors can assist individuals in tangible ways (instrumentally) or providing boosts to self-esteem and confidence (psychosocially) (Lockwood, Evans & Eby, 2007). In both these ways, mentoring can be seen as a critical lifeline to underserved youth who may need tangible resources to get to school or improve their grades or simply need someone who can provide social support as they embark on the statistically inequitable path of life. Another significant focus of research has been investigating the features of mentoring programs and the types of relationships that are more likely to result in program related successes (Rhodes & DuBois, 2006). As

such a number of the evaluations of large mentoring programs like BBBS have found that while mentoring does work overall, certain features of programs such as closeness of mentor dyads, consistency of mentors, duration of the relationship, mentor characteristics (empathy, caring, ability to model behaviors), and broader inter-contextual connections all contribute to greater effectiveness and longer lasting benefits (Rhodes & DuBois, 2006). While the identification of these key features are important, little progress has been made in identifying unifying explanations for why mentoring works.

While the research has not made as much progress identifying the processes by which mentoring works, one factor, the quality of the relationship between the mentor and mentee, has been identified as a core component correlated with more successful mentoring relationships (Eby et al., 2008). This finding supports years of research that indicated that “natural” or informal mentoring relationships produced more significant outcomes than “formal” ones due to the rapport that was engendered between mentors and their protégés. Many practitioners, across the diverse contexts in which mentoring is utilized have tried with varying success to create programs which mimic the characteristics of naturally occurring mentoring dyads (Sipe, 2002; Rhodes, 2008).

Pawson (2004) sums it up nicely when he says that, “Creating a close relationship with a knowledgeable guide is seen as an all-purpose resource offering both opportunities for advancement and solutions to disadvantage.” Mentoring has been defined as a supportive and caring relationship that takes place between an adult (more experienced individual) and a youth (less experienced individual) (Rhodes, Spencer, Keller, Liang & Noam, 2006). In light of the poor outcomes that youth have been facing in Detroit and across the U.S. and the evidence gathered across various youth contexts, it seems to make

sense that such “caring” relationships might augment the trajectories that young men of color might face. Further, sport might be a context in which such relationships may already exist. It makes sense then to try to leverage that.

Mentoring in Sport

In spite of an increase in the use of mentoring strategies in a variety of programs nationwide and a rise in the prominence of mentoring programs both socially and within the academic sphere, there has been concurrently a relative vacuum as it relates to an examination of mentoring within the sporting context (Jones, Harris & Miles, 2009; Bloom, 2013). In fact a review of the literature as it relates to mentoring and sport reveals only a few articles that focus on the development of sport psychology professionals and physical educators in the field. Moreover, these articles view mentoring as a useful strategy, and the researchers lament the fact that mentoring has been relatively neglected as a strategy for developing sporting professionals within their contexts. This they view as surprising given the fact that mentoring has been so established as a critical part of the development of other professionals (Hardy, 1994; Butki & Andersen, 1994; Wright & Smith, 2000). This call for a greater emphasis on mentoring in the development of professionals in sport does not just exist within the fields of physical education and sport psychology.

Other researchers have seen the potential value that mentoring can have in the development of its professionals. One such field is that of coaching. Salmela and Moraes (2003) have called for the use of mentoring of coaches within the third world where coaching programs are far less structured and formalized. This call has been echoed within the first world as well. Bloom, Durand-Bush, Schinke, Salmela (1998) and Bloom

(2013) call for more coaches to be mentored as they begin to develop their competencies and their careers. They also point out that while there are some countries that have adopted mentoring as a part of their coach development programs, such programs are not formalized with respect to their processes or their outcomes (Cushion, 2007; Bloom, 2013).

One area that has received even less examination in the mentoring literature is the role that coaches might play in mentoring their athletes. Bloom (2013, p. 479) writes, “There is likely to be little debate that coaches spend a great deal of their career mentoring their athletes.” Despite Bloom’s assertion and thousands of anecdotal accounts there is very little literature examining these roles. It is almost shocking that the role that coaches may play as mentors to youth has not been more closely studied given the need to identify potential mentors for underserved youth (MENTOR, National Mentoring Partnership, 2014).

Purpose of the Study

While there is a strong belief and some empirical support for the efficacy of mentoring in youth development, a recent report published by the National Mentoring Network reveals that the U.S. faces a severe shortage of mentors; especially for underserved youth. Given the popularity of sport in American society and the fact that so many persons are involved as coaches, coaches might help fill this mentoring void for the estimated 40 million youth involved in sport. Unfortunately, while mentoring has been sporadically discussed in the sport psychology literature, few empirical studies have been conducted on the topic. What are even scarcer are studies that consider coaches serving as mentors to their athletes. There is therefore, a need to understand if and under what

conditions coaches might act as youth mentors and the reasons or conditions under which they might begin mentoring. Do coaches perceive of themselves as mentors? If they do what are the activities in which they engage that cause them to identify in this way? Are coaches effective mentors? What strategies do coaches use to mentor their athletes and is mentoring a separate activity from coaching or is it subsumed within the coach function? These are just some of the questions needing study.

In light of these broader questions this study has five research questions. These are:

1. Do coaches consider themselves mentors to their athletes and what in their minds is the nature of mentoring?
2. Why are coaches involved in mentoring? What causes them to do it?
3. What benefits do coaches believe are derived through mentoring in the sport context? For athletes or themselves?
4. What are the challenges that coaches believe they face when mentoring?
5. What factors are perceived to influence mentoring effectiveness within the sport context (e.g. duration, quality of relationships?)

Because so little research has been conducted on coaches as mentors an exploratory research design is the most appropriate method choice for this investigation. Specifically, coaches will take part in in depth interviews to explore the role of youth coaches as mentors and address the primary research questions posed in this study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Given the purposes of this investigation and the lack of research on mentoring in sport in general and about coaches as mentors, this review of literature will begin by discussing general mentoring research taking into consideration a variety of contexts. Mentoring will be defined. Types of mentoring (formal, informal) will then be discussed followed by a summary of the functions of mentoring. Subsequently, the benefits of mentoring will be examined and will be contrasted with a discussion of dysfunctional mentoring. Finally, theories of mentoring will be briefly examined.

Following this summary of general mentoring literature, youth mentoring literature will be reviewed. Emphasis will be placed on the functions of youth mentors, benefits of youth mentoring and factors influencing mentoring such as duration of the relationship, diversity effects, and formal versus informal mentors.

Once the youth mentoring literature is reviewed the related area of positive youth development will be examined together with research regarding the coach/athlete relationship as there may be a number of potential implications for understanding mentoring taking place between coaches and their athletes.

Defining Mentoring

There is no one definition of mentoring. Mentoring has meant and still means different things, to different people, in varying contexts (Eby, Rhodes, & Allen, 2011). The lack of a unified definition is one area that has made the study of mentoring challenging. In their review of the mentoring literature Haggard, Dougherty, Turban & Wilbanks (2011) stated that they were able to identify over 40 varying definitions of the

term used within empirical studies for the period 1980 – 2009. Because the way in which mentoring is defined has implications for who is identified as a mentor and consequently what outcomes are considered a result of mentorship, researchers have had to be very clear about the criteria used to operationally define mentoring (Haggard, Dougherty, Turban & Wilbanks (2011).

This is clear if we examine the case of two definitions of mentoring within the work or professional context. Fagenson (1989) defined a mentor as, “Someone in a position of power who looks out for you, or gives you advice, or brings your accomplishments to the attention of other people who have power in the company.” This definition focuses on the functions that the mentor provides and the position of power (presumably formal) that the person may have. This would mean that anyone providing such functions could be considered a mentor. Alternatively, Seibert (1999) makes it clear however that one’s mentor cannot be your manager. He defines a mentor as, “Someone, other than your manager or immediate coworkers, who provides you with technical or career advice, coaching, or information on an informal basis.” In this definition the emphasis is not only on what the mentor provides but also the formal and structural relationships that may already exist between the persons. The logical extension of Siebert’s view is that mentoring can only occur when relationships are formed “naturally” and when the persons providing such functions have no other formal relationship with the recipient of such functions. This would however rule out any “formal” mentoring initiative as ‘true’ mentoring. Additionally, Siebert places far less emphasis on the provision of psychosocial support.

What adds to the challenge of creating a unified definition of mentoring is the

number of diverse fields in which the practice has been adopted. Coupled with a lack of clarity about the definition of mentoring, much of the research on mentoring has been compartmentalized according to the context in which the construct of mentoring has been studied (Eby, Allen, Evans, Ng & DuBois; 2008). Each field has been focused on a different population and accordingly different outcomes from the process of mentoring. In the fields of nursing, teaching, medicine, and management, there have been varying literatures of mentoring exploring how it can be utilized effectively to aid the professional development of persons. This is similar to the literature in which mentoring has been viewed as a human resource development tool (Hegstad, 1999). The field of youth mentoring however is vastly different. In it, mentoring is viewed in a more holistic manner (DuBois & Karcher, 2008) contributing to the development of the individual as a whole. This separation of research has led to a lack of clarity about the concept across disciplines, as findings and advances in one field have not always been adopted by others (Eby et al., 2008). After reviewing the literature, Eby and colleagues (2008) stated, “We expect a wide range of outcomes to be related to mentoring. This includes behavioral, attitudinal, health-related, relational, motivational, and career outcomes.”

Relatedly, some have questioned the ability to distinguish the practice of mentoring from a range of similar activities and professions that can be ascribed comparable descriptions. The professions of teaching, coaching (athletic), coaching (executive), counseling, and advising, to name a few, can all be defined in similar ways and there may be significant overlap of functions (Garvey, 2004; Mertz, 2004). As such both within the literature and anecdotally, “mentoring” is a term that is used to describe a range of activities, by a range of individuals, in a range of social settings that have mainly

positive outcomes. Established researchers in the youth mentoring field, Rhodes and DuBois (2008) expressed a concern that even within the context of youth, several programs have adopted the term “mentoring” once the program includes the interaction between adults and young persons.

In spite of this skepticism about the concept of mentoring and how it should be defined, what is clear is that everyone has some notion of what mentoring is and the functions that it can provide to both mentor and protégé (Eby, Rhodes, Allen, 2011; Mertz, 2004). There is agreement that mentoring provides two broad categories of functions to the protégé; instrumental and psychosocial (Kram, 1983; Mertz, 2004; Rhodes, 1994). Firstly the mentor assists the mentees in tangible ways, allowing them to improve their skills, knowledge or competence (instrumental). Relatedly, they may assist them by connecting them to new networks. Secondly, the mentor assists the mentee by building their self-esteem and self-confidence (psychosocial). They cheer them on when they are successful and support them if they have stumbled.

There is also agreement that mentoring does not simply benefit the mentee but benefits the mentors who are involved in the relationship. Allen, Poteet & Borroughs (1997) and Ragins & Cotton (1999) in their studies both found that mentors identified benefits that they had derived from the mentoring relationship. These benefits ranged from mentor satisfaction with the outcomes attained by the mentee to tangible benefits for the mentor in the form of new networks, challenges, and skills (Allen, Poteet & Borroughs, 1997; Ragins & Cotton, 1999). There is also consensus that the mentoring relationship, especially if it is done properly, is unique from other relationships in its intensity and quality. This means that there is an emotional bond or attachment that

develops between the mentor and the mentee, one that is not encouraged or even frowned upon in other settings (DuBois & Karcher, 2005). More specifically, everyone believes that mentoring works (DuBois, Holloway, Valentine, & Cooper, 2002; Jacobi, 1991; Kram, 1985; Levinson et al, 1978).

These elements of mentoring on which most agree allow us to construct a useful conception of mentoring which we can use to search for similarities across relationships and contexts. For our purposes a mentor is someone who is typically older, more experienced and more knowledgeable who assists, in myriad ways, someone who is typically younger, less experienced and less knowledgeable (Jacobi, 1991; Kram, 1985; Rhodes, 1994; Rhodes, 2005). Further the mentoring relationship provides benefits to both the mentee and the mentor and there is an emotional attachment usually facilitated by trust (DuBois & Karcher, 2008).

Given the varying purposes of mentoring and the many contexts in which it may be found, one of the tasks of this literature review is to investigate more thoroughly what mentoring looks like across different contexts. It will then conclude by presenting a definition of mentoring to be used for this study and one that is proposed to work well within the context of sport. This will be done by identifying and focusing on the functions that mentor activities serve regardless of context. More specifically it will focus on the quality of the relationship established between the mentor and the mentee since in many instances this relationship predicts the success of the mentoring relationship above and beyond other factors (Allen & Eby, 2003).

General Mentoring Research

Eby et al. (2008) describe mentoring as having three broad categories of research:

academic, workplace and youth mentoring. They advocate that these contexts correspond to three differing developmental contexts in which human beings find themselves. Using Erikson's psychosocial stages of development, they posit that the psychosocial needs at each stage of human development are dealt with through the process of mentoring. As the above definition of mentoring would suggest mentoring involves a more experienced individual helping a protégé to grow and develop in specific facets of their lives. The psychosocial view adopted by Eby et al. (2008) is that the assistance that youth, students and young professionals receive from mentors allows them to negotiate their respective contexts.

As such the first purpose of this literature review is to broadly describe the research on mentoring and to examine how it may look in different contexts. To do this the academic, educational and nursing fields will be considered synonymously with the work mentoring literature and juxtaposed against the youth mentoring research. This is done because the goals and benefits of those fields are similar (Lockwood, Evans & Eby, 2007); mentoring is designed to lead to career related opportunities and advancements for protégés while youth mentoring typically focuses on a broader range of outcomes or the holistic development of the mentee. This has led to a focus on more at risk youth within the youth mentoring literature with mentoring being viewed as a tool to provide redemption for youth in crisis. In the academic and work contexts, mentoring has been viewed as more of a developmental tool; something that allows protégés to better navigate the bureaucracies of the professional world (Lockwood, Evans & Eby, 2007).

The second purpose of this literature review will be to examine the work that has been done on mentoring within sport and to consider the extent to which mentoring has

been used in youth development within the sporting context. While mentoring has not been explicitly studied in sport, there are a number of theories, models and work that have looked at the role of significant relationships between adults and youth in developing life skills and promoting holistic development. This review will try to make the case that perhaps the relationships that exist between coaches and their athletes should be examined more critically from a mentoring lens.

One such model/theory of the Coach Athlete Relationship will be explored to establish the similarities that may exist between that literature and that of mentoring within sport. This will be done to establish that conceptually, mentoring probably has been taking place within sporting contexts but has not been studied formally. The goal here would be to establish a basis for studying mentoring in sport and hopefully provide a useful focus on the functions that mentoring provides and the development of quality relationships within the dyad.

Professional Mentoring

Mentoring in the workplace is an area that has received a great deal of attention and study. Using specific search criteria to search academic databases Hansford, Tennent & Ehrich (2002) were able to find 151 original studies between 1986 and 2000. Beginning with Kram's (1985) seminal work, the research on professional mentoring has been diverse; cutting across organizations of different sizes and different types and involving a wide array of professionals. As a result, research findings on professional mentoring spans the nursing, teaching, medical, academic and business professions (Andrews & Wallis, 1999; Hansford, Tennent & Ehrich, 2002; Jacobi, 1991; Sambunjak, Straus & Marusic, 2010). Wanberg, Welsh and Hezlett (2003) reported that organizations

have begun setting up formal mentoring programs and these businesses are incorporating mentoring into their organizations because they see it as a process central to the development of their human resource.

Hansford, Tennent and Ehrich, (2002) in reviewing mentoring studies done in the education settings identify mentoring as developing, among other things, the skill of reflection for both mentors and mentees. They noted that according to Schon (1987) this skill is central to the development of teachers and lecturers, as they need to have the ability to reflect on the mistakes and successes as they progress through the academic year. Similarly, Sambunjak, Straus, and Marusic (2010) in their review of mentoring within academic medicine pointed out that the process of mentoring has been found to be a “core component” in the development of young medical students and professionals. They credited mentoring for influencing the career trajectories of mentees; playing a role in productivity and promotions.

While in some fields, like nursing, the role and definition of the term mentor may not be clear, Andrews and Wallis (1999) noted that many students view their mentor as critical to their success and have positive recollections of the relationship. The role of mentoring in the development of business professionals across their careers has also been well noted (Chao, 1997; Holland, 2009; Kram, 1985). Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, and Lima (2004) in their review of the literature on work mentoring found that those who were mentored achieved greater career success than those who were not.

Academic development in the field of sport has not been left behind as it relates to mentoring, though work in the field is sparse. Former President of the Association of Applied Sport Psychology (AASP), Charles Hardy makes a strong case for the adoption

of mentoring within the field of Sport Psychology, as he noted the potential impacts that it could have on the field (Hardy, 1993) including support for protégés, exposure for mentors and enhancing the loyalty, morale and experience of the membership. Watson, Clement, Blom and Grindley (2009) also pointed out the positive regard that mentoring has among graduate students in their professional development. They suggested that more formalized, thought out programs be developed since it has tremendous potential within in Sport Psychology graduate school programs. Finally, there has been some work examining mentoring, or the lack thereof, within the profession of coaching (Bloom, 2013). Importantly, research in these diverse contexts demonstrates the positive outcomes that mentoring relationships can produce and their potential to develop those who are relatively new to their respective fields.

Types of Mentoring

Informal vs. Formal Mentoring. Both formal and informal (natural) mentoring have been identified and contrasted in the literature. Formal mentoring programs are those in which there is a deliberate effort to match persons who may potentially need support (mentee) to a person who could potentially provide such support (mentor). These have become popular within the workplace as a means of developing the incoming workforce. Additionally, many academic programs such as medicine, nursing and teaching have formal means by which the new students (mentees) are matched with an older cohort or young professionals who can guide them through the internship process. Informal mentoring has been used to describe the relationships that ‘naturally’ emerge as persons interact in their respective spheres. It is these relationships that were first studied by Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson & McKee (1978) and Kram, (1983). While formal

relationships have been developed to replicate the benefits that informal or natural relationships yield, the literature shows that there are some significant differences between these two mentoring types.

Specifically, Ragins and Cotton (1999) identified three major differences between formal and informal mentoring relationships. The first difference was the way in which the relationship is initiated. While formal programs usually, have some third party selecting and matching the parties who will comprise the mentoring relationship, naturally forming relationships develop through a process of “mutual identification”(Ragins and Cotton, 1999; Elkin, 2006). Accordingly, Ragins and Cotton (1999) have found that while mentors select their protégés based on their competence or their need for help, mentee ability carried far more weight in the selection process.

Similarly, Kram, (1985) found that mentees were drawn to mentors who they viewed as role models; persons who could help them instrumentally and psychosocially. Consequently, one major feature of informal mentoring relationship is the perception of competence that each party has of the other and a relative interpersonal comfort. This draws them to one another and may be totally non-existent in formal programs where competence and suitability for a program is determined by a third party and not the persons engaged in the relationship. Therefore, the mutual respect and perceived competence that drives natural relationships may not be present in formal ones.

The second difference between formal and informal mentoring deals with the way the mentoring relationships are structured. Persons who engage in informal relationships are not bound by rules that determine their modes of communication or a set, predetermined duration of the relationship. Ragins and Cotton (1999) argued that this

means that there is no pressure to set goals in such relationships. These can naturally evolve and unfold as the relationship progresses. Formal relationships usually have a set time frame (e.g., 1 yr.), and place additional pressure on its participants by telling them what needs to be achieved, by what date and through what means. Natural relationships as Ragins, Cotton and Miller (2000) point out can last up to 6 years which can be nearly five times as long as those that are artificially constructed. Mentors therefore are under no pressure to provide the career and psychosocial functions that comprise the relationship. Similarly, mentees are not under the impression that the mentors' assistance is a commitment to the organization and not a personal commitment to them.

Finally, the third formal versus informal mentoring difference is based on the processes that take place within the relationships. They point out that the communication and coaching skills of formal mentors may not be as strong as informal ones. Additionally, formal mentors may lack the motivation to participate in such relationships and may not perform as well given the focus and pressure on them to ensure the relationships produce results. They also suggest that the matching process in such relationships may result in dysfunctional relationships that in turn will lead to no enhanced outcomes. This means that the benefits that can be accrued through such relationships are also more long lived in informal relationships. In fact, Ragins and Cotton (1999) found that informal relationships not only produced longer lasting effects for protégés but also that these relationships resulted in far greater outcomes for the mentees and far higher levels of satisfaction with mentors and the mentoring experience.

Group Mentoring. A large subset of the body of research on mentoring has examined situations in which a mentor meets one to one with a mentee. This is in keeping

with the idea and tradition that mentoring involves a (one) significant other whose role is to develop a relationship with someone, who is less experienced, and to guide the mentee in his or her development (Chao, 1997; Kram, 1985). Group mentoring however, is a phenomenon that is becoming more popular due to the challenges that formal mentoring programs face and the peculiarities of particular employment contexts.

Group mentoring can be considered a situation in which there is more than one mentee being mentored by a mentor, or situations in which there is more than one mentor, mentoring a group of individuals (Johnson, 2013; Emelo, 2011). It has been described as akin to a classroom setting where each employee learns based on his or her personal goals even though this learning takes place in a group setting (Carvin, 2011). Dansky (1999) has also defined group mentoring as a context in which individuals access support and guidance from an organization (professional organizations) whether they access this support as individuals or as a group. Regardless, the view is that group mentoring can provide the same psychosocial and instrumental support for which traditional mentoring relationships within the workplace have become known (Johnson, 2013).

Kaplan, Keinath and Walo (2001) identified mentor scarcity as one of the major challenges facing mentoring programs within organizations. They also explain that the time needed to develop promising relationships between mentor and mentee is also something that is a luxury. Sometimes it is the mentors who do not have time and other times mentors are not readily accessible to mentees. Hegstad (1999) also cites a lack of formal training of mentors as another potential shortcoming of formal mentoring programs. In especially large organizations, the ability to provide the training necessary

to make all potential mentors effective is a tremendous task and this coupled with poor matching of mentors makes programs ineffective (Hansford, Tennent, Ehrich, 2002).

Reduced funding within the organization to provide mentoring, and situations in which employees may work in remote locations or even on their own, are situations for which group mentoring can provide organizations with solutions (Mitchell, 1999; Dansky, 1996;). AT&T is successfully using a form of mentoring which allows them to “reach far more employees than programs run by HR” and by combining it with online platforms one mentor is able to work with several protégés at the same time successfully leveraging his knowledge and expertise.

The need for fast and flexible roll out of training and knowledge within organizations is also a context in which group mentoring has been found to be effective and perhaps even a substitute to the training of vast numbers of employees (Emelo, 2011). Meister & Willyerd (2010) describe that at BT, a British telecommunications firm, peer-to-peer learning was preferred by 78% of employees. BT’s willingness to implement a group-mentoring program in which employees are mentored by their peers has resulted in reduced training costs and faster orientation of new employees. Hegstad (1999) had proposed the potential benefit that group mentoring could have within the workplace due to an increased use of teams and the prevalence of peer mentorships.

Mitchell (1999) discusses one of the main benefits of group mentoring to be the cross pollination of ideas and views that come from the group. She concludes after her interviews of women in group mentoring situations that while the issues of confidentiality and difficulty of speaking in front of many people were concerns raised, they were minor concerns raised by very few women. Many were more appreciative of the learning that

can be derived in the group setting where mentoring does not only come from the mentor but from others who were in similar situations as the mentees. In fact in this study many women spoke about the reassurance of knowing that they were not the only ones in the situation. This allowed them to view their situation as less of their fault and focus on getting out of their circumstances.

Benefits & Drawbacks of Mentoring

Benefits to Mentees. There is the belief that success in one's professional life is not attainable without the contribution of a significant person who could guide, advise and potentially enable the individual to access to the 'right' networks (Levinson Darrow, Klein, Levinson, McKee, 1978; Roche, 1979). In the words of Donald S. Perkins, "Everyone who succeeds has had a mentor" (Roche, 1979, p. 14). In fact, Roche (1979) having surveyed 1,250 executives in senior management and executive positions in the U.S. found that two-thirds of them reported having had a mentor and were satisfied that this relationship was in part responsible for their success.

Not surprisingly, a significant part of the research on mentoring has examined the benefits that mentoring can have for the mentees or protégés in the relationships and the functions that mentor provide (Chao, 1997; Elkin, 2006). Kram's (1985) seminal work outlined two broad categories of benefits that the mentee derives from the mentoring relationship. The first category of benefits is related to the mentee's career trajectory and is thus known as instrumental benefits (Kram, 1985) and includes such things as salary increases, promotions, increased responsibility and increased influence within the organization (Ragins & Cotton, 1999, Thomas, 2001). The second broad category is known as psychosocial benefits and focuses on the emotional and psychological support,

growth and development that the protégé gains through the mentoring match (Elkin, 2006, Allen, Eby, Poteet & Lentz, 2004).

Instrumental benefits as Kram (1985) refers to them, have also been linked to the “career development functions” that mentors provide (Elkin, 2006). Scandura (1998) refers to them as “vocational career support”. This category involves activities such as sponsorship, protection, coaching and exposure and is supposed to result in the protégé’s career advancement (Elkin, 2006). Mentors have been reported to introduce their protégés to new and better opportunities within the organization and vouch for their ability and competence (Kram, 1983; Ragins & Cotton, 1999; Elkin, 2006). Further many mentees report that mentors would guide them on how to approach particular responsibilities or navigate a particularly difficult or challenging situation (Parnell, 1998; Scandura, 1998).

Finally, mentors have been known to shield their mentees from difficult experiences that they could potentially experience on the job. The focus of the mentor in such a relationship is the eventual development and success of the mentee in the given profession or field (Elkin, 2006). Eby, Allen, Evans, Ng, & DuBois, (2008) suggest that this success is not limited to the current organization, rather the activities in which the duo engage hone the mentee’s craft and position him/her so that opportunities are offered to the mentee and as such the mentee is in a stronger position to be supported by others and be successful in their endeavors.

Psychosocial functions provided by mentors involve the provision of social support and role modeling which can lead to the increased self-esteem, confidence and wellbeing of the mentee. Since many employees enter mentor relationships early in their

careers, they usually have a need to be accepted and to build an identity for themselves. Mentors can facilitate this by building trust and intimacy with their mentees (Ragins & Kram, 2007). Such functions provided by mentors have been found to make mentees more confident and resilient, allowing them to recover from setbacks that may occur in the workplace more easily (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004). It involves providing the protégé with adequate support on projects or work related tasks, helping them to bounce back from pitfalls or stumbling blocks and potentially shielding them from situations, projects, tasks and individuals who might adversely affect their psychological wellbeing (Elkin, 2006).

Benefits to mentors. The bulk of the research on mentoring within professional settings has focused on the benefits of mentoring to mentees (Underhill, 2006; Ragins & Kram, 2007; Holland, 2009). Hanford, Ehrich & Tennent (2004) in their review of formal mentoring programs report that only 42% of studies reported any positive outcomes for mentors as opposed to 82% of studies reporting positive outcomes for mentees. A review of professional mentoring by Noe, Greenberger and Wang (2002) has shown however, that mentors also benefit from the process of mentoring. While there has been comparatively less investigation of these benefits, the evidence seems to overwhelmingly demonstrate that the mentor/mentee relationship is one that also results in positive outcomes for mentors (Wanberg, Welsh and Hezlett (2003). Ragins and Scandura (1999) suggest that mentors derive a profound sense of satisfaction and fulfillment in from their roles.

Some researchers have contended that through such relationships, mentors are able to gain a sense of generativity or sense of purpose in their lives; a need that Erikson

argued is the opposite of psychosocial stagnation (Ragins & Cotton, 1999; Ragins & Scandura, 1999; Hegstad, 1999). Holland (2009) supports these and adds that mentoring helps mentors gain a better understanding of their own management styles and practices and may allow them to learn about other parts of the company. This suggests that the networks of mentors, not just mentees are expanded through the mentoring process (Eby, 2007).

Organizational Benefits. While Kram's initial work only identified benefits to the mentor and mentee, some have suggested that there are larger systemic benefits that the organization derives when mentoring relationships are successful (Elkin, 2006). Such findings are not surprising since the organization is an amalgamation of the individuals who comprise it. It would logically follow therefore, that individual progress would eventually have some collective, widespread impact on the larger organization. Organizational function refers to the institutional knowledge passed on to the mentee by the mentor that allows them to function in keeping with the expectations and standards of the organization. This function benefits both the mentee and the organization since a mentee's standard of work allows him/her to be more visible within the organization's structure. Concurrently, the organization benefits since the culture of excellence for which it has been known has now been planted and is being nurtured within a new generation of employees. This view of mentoring is consistent with the focus on group and peer mentoring as strategies to replace traditional training and development within organizations. Persons who have found support for these alternate forms of mentoring stress their value to organizational learning and the development of an organizational culture (DeLong, Gabarro & Lees, 2008).

Drawbacks to Mentoring. Mentoring has traditionally been viewed predominantly as a positive process (Jacobi, 1991; Long, 1997; Dougherty & Dreher, 2007). Nonetheless, while many generally expect mentoring relationships to result in positive outcomes, these outcomes can also be negative or altogether absent (Jacobi, 1991; Long, 1997; Ragins & Cotton, 1999). For example, since mentors are by definition usually more experienced, they can in many circumstances bully the mentee because of the disparity of power between them (Scandura, 1998). One challenge that can be experienced through mentoring relationships can be the demands of time it places on the mentor and the mentee (Ragins, 1989; Littleton, Tally-Foos, Wolaver, 1992). Whether it is a formal or an informal relationship both parties need to make time to develop their relationship. This time however, evidently comes at an opportunity cost; especially if the relationship is formal and there is no ‘natural’ inclination to spend time with the person.

The lack of sufficient mentors, one consistent challenge across the mentoring literature, may also result in the overuse of the mentors who are available, leading to burnout and frustration (Scandura, 1998). Allen Poteet & Burrough (1997) also suggest that professional mentoring relationships may be abusive or that mentors and mentees may feel as though they failed or did not live up to the expectations of themselves. These types of relationships may result from a lack of training (mentors & mentees) or insufficient resources (Wanberg, Welch, & Hezlett, 2003).

Scandura (1998) discusses a typology of dysfunctional mentoring relationships that explores malevolent behaviors on the part of both the mentor and the mentee. This concept recognizes that the dysfunction that takes place in mentoring matches does not only occur because of chance or issues related to the mentor mentee match. Dysfunction

can only be determined when the intent of the employee is known, since it may be due to deliberate attempts to sabotage the relationship on the part of the mentor or the mentee. All mentoring relationships however, if we are to go by Kram's (1983) phases will go through a stage where there is dysfunction. The termination phase occurs when the relationship is no longer fulfilling the need of one of the parties (Hegstad, 1999). Kram (1983) herself describes it as follows:

"Some turmoil, anxiety and feeling of loss generally characterize this period as the equilibrium of the cultivation phase is disrupted." p. 618

Based on this view then, dysfunction is a natural part of the mentoring process one that the employees need to work through in order to redefine their relationship. In Kram's view dysfunction is natural, temporary, but expected.

Youth Mentoring

There has been an increasing growth in the use of mentoring as a strategy to be used to intervene in the lives of youth and aid in the process of youth development (Rhodes, 1994; Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; DuBois & Karcher, 2008). This trend has developed in the past 20 years as evaluations of mentoring programs have established the importance of the role significant adults play in the lives of youth (Grossman & Tierney, 1998; Scales, 2003; Benson, 2006). During the difficult period of adolescence, where youth are trying to develop their own identities, many have suggested that mentors can assist in the process of identity development (Erikson, 1968; Benson, 2000; Larson, 2006; Rhodes & DuBois, 2008). Additionally, the belief, which has so far been supported by the research, is that while all youth can benefit from these relationships with adult mentors, mentoring relationships with at-risk youth can be even more impactful (Rhodes, 1994; Tierney, Grossman & Resch, 1995; Benson, Scales, Hamilton, & Sesma, 2006).

This has led to a preponderance of mentoring initiatives geared to assisting not only youth in general, but more specifically those labeled “at-risk” youth (Rhodes & DuBois, 2006).

Youth mentoring can be defined in similar terms to mentoring in other contexts. Mentoring is believed to occur when there is a developmental relationship in which a non-parental adult, usually older and more experienced guides, teaches, and molds a less experienced, usually younger individual (Rhodes, 1994; Rhodes, Spencer, Keller, Liang & Noam, 2006). One significant component of the definition of youth mentoring is that the protégés are youth; individuals who are not yet adults. Youth mentoring therefore is an activity that can involve protégés that range in age from 5 years old until 25 years old (Eby et al, 2008). While the United Nations defines youth as “anyone under the age of 25”, usually youth mentoring programs involve persons who are below college age.

Given the range of ages and youth involved, youth mentoring in the U.S. has taken many forms pursuing a range of outcomes. Rhodes & DuBois (2008) and DuBois, Portillo, Rhodes, Silverthorn & Valentine (2011) report that there are nearly 5000 such programs involving nearly 3 million youth nationwide. As such, the development that takes place across mentoring programs may vary (Eby et al., 2013). However, a common thread across youth mentoring programs is a general belief that mentoring of youth assists them in their overall and holistic development (Rhodes, Spencer, Keller, Liang & Noam, 2006; DuBois, Portillo, Rhodes, Silverthorn & Valentine, 2011; Eby et al, 2013). Some like Eby et al (2013) have suggested that mentoring helps to counteract the risk taking and behavioral challenges that can occur when youth feel isolated and

disconnected. Described in this way, the rationale youth mentoring seems similar to many PYD approaches.

Functions of Mentors. There is a great deal of similarity between the functions that mentors serve in the lives of youth compared to the functions they provide in professional settings (Eby, Rhodes, & Allen, 2007). This means that as described in the work mentoring review mentors who serve youth essentially provide two broad categories of support to their protégés (DuBois, Holloway, Valentine, Cooper, 2002; Eby, Rhodes, & Allen, 2007). On the one hand mentors serve a psychosocial function by allowing youth to develop their confidence, resilience and self-esteem. On the other hand mentoring relationships allow youth to develop new skill sets that may allow them to explore new opportunities or achieve in instrumental ways. As such, mentoring relationships have been categorized as providing either, goal oriented functions (similar to career or instrumental functions) or providing developmental functions (similar to psychosocial functions) (DuBois & Karcher, 2008). Compared with professional mentoring however, youth mentoring has been found to have weaker associations with desirable outcomes. DuBois, Portillo, Rhodes, Silverthorn & Valentine (2011) point out that while in academic and work settings the interests and experiences of mentors and mentees typically align, in youth mentoring there is greater diversity between the interests of protégés and mentors leading to relationships of lower quality. It is for this reason that relationship quality has become a central focus of the research within youth mentoring (Eby et al, 2008; Eby et al; 2013).

Benefits of Youth Mentoring. Mentoring has overall been found to have a wide range of benefits for youth (DuBois, Holloway, Valentine & Cooper, 2002; Rhodes &

DuBois, 2008; DuBois, Portillo, Rhodes, Silverthorn & Valentine, 2011). Some of these benefits are academically related. Youth in mentoring initiatives have improved grade performance and are more engaged in school. Specifically, they are more likely to finish school, more likely to graduate and more likely to get along with teachers and other school staff (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Blinn-Pike, 2011). Other benefits have been related to the emotional and psychosocial functioning of youth. Mentoring relationships have been found to impact the self-esteem of youth, increase their ability to cope with tough and difficult situations and also to be more satisfied with the support in their lives (Rhodes, Contreras, and Mangelsdorf (1994). In an attempt to outline the ways in which mentoring might contribute to youth development, Rhodes (2005) developed a model of youth mentoring. Rhodes (2005) suggested that there were three processes through which mentoring derived benefits for youth. It could improve social & emotional functioning, enhance cognitive development, and help youth develop a positive identity.

DuBois & Silverthorn (2005) conducted a study that exemplifies the impact that mentoring can have on youth outcomes. In this study the researchers examined the public-use data set of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health and assessed youth responses to the Wave I & III assessments against youth responses to whether or not they had a mentor. WAVE I was taken in 1995 and WAVE III in 2002. Youth in this study ranged in ages from 18 – 26 when they took the WAVE III. The WAVE instruments assessed respondents on problem behaviors such as binge drinking and drug use, physical health outcomes such as physical activity levels and use of condoms, psychological well being such as self esteem, depressive symptoms and life satisfaction. To determine whether or not youth had a mentor, researchers used the WAVE III

question that asked “whether or not there was a non-parental adult who had made a significant contribution in their lives?” Youth were omitted from the study if the person they identified was a younger sibling, partner/spouse or a friend. A sample of 3187 responses was randomly selected from a larger set of 15,197 respondents. Of those 2323 youth reported having a mentor.

The researchers used logistic regression analyses to see if reporting a mentoring relationship would predict youth outcomes against the three broad categories described earlier. The analyses were controlled for demographic characteristics such as race, and risk (individual and environmental). The researchers found that having a mentor was associated with reduced likelihood of having problem behaviors (gang membership, risk taking and fighting). It was also associated with increased levels of psychological wellbeing and also a greater likelihood that the youth had completed high school and attended college. Finally, youth with mentors engaged in more physical activity and were more likely to use birth control regularly.

Blinn-Pike (2011) also found that decreased drug use, alcohol use, reduction in truancy and delinquency also occurred when youth had mentors. Youth who engage in mentoring programs therefore not only have increases in positive outcomes but also decreases in negative ones (Tierney, Grossman & Resch, 1995; Blinn-Pike, 2011). This seems to suggest that mentoring has a protective effect; reducing the likelihood that youth will engage in at risk behaviors (DuBois, Portillo, Rhodes, Silverthorn & Valentine, 2011). Eby et al (2013) concluded that mentoring is effective across all age groups from early childhood to adolescence (various stages of development). When one considers the periods of childhood and adolescence are periods when youth experiment and generally

try new things, the findings and suggestions that mentoring might make youth more resilient is especially appealing.

Given the wide range of mentoring initiatives that exist however, and the diverse ages of protégé populations some have cautioned that such optimism needs to be tempered (Hall, 2003; Roberts, Liabo, Lucas, DuBois & Sheldon, 2004). Their contention is that mentoring may not work in the same ways for all populations of youth and under all conditions. Others point out that there have been varied and conflicting findings across evaluations of mentoring programs (Blinn-Pike, 2011; Rhodes, 2008). Indeed there has been some research to suggest that particular populations of youth might be more predisposed to benefit from mentoring relationships (Spencer, 2007). Herrera, Grossman, Kauh, Feldman, McMaken & Jucovy (2007) & Herrera, Grossman, Kauh, McMaken (2011) in their evaluation of Big Brother Big Sister (BBBS) programs found that older youth tended to benefit more from matches than elementary school aged youth. Grossman & Rhodes, (2002) found that adolescents who had been abused emotionally, sexually, physically were less likely to remain in mentoring relationships and that older youth more likely to end relationships than younger youth.

Others still, maintain that the research on youth mentoring holds promise but certain aspects require greater, closer examination (Hansen, 2007; Phillip & Spratt, 2007; Eby et al, 2013). Nakkula and Harris (2010) speak to a gap between what research has found and the evidence that practitioners of mentoring programs have observed.

“This research is not congruent with practitioners’ observations of what mentoring can accomplish when it is done well, and as such the field is undergoing intensified efforts to identify and implement elements of effective practices.” Nakkula & Harris, 2010

Their view is that research has shown that the programs that derive greater

outcomes and benefits are those that subscribe to particular criteria (DuBois & Rhodes, 2008; Nakkula & Harris, 2010). They identified pre-match training of youth, a one-year commitment by youth and mentors, weekly face-to-face contact for at least two hours and structured activities as critical components to determine mentoring success (DuBois & Rhodes, 2008). In their 2002 review of the mentoring research DuBois, Holloway, Valentine & Cooper (2002) identify mentor training, strong dyadic relationships and clear expectations as things associated with modest mentoring effects. More emphasis in their minds needs to be paid to these areas to further and deepen an understanding of mentoring. Rhodes and DuBois (2006) identify 13 such practices. Some of these areas include the quality of the mentor mentee relationship, the duration of the relationship, the functions that mentors provide, the wider context in which mentor dyads may be based, the difference between formal and informal programs and the training and support that mentors receive.

In an attempt to elucidate the potential benefits of mentoring to youth and to clarify the mixed results that had up to that time been found, DuBois, Holloway, Valentine & Cooper (2002) conducted a meta-analytic review of 55 evaluations of youth mentoring programs. In an attempt to ensure that this review was extensive, their initial search did not only use established academic search engine like PsychINFO & ERIC but also utilized search engines on the internet to seek out possible unpublished reports that met criteria. Interestingly, in keeping with the working definition of mentoring established earlier in this literature review DuBois et al (2002) did not include any programs in which there was peer mentoring unless they were programs in which adolescents mentored children. This was done in order to maintain one of the critical

criteria mentoring that is, the mentor must be older than the mentee. Also mentored youth had to have a mean age less than 18. Finally, studies had to compare the effects of mentoring in one of two ways. They either had to compare one group pre mentoring to post mentoring or compare one group that had been mentored to one which had not been. Effect sizes for the outcome measures were calculated for the relationships in the study and compared.

The analysis revealed that youth who were mentored scored higher on positive outcomes measured. The effect size was 0.14, which is considered small using Cohen's d. Additionally, the effect sizes for potential moderators were calculated and tested using the homogeneity statistic. This compares actual sets of effect sizes to what would normally be expected due to sampling error alone. This analysis revealed that there were certain characteristics which had a significant effect size on the mentoring outcomes measured; notably having mentors who came from helping professions (teachers, psychologists), provision of ongoing training to mentors, provision of structured activities, parental support and involvement, and expectations for frequency of contact. Additionally, programs that implemented more "best practices" also had larger effect sizes and those with 7 or more best practices had higher effect sizes than those that engaged in fewer "best practices". Best practices are those things that have been advocated by mentoring practitioners who have implemented and coordinated youth mentoring programs extensively. These practices range from the provision of training for mentors, to the use of mentor-mentee match instruments, having duration of the match among others. Finally, certain groups such as males and at risk youth mentoring had a greater effect with double (.25) the effect size of the overall effect size for the entire

group.

The main conclusion of this meta-analysis is that while mentoring had been found to be effective overall for all youth, there were certain populations, at risk youth, for whom it had been shown to be more effective. Further and perhaps most significantly, there were particular program features that could be implemented to improve outcomes for youth. This bodes well mentoring programs since there are standards and best practice that can be built in to improve their impact on youth. One of the challenges though is that the programs examined in this study were formal in nature. As Zimmerman, Bingehheimer and Notaro (2002) point out, less research has been done in the youth context on natural mentors. Consequently, while some studies have shown that natural mentoring works, (Zimmerman, Bingehheimer and Notaro, 2002; Rhodes, Ebert & Fischer, 1992) there has not been the same type of research conducted in this context as has been done in the work mentoring context (Ragins & Cotton, 1999).

Factors impacting Youth Mentoring Effects

Duration of Mentoring Programs. There has been significant discussion on the role of mentoring relationships' length on youth outcomes (Styles & Morrow, 1992; Rhodes & DuBois, 2005). While it is accepted that the quality of mentoring relationships may mediate the ultimate impact that they have, it is also acknowledged that the length of mentoring relationships contribute to their impact. Grossman & Rhodes (2002) found in their study of 1,138 youth that those who spent longer in mentoring relationships had more positive effects and improvements in behavior outcomes compared to youth whose relationships terminated earlier.

Grossman and Rhodes (2002) examined the effects of mentoring by comparing a group of adolescents to others of the same age group who were not mentored. Youth who applied to a part of the Big Brother Big Sister mentoring program were randomly assigned to receive mentoring or not receive mentoring over a period of 18 months. All youth were interviewed prior to the start of the study and again at the end of the study. Those placed in the control group were told that they had been placed on a wait list until a proper match could be established. The study assessed the strength of parental relationships, grades and attendance, scholastic competence, school value, self worth, length of the mentor/ mentee relationship and the quality of the mentor/mentee relationship.

In this particular study, there was a relationship between the duration of the mentoring relationship and the positive or negative benefits reported by youth. Youth who were in relationships that ended in less than three months reported negative outcomes such as reduced scholastic competence and self worth. Even though some positive effects were observed after 6 months. The threshold of one year seemed to be the duration that resulted in greatest positive impacts on youth (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002). Previous studies had determined that 6 months was sufficient time for mentoring relationships to result in positive impacts (Styles & Morrow, 1992). Others have suggested that 24 months is a better timeframe within which to reasonably see behavioral and attitudinal transformations in youth (Lipman & Shaver, 2013). Collectively thought it seems that the duration of the relationship an impact on the outcomes that youth experience.

Diversity in Mentoring (Women, Race). There is some evidence to suggest that the characteristics of mentors and mentees may impact and affect the outcomes of the relationships. Grossman & Rhodes (2002) report that all-white dyads lasted longer than all minority relationships and cross race relationships. They also report that volunteers with higher incomes stay in mentoring relationships longer than lower income volunteers. When the interests of the mentor and mentee were controlled for, the differences between dyad types, however, were not significant. This points to the critical need to ensure that mentors are appropriately matched with their protégés. Still, in reviewing mentoring relationships across the disciplines of work, academic and youth mentoring, it was similarity of dyads which showed the greatest impact on protégés' perceptions of instrumental, psychosocial and perception of relationship quality (Eby et al, 2013). They point out however that given most of the data is self reported from the perspective of the mentee there is no way to know if this perception of similarity influences the success of the relationship or is a product of the relationship.

Formal vs. Natural Mentoring. Natural mentoring takes place when some significant adult in the life of the youth provides the instrumental or psychosocial functions necessary to facilitate the youth's development (Hamilton et al, 2006). This relationship is termed natural since it evolves organically as the youth interacts with persons within his/her network. As such natural mentors can range from aunts and uncles, to teachers, priests, and coaches (Spencer, 2007). These relationships have been found to be associated with very strong impacts on youth outcomes (Spencer, 2007; Hamilton et al, 2006). Similar to the professional mentoring literature, relationships in which persons are naturally drawn to one another seem to have great benefits to both individuals

involved. This relationship also lasts far longer than formal relationships suggesting that whatever brought the dyad together initially, plays some role in maintaining it. Rhodes, Contreras and Mangelsdorf (1994) while interviewing natural mentors of Latino mothers found that the persons they identified as mentors most had known most, if not all, of their lives. This was also the case when Klaw, Rhodes & Fitzgerald (2003) interviewed African American mothers about their mentors. While in both studies the relationships between the mentors and mentees had existed for two or more years, more significantly mentees expected the relationship to last forever. This challenges the notions of formal mentoring in which there is a program prescribed termination or redefinition point.

Formal mentoring, tries to mimic naturally forming relationships by pairing youth who may need a role model with someone who is willing to provide assistance. While they are well intentioned, such programs have had challenges. One major area of concern is that relationships often do not last as long. Cavell, Meeham, Heffer & Holliday (2002) point out that dyads in formal mentoring relationships face the same challenges that they would face on their own namely that the individuals would not normally interact with one another; they do not share common interests and often come from very different backgrounds. DuBois, Holloway, Valentine & Cooper (2002) demonstrate however, that these programs can be successful, especially if they follow prescribed best practices. Additionally, certain at risk populations have been found to have larger effects as a result of these programs.

While both natural and formal mentors have youth development as their aim, there are some critical differences between both types of programs. One of the main differences is that natural mentoring has not been as widely studied as its formal

counterpart. Blinn-Pike (2011) and Spencer (2007) state that formal programs have received more attention. By this they mean that far greater energy has been spent studying and evaluating such programs and consequently there is a greater understanding and appreciation of how mentoring might function in formal conditions. In spite of this Cavell, Meeham, Heffer, & Holliday (2002) identify that the following features of natural mentoring relationships are thought to contribute to natural relationships' ability to produce superior outcomes to formal programs.

- a. These relationships are more common;
- b. The duration of contact is generally longer.
- c. Mentors are typically a part of the social or kinship networks.
- d. Mentors are more likely to be similar to youth in gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic background.
- e. Mentors may already be familiar with the life circumstances of the youth.
- f. Mentors are more likely to have access to and participate with youth in religious services, family celebrations, and family rituals.

Critical in the criteria they identify are duration of the mentoring relationship and the fact that the mentor is involved in multiple aspects of the mentees' life. This speaks to the interconnectedness of the relationship that is sometimes necessary to impact the lives of youth. It also suggests that the dyad's strength and quality of relationships is critical to success.

Mentoring in Sport

The research that exists on mentoring within the domain of sport is comparatively sparse (Bloom, Durand-Bush, Schinke & Salmela, 1998; Jones, Harris & Miles, 2009). This is a surprising finding since the wider body of research on mentoring has held such promise both for the development of professionals as well as youth in other contexts. In many ways coaches, just like teachers can naturally be viewed as mentors for youth as they have a formal role to develop their capacities. As such it seems odd that more

studies examining the potential of coaches to function as mentors are not more prevalent. One explanation is that the field of coaching has viewed the primary function of the coach as improving the athletic performance of the athlete. Accordingly, research and focus has been more on developing the coaches' ability to become better at this role rather than the holistic development of the athlete.

One area in which mentoring can be valuable within the field of sport is the use of mentoring as a tool in the development of sporting officials and coaches (Jones, Harris & Miles, 2009). In one study by Narcotta, Peterson and Johnson (2009) that examined the functions of mentors in soccer coaching dyads female coaches readily identified mentoring functions fulfilled by their head coaches. Using the mentor role instrument (MRI) developed by Ragins & Cotton (1999) the research team asked 433 NCAA Division 1 soccer coaches about their 'mentoring' relationships with their head coaches. Using ANOVA's and descriptive statistics, the research team found that friendship and acceptance (psychosocial functions) and sponsorship and challenging assignments (career related functions) were the areas that assistant coaches perceived to be most present in their interactions with their head coaches.

In her review of the mentoring within coaching literature, Jones et al (2009) strongly suggest that more be done to introduce mentoring systematically into the development of coaches in the same way that it is used as a tool in the development of other professionals. She ends her review by outlining some guidelines to implement mentoring that can aid in the development of coaches. She calls, specifically, for a formalization of the approaches to mentoring within coaching and coach development, focusing on the needs of the persons being mentored as it relates to skill development,

training for mentors and professional support. Cushion (2013) also advises that coach learning can benefit from the experience and interaction of older and more advanced professionals. He cautions that mentoring should ultimately result in the increase of knowledge and skills of those coaches being mentored. This he points out can be challenging in the absence of an overarching model of coach development and the high incidence of volunteers within the field.

Bloom et al's (1998) study investigating mentoring in the development of coaches also points to the central role that this process plays in coach development. Utilizing semi-structured interviews, 21 coaches were asked about the role of mentoring in their development. Many spoke about the role of close relationships they had with older more experienced coaches and the role that that played in shaping their philosophy and approach to the game as well as their techniques. One interesting finding in this study is that many coaches described that they were mentored as athletes by their former coaches. It is, as athletes, that the seeds of coaching philosophy and beliefs and values about coaching were introduced. As such some of these coaches also described a need to help their own athletes develop in all facets of their lives, not just sport. It seems therefore that being mentored fosters a sense/ responsibility to give back. It also points to the role that coaches can potentially play in the lives of their athletes, going beyond simply performance improvement. Studies like this one are rare, however, and Bloom et al conclude by calling for more structured approaches to mentoring in sport and further research in the field.

Sport Coaches as Mentors

Bloom (2013) in his discussion of mentoring for sport coaches says, “There is likely to be little debate that coaches spend a great deal of their careers mentoring their athletes.” This is because many believe that the sport setting is a useful context in which critical life skills that youth need for success can be taught. If mentoring is a process in which youth are taught the life skills they need to have educational success and enhanced wellbeing then the job of the coach as a mentor becomes one that surpasses teaching techniques and tactics. Accordingly, many view the coach as a mentor; someone having the responsibility to ensure that these skills are taught. There is very little by way of empirical studies that examine the potential that coaches have to serve their athletes in this capacity directly. Some like Lough (2001) and Bloom et al (1998) identify the potential of coaches to mentor athletes but view it as a stepping-stone in the process of coach development and training. In other words, coaches should mentor athletes because those athletes are potentially future coaches. Such a view of mentoring would suffice, in the work mentoring literature, where career advancement is one of the critical outcomes of mentoring, however, within youth contexts, mentoring is about holistic youth development. In many ways mentoring within sport might learn from approaches to build life skills within sport.

Youth success has been an area that has been of interest to researchers in varying fields (Erikson, 1968; Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Benson, 2006; Rhodes, 1994). Of particular interest have been the processes by which youth attain success and how they navigate the range of choices and options, both good and bad, which are available to them (Larson, 2011). While some have focused on these processes in developmental terms, others have

focused on it as an attempt to reduce delinquency and other errant behavior (Hellison, 1993, 1999). In spite of their varied approaches however, a central component of a number of these approaches has been recognition that significant adults play key roles in the process of youth development. While Hamilton (1999) contends that the field of PYD can be divided into PYD models, PYD philosophies and PYD approaches to youth programming what has been a central thread across this field is the importance of the relationship that is established between the youth and adults.

Benson's Assets. Others have examined the resources that young people require to maximize their potential and the ability of youth to achieve (Benson, 1997). In their work at the Search Institute, Benson and colleagues identified 40 assets that youth require to be considered as thriving. Their research found that the more assets youth possessed, the more likely they were to thrive (Scales, Benson, Leffert & Blyth, 2000). More specifically studies found that greater assets were significantly related, reduced risky behaviors in general, reduced risky behaviors for alcohol use, reduced risky behaviors for displaying aggression and increased academic performance (Scales, Benson, Roehlkepartain, Sesma & van Dulmen, 2006; Leffert, Benson, Scales, Sharma, Drake, Blyth, 1998).

While these assets include many personal characteristics such as positive values, social competencies and a commitment to learning (internal assets), many of their assets focus on the social support and connections that youth have to their communities and contexts (external assets). Chief among these relationships are that youth need to form and establish with non-parental adults. Scales, Benson and Mannes (2006) identify such individuals as a critical part of the process of PYD and lament the fact that there aren't

more youth who are able to establish positive connections with adults in their contexts. In the longitudinal study of 370 youth, followed over the course of 4 years, their connections to non-adult others led to significant decreases in risk taking and an increase in thriving outcomes. This Scale et al (2006) attributes to the quality of youths' non-family relationships.

Features of Positive Developmental Settings. Gootman & Eccles (2002) identify four domains that can be used to ascertain youth wellbeing. These are Physical development, Intellectual development, Psychological & Emotional development and Social development. Their view is similar to Benson in that, the more assets youth have the more likely they are to achieve wellbeing and thrive. A critical component of their conception, however, is that these assets cannot exist or be derived in a vacuum. It is the connection that youth have with their environment and context that allow them to develop these assets. These contexts and environments do not all facilitate PYD. Gootman & Eccles posit that there are central features of positive developmental settings (Lerner et al, 2011). Among the eight features identified the most basic of these is the physical & psychological safety of the youth who are in the setting. Notwithstanding, however, they too stress the quality of relationships which youth have with adults as a feature central to the process of PYD (Larson, Eccles & Gootman, 2004). Relationships are also found to be a consistent feature, identified across youth interventions, central to their success (Lerner et al, 2011).

Life Skills. Building on the work of those in the field of PYD, researchers in the field of sport psychology saw the potential of character and life skill building programs within sport and sport settings. Researchers like Danish, Petipas & Hale (1993) contend

that life skill development is a useful way in which youth can realize their potential and that sporting contexts may provide the tools to develop these skills. They suggest that such skills may be transferable to other life contexts; though not without challenges. Danish's initial work focused on teaching goal setting through sport and exercise settings, but in the past 20 years varied life skills have been taught using sport and physical activity programs. These range from leadership, personal & social responsibility, teamwork, emotional regulation, conflict resolution and communication skills (Hellison, 1993; Weiss, Stuntz, Bhalla, Bolter & Price, 2013; Gould & Voelker, 2012). While many of these programs involve sport psychologists trained to do this type of work, other researchers have identified the coach as a central figure for athlete's development of life skills within sport (Gould, Collins, Lauer, Chung, 2007; Gould & Carson, 2010). Many believed that the coach could be especially effective at such development if he/she were adequately trained (Smith & Smoll, 1997).

Gould & Carson (2010) conducted a study in which they surveyed 200 former athletes and assessed their experiences in their high school sport and the coaching behaviors of their coaches. The Youth Experiences Survey for Sport (YES-S) was used to measure positive and negative sport experiences and the players were also asked to assess their respective coaches' behaviors using the Coaching Behavior Scale for Sport CBS-S. They found that athletes who reported their coaches' behaviors as positive (Building a positive rapport and Talking about how life skills are related to sport) had more positive experiences in sport. These former athletes reported that they developed emotional regulation, pro-social norms, cognitive skills and linkages to the community. Former

athletes who reported having more negative experiences in high school sport reported having coaches who were not as supportive in the types of behaviors they displayed.

Similarly, Gould, Collins, Lauer, Chung (2007) interviewed 10 “outstanding” coaches who had on average 31 years of experience coaching at the high school level. Collectively these coaches had won 76% of their games, meaning that they could be considered winning coaches. This study revealed that coaches focused on two main areas in their craft. The first area, effective coaching strategies was related to working with players and dealing with others (assistant coaches, officials & parents). In this dimension, coaches spoke about being able to develop relationships with their athletes where they could be tough with them, but athletes still knew that they supported and cared about them. Thus even though players were corrected, coaches acknowledged that there was a way in which it should be done. Coaches also spoke about setting structures and rules that allowed players to be held accountable and to understand expectations and be motivated.

The second dimension Player Enhancement Strategies focused on developing skills like goal setting, team building, motivating players and teaching a variety of life skills. The study demonstrated that successful coaches incorporated life skill development into their process of preparing athletes. It showed that that preparation was deliberate and that coaches felt that this preparation hinged on the relationships they developed with their athletes and others within the sporting context.

Coach-Athlete Relationship

While life skill development is possible within the sport context the research points to the relationship between the coach and the athlete as an important and pivotal component of that process (Smith & Smoll, 1997). This finding is not surprising. This is

because a coach's behavior and interaction with his athlete has the potential to impact more than just their performance in a sporting event; it can impact all aspects of their lives (Ewing & Seefeldt, 1996; Smith & Smoll, 2006; Carson & Gould, 2008). In fact given the function that the coach serves this is one relationship, more than any other, can be considered similar to the mentoring relationship (Starcevich, 1999; Lough, 2001). Additionally, similar to the mentoring relationship, the coach-athlete relationship can impact the coach's job satisfaction that the coach has as well. The notion of the coach being a mentor also fits well in Bronfenbrenner's conceptions of the development of natural mentors. Coaches exist within one microsystem that the child (actor) occupies. This microsystem interacts with the microsystem of the school, home and others to encapsulate the entire macrosystem in the child's life (Hamilton et al, 2006).

Initial work examining the coach-athlete relationship approached it from a leadership perspective (Poczwadowski, Barott, Jowett, 2005). Chelladurai's Multidimensional Leadership Model and Smith & Smoll's Mediational Model considered and hypothesized the impact that a coach's leadership behavior would have on his athletes' performance, satisfaction and overall well-being. In fact the athlete's satisfaction of the coach athlete relationship was one of the major components of the Multidimensional Leadership Model.

Leadership Scale for Sport (LSS) Multidimensional Leadership Model. The coach athlete relationship is one that has been studied extensively. Some have explored the impact that the relationship can have on the performance of elite athletes (Jowett, 2007). Others have been more concerned with the quality of the relationship predicting the longevity of the athlete in the sport and their satisfaction while performing the sport

(Ewing & Seefeldt, 1996). Others still have looked at a combination of performance and satisfaction being derived from the coaching styles that coaches may adopt (Chelladurai, 1984). Chelladurai's model of leadership describes how the actions of the coach will be related to the overall satisfaction and performance of the team members. Specifically, he distinguishes between the leadership behaviors required in a particular context, those behaviors the team's members will prefer the coach to use and those which are actually used by the coach in the situation. He postulates that while it is what is required that will most likely determine performance; athlete satisfaction is most correlated with leadership behaviors and a style that they prefer. By hypothesizing this, his is one of the first models that considered the relationship between the coach and the athlete and how such a relationship could evolve from situation to situation.

Coaching Behavior Assessment Scale. Smith & Smoll developed a Coaching Behaviors Assessment System (CBAS) that allowed them to code the behaviors of coaches as they interacted with their athletes in training or at games. They categorized the range of behaviors coaches exhibited in their interactions with their athletes and found that these could be arranged into three independent dimensions; Supportiveness, Instructiveness and Punitiveness. There were a total of 12 types of behavior that the scale measured and in many instances the scale assessed whether the coach utilized one behavior over another in particular contexts (Smoll & Smith, 1989). Supportiveness behaviors were those that involved reinforcement and encouragement that was mistake-contingent. Behaviors that were considered instructiveness were those that involved general technical instruction or mistake-contingent instruction versus general communication or general encouragement. Finally, punitive behaviors were those

behaviors that were related to punishment or punitive technical instruction versus organizational behaviors (Smith & Smoll, 1989). Overall they found that coaches who displayed more instructive and supportive type behaviors had players who enjoyed playing more, enjoyed the coach more and had improved self esteem. This demonstrates the potential for the coach to do more than simply impact the performance of his players but to provide the same type of support that a mentor might.

Smoll, Smith, Barnett & Everett (1993) conducted an experimental study with 18 coaches. Coaches in the experimental group (8 teams) were given coaches' training (CET) prior to the start of the season and were compared to the control group (10 teams). were trained using Coach Effectiveness Training (CET). Coaches were told that one of the goals of the training was to strengthen positive coach athlete relationships as well as athlete-athlete relationships. In the 2 ½ hour session they were encouraged to use behaviors measured on the CBAS. Perceptions of coaches behaviors, attitudes toward the coaches and self esteem scores were obtained from the boys on the coaches' teams both preseason and postseason. The results revealed three major findings. The first is that the players favored coaches who were trained over coaches who were not trained due to an increase in their instructive and supportive behaviors during the season. Secondly, players also perceived trained coaches as liking them more and perceived them as more supportive. As a result, they felt happier and had more fun during the season. Thirdly, boys with low self-esteem coached by the experimental group of coaches had a statistically significant increase in their self-esteem over the course of the season.

In another exploratory study conducted using this classification system for coaching behaviors Curtis, Smith & Smoll, (1989) found that coaches sometimes do not

have an accurate representation of their actions and behaviors. By comparing coaches perceptions of their behavior on the CBAS categories against those of their players and independent observers, coaches perceptions of their behavior was found to be more consistent with other rater perceptions for punitive practices rather than supportive and instructional practices. The fact that coaches' opinions of their own behavior may not be accurate is a curious finding reinforcing the need to compare coaches' views of their behavior to others' perceptions.

Understanding Coaches as Mentors

This review demonstrates that much has been learned about mentoring and it is widely believed to be an important mechanism for enhancing youth development. It is ironic then, that the role of sport coaches in mentoring has not been extensively examined. This dissertation is designed to explore that relationship.

One area to be examined as we consider the benefits and potential decrements of mentoring in coaching is what is considered to be a mentoring. Rhodes & DuBois (2005) contend that not all relationships in which adults engage with youth ought to be considered mentoring programs. There is however, great similarity between the activities in which mentors engage and persons who may be categorized in other ways. They suggest that there has been a rush to label all adult youth interaction as mentoring with little regard to the nature of the relationships within such programs. It is important not to fall prey to this mistake as the topic of sport coaching as mentoring is broached. Doing this will result in yet another field of research on mentoring that does not take account or add to the findings already established by research.

Therefore, in this dissertation it is suggested that a good place to start to examine coaches as youth mentors is to take a look at the nature of the relationships that coaches have with their athletes, the relationship quality and the functions provided by the relationships into question. These things have always been elements critical to distinguishing mentoring relationships from others in which adults help youth (Eby et al). In doing this the characteristics that the research has identified as consistent with mentors will be compared to coaches' reflections to determine if it holds true. Logically it makes sense that if coaches are to be considered mentors, they should exhibit some of those characteristics and fulfill both functions; instrumental and psychosocial.

One of the questions that this dissertation poses therefore is whether or not the relationship that a coach has with his/her athletes may be thought of as a mentoring relationship. The research has shown that coaches for decades have not simply been focused on the sporting performance of their athletes. Coaches, at various levels have employed strategies that both implicitly and explicitly develop the character and life skills of their charges. Research has shown that the coaches who have been more successful in terms of this holistic development of their athletes have really focused on the development of the relationship between themselves and their athletes. In fact, athletes prefer coaches who adopt the more mentor like functions of psychosocial support and development. So coaches could very likely serve as natural mentors. At the same time, sport participation can have many goals including physical development, enhanced fitness, winning and psychosocial development. Significantly, not all coaches focus on these goals equally. In fact, many feel that coaches focus so much attention on winning and success that little or no attention is placed on personal and social development

(Farrey, 2008) or as Coakley (2011) has suggested that many coaches fall prey to the myth that mere participation in sport automatically leads to personal development. Thus, not all coaches might actively adopt youth mentoring roles.

The research across all fields of mentoring and more specifically the youth mentoring literature has revealed that all mentoring relationships serve two broad functions expected to be fulfilled by mentor coaches for mentees. The first relates to the instrumental purposes which mentees may have. Mentors can help their protégés navigate new working environments in better ways and also allow them to develop new skills and build new networks and relationships. In this way mentoring is very similar to coaches who need to build the skills of their athletes and guide them in a sporting environment that is becoming increasingly competitive and precarious. The second function that mentors serve is that they give psychosocial support to their protégés. Mentors give comfort when mentees may not have been successful or when they have to accomplish challenging tasks. Again the coach's role can be viewed in similar ways. When athletes fail to meet targets or to perform well they will turn to their coach for solace to them. To what extent do coaches provide a balance of these functions and is it perceived in the same way by coaches and their athletes? Additionally, how might parents affect the relationship that the coach and athlete may have? Is the coach perceived as 'taking the place' of the parent or is his contribution welcomed?

The second element that is consistent across mentoring literature is the stress and emphasis placed on the development of the relationship between the mentor and the mentee. The quality of the relationship is a critical component of the outcomes that relationships were able to achieve. Even when personal characteristics were different,

mentors having shared interests with their mentees and spent longer time together in matches were able to mitigate that. It is for this reason that the natural mentor matches seem to be more productive matches than formal mentoring arrangements. The natural matches usually are based on persons of similar interests “seeking” one another out. Concurrently the foundation for a strong relationship has already been laid and it is important to examine this relationship in the youth sport-coaching context.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

This study was primarily designed to understand if mentoring occurs in youth sporting contexts. More specifically, the researcher was interested in investigating if coaches mentored their athletes and what activities they defined as mentoring. The investigator also assessed the ways in which coaches described mentoring and the activities they considered to be involved in the process of mentoring. The benefits and challenges coaches associated with the mentoring relationships in which they were engaged were also assessed. Finally, this study was interested in the factors that coaches felt influenced their effectiveness as mentors. This chapter outlines the methodology that was used to assess these questions. It describes the research epistemology, design, context, participants, procedures, instruments and data analysis techniques that were used. Before doing that however, phenomenography as an ontology and how it helped shape the methodological framework for the study, will be discussed. Additionally, points of departure away from phenomenography will be discussed.

What is Phenomenography?

Phenomenography as an approach, is specifically designed to ascertain and understand the ways in which persons describe and understand the world. Similar to phenomenology which is concerned with “structures of consciousness”, it accepts that there are multiple ways in which people construct their world. What sets it apart from phenomenology, is that it argues that persons interpret *reality* in different ways (Ashwood & Lucas, 2000). In the case of phenomenography therefore, an objective

reality exists (Marton, 1981). For example, the field believes that there is an objective reality, 'a real world' that is external to our individual experiences. At the same time this view holds that people will interpret that objective reality in different ways. Phenomenographic approaches aim to capture and make sense of the respective interpretations as well as the objective reality they believe exists (Reed, 2006). As Marton (2000) contends "there is only one world, a real existing world that is experienced and understood in different ways by human beings; it is both objective and subjective at the same time."

Marton and Booth (1997) write that phenomenographic researchers are interested in the varying interpretations that people impose on reality. While the field accepts that there is an objective reality, the contention is that people experience and interpret that reality in very different ways. One person's account of a phenomena, they suggest, would be different from anyone else's since the perspective from which they have experienced it is different (Richardson, 1999). The goal of phenomenographers therefore, would be to capture the "second order" view of phenomena, the world as the subject themselves are experiencing it. They are less interested in the "first order" view of an external researcher so typical in conventional research (Richardson, 1999).

Phenomenography is, as a result, interested in the "discursive experiences" of the participants since it values the perspective of reality that participants describe as a closer approximation of their experience than any description given by a 'third party'. Even further, "reality" is the sum of all the potential experiences that might be had with a given phenomenon. What is important for phenomenography therefore is to examine the

relationship between the consistencies and distinctions in descriptions in a search for objectivity.

Phenomenographic Methods. Marton (1981) who is credited with developing and strengthening the field of phenomenography emphasizes that it is an approach to research, and not a research method itself. This means that there are several methods that can be used to carry out phenomenographic work. These methods range from content analysis of various documents such as transcripts, to observation of participants within a specific context. One central method however, is the conduct of the “research interview” and its subsequent analysis (Richardson, 1999). Researchers within the phenomenographic method conduct interviews hoping to capture the views of participants about specific phenomena and then go through a process of analysis that results in categories or themes which describe the respective phenomenon.

Challenges to Phenomenographic Methods. Phenomenography’s approach allows for gathering rich descriptions in the words of the participants. These views are then synthesized into categories and themes. There have, however, been some concerns about its methodology (Ashworth & Lucas, 2000). Some have gone as far as to suggest that the methods prescribed in studies claiming to be phenomenographic have been ad hoc, thereby undermining its claims for validity (Richardson, 1999; Reed, 2006). What has been recommended therefore are adjustments to its method to provide for transparency and ultimately accountability (Richardson, 1999). These calls have recommended borrowing from the field of phenomenology where methods such as ‘bracketing’ are more clearly defined and standardized. Ashworth and Lucas (2000) have

identified suggestions that future phenomenographic researchers can take to make their research more robust. They are as follows:

1. Identify 'a priori' broad objectives of your research.
2. Participant selection should avoid presuppositions about the nature of phenomena while conducting the study.
3. The most appropriate means of obtaining an account should be identified.
4. Questions to participants should allow for reflection on the subject matter and not be based on researchers presuppositions.
5. Researcher's interviewing skills should be assessed and adjusted as necessary during the interview process.
6. Transcripts should be aimed at capturing the participants' emotions and intent.
7. Analysis should be carried out with awareness of potential (researcher biases) and be empathetic to the participant voice.
8. Analysis should avoid premature closure of categories or themes.
9. The process of analysis should be sufficiently described to allow for evaluation of attempts at bracketing and see the process through which findings emerged.

Research Ontology

This study utilized a phenomenographic approach to investigate the extent to which mentoring takes place within an urban sport context. Given the lack of research about coaches as mentors to their athletes and the number of questions the investigator had about mentoring in sport, a phenomenographic ontology was an ideal approach for this

study because it complemented the study's exploratory design (Marton, 1981). Because the researcher was unsure about how mentoring was experienced and performed in this context, he sought to discover how it was perceived by coaches within this context.

Like phenomenography, this study focused on identifying the similarities and differences about coaches' accounts of mentoring hoping to gain a clearer understanding of what it means to them. Attempts were also made to place this understanding within the context of previous knowledge and research about mentoring. Accordingly, the researcher interviewed coaches with the goal of isolating their perceptions of whether or not mentoring was occurring and their descriptions of which specific activities constituted mentoring. This was done while recognizing that as a researcher studying mentoring, he had his own conception about the nature of the mentoring. The goal was to identify clear categories or themes of meaning that accurately represented what mentoring meant to coaches and to use them to gain a clearer sense about the objective reality of mentoring.

Phenomenography is an approach to studying phenomena that holds that while an "objective" reality exists it must be understood through the lens of the individuals who are experiencing it (Husserl, 1912). This approach does not try to test hypotheses to see whether they hold up to our objective understandings of reality, but is aimed at allowing us to better understand the reality that is being observed. Accordingly, interviews were conducted with coaches to ascertain their views of the relationships they have with their athletes. Specifically, the investigator was interested in learning whether coaches described such relationships as a mentoring relationship and the reasons for such a description.

Research Design. Previous work on mentoring has investigated mentoring by asking mentors and mentees about their experiences. Participants were asked whether someone had mentored them or they have mentored someone and then the perceived outcomes of such relationships were investigated. Typically, some definition of mentoring is given and participants are asked the extent to which a relationship in their own lives mirrors or is similar to the definition (Dubois & Karcher, 2008). This study used interviews to glean coaches' views of mentoring, however, a different approach was adopted since at no point did the investigator provide coaches with a definition of mentoring. Instead the researcher simply asked the coaches if they were mentors to their athletes and then asked them to articulate what they did that allowed them to use such a label. This approach was adopted to allow coach views to be solicited free of 'contamination' of the researchers perceptions. In many cases the interview allowed the researcher to clarify coaches' definitions of mentoring. Specifically, in depth interviews were conducted with 13 coaches and they were asked to describe their experiences mentoring their athletes in an attempt to glean their perceptions of the phenomena of mentoring within the sport context. Participants were asked to describe the relationship between the coach and the athlete and enquire whether they perceived it as a mentoring relationship. In this way the investigator tried to capture the essence of the relationships between coaches and athletes; as the coaches perceived it.

Previous work on the coach-athlete relationship has challenged the field to utilize rich descriptive techniques and methods in exploring and examining variables (Poczwadowski, Barott & Jowett, 2006). This study attempted to do this by

implementing an in-depth interview design. These interviews were then transcribed, coded and analyzed using thematic analysis.

Participants

Coaches. Using a purposive sampling technique, 13 coaches were interviewed about their perceptions about their role in mentoring their athletes (see Table 1). Attempts were made to identify coaches who possessed a range of demographic characteristics to get a sense of how context may have impacted the act of mentoring and its perception by coaches. However, due to constraints of time and practicality of getting interviews completed by the end of the study the researcher accepted any interview he could get scheduled. However, one main factor considered was the fact that, though rare, not all coaches consider themselves mentors (Mac Intosh, Charlton & Gould, unpublished).

Ultimately, since the major purpose of the study was to explore the phenomena of mentoring in the sport context, the researcher asked Detroit PAL, an organization which runs recreation sporting leagues in Detroit to nominate coaches whom they believed met the following criteria:

1. The coach has been through all three levels of IMPACT Training
2. The coach coaches a team of youth ages 13 – 19 years old.
3. The coach has been known to do more than coach to win. This means that he will have a history of trying to impart life skills and the values to athletes in his team/program.
4. The coach has expressed a philosophy of mentoring athletes.

Procedure. Detroit PAL was asked to nominate 20 coaches who met the above criteria. A staff member at Detroit PAL initially reached out to these coaches and let them know that the researcher would contact them to invite them to participate in the study. These names were then forwarded to the researcher who contacted them, told them about the study's purposes and invited them to participate. Based on these discussions, 13 coaches (4 females, 9 males) agreed to participate. Where possible coaches were interviewed in person. In some cases given their schedules some interviews were conducted over the phone. In all cases consent was obtained prior to conducting interviews. Coaches were also asked if they were comfortable having the interview recorded. All agreed. The researcher used a semi structured interview guide organized around the research questions to interview coaches. Probes were used to gather further information depending on the coaches' responses.

The following table (Table 1) lists the coaches who were identified by Detroit PAL and agreed to be a part of the study. Coaches ages, sex, years experience, profession and education level are also listed. Pseudonyms are used in place of coaches' real names to protect their identities.

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of Coaches Interviewed

Name	Sex	Age	Sport	Years	Profession	Education
Coach Alicia	F	34	Volleyball	12	Sport Administrator	Post Grad
Coach Christy	F	43	Volleyball	10	Lecturer	Post Grad
Coach Danielle	F	43	Basketball	2	Administration	Undergrad
Coach Diane	F	40	Volleyball	8	Sport Administrator	Post Grad
Coach Gary	M	55	Basketball	20	Pastor	HighSchool
Coach Jada	F	41	Basketball	15	Sport Administrator	Post Grad
Coach Katherine	F	38	Soccer	12	Teacher	Post Grad
Coach Kathleen	F	70	Swimming	6	Retired Teacher	Post Grad
Coach Lisa	F	46	Volleyball	10	Homemaker	Undergrad
Coach Michael	M	61	Baseball	17	Teacher	Post Grad

Table 1 (cont'd)

Coach Richard	M	46	Basketball	15	Counselor	Undergrad
Coach Robert	M	46	Soccer	26	Teacher	Post Grad
Coach Venita	F	49	Softball	10	Police Officer	HighSchool

Detroit PAL Context. Since all the coaches in this study were sourced and identified based on their involvement in Detroit PAL, the following section will describe briefly the context of sport within Detroit and the role that Detroit PAL plays. It is hoped that this will provide a clearer understanding about which coaches were identified for this study and the reasons the researcher thought they were appropriate.

Since the recession, a number of public services in the city of Detroit, have been difficult to obtain. One of these has been youth access to sport and recreational facilities (Data Driven Detroit, 2012). This situation is exacerbated for youth of high school age since many schools have reduced the numbers of hours of physical activity that they now schedule for students (Data Driven Detroit, 2012). If schools do provide sport and physical activity, these usually come at an additional cost for parents. When finances are already scarce, parents of low economic status have few avenues to which to turn to provide safe sporting activities for their children.

One organization that has tried to fill the void left as a result of the decline in sporting activity for youth has been Detroit PAL. This organization's history dates back to 1969 when the original Detroit Police Athletic Leagues were founded to assist youth in their interaction with police officers in the community. It later merged with an organization called Think Detroit, which had character development as a primary focus. Although there have been many changes since its original founding, Detroit PAL provides an opportunity for youth to play sport and interact with responsible, caring

adults. In fact, Detroit PAL provides sporting opportunities for over 10, 000 unique youth each year in over 13 sports. Their wide reach has allowed them to establish unique partnerships with schools, Non-Governmental Organizations and National Governing Bodies to create opportunities for increasing numbers of youth to participate in one of the respective leagues they administer.

The mission of the team at Detroit PAL and their three overarching goals demonstrate the organization's commitment to do more than simply provide opportunities for youth to play sport. The goals include providing sport experiences that produce the following:

1. Young people with high character
2. Young people who lead active and healthy lifestyles
3. Young people who give back in their community

These three goals tied to the organization's mission to "build character in young people" all point to the fact that they view sport as more than just an activity in which youth participate. They view it as a critical opportunity to build the capacity of youth who engage with and interact with the 1500 plus volunteer coaches that the NGO has had trained and certified and on whom they have run background checks.

As such, mentoring is one of the themes that is emphasized as a part of their coach education series. It is the organization's expectation that their coaches will focus less on the scores of matches during league play and ensure that the character qualities of leadership, self-control, teamwork, responsibility and respect are taught. Through efforts like these the expectation is that coaches do more than teach youth the skills of the game but that they teach youth critical and valuable life skills that they can take with them for

life. Given this context, Detroit PAL coaches may be more inclined than most to view themselves as mentors and adopt strategies to mentor the athletes on their teams. If mentoring might be used as a strategy to be leveraged to assist *at risk* youth through sport, this organization is currently poised so to do.

Interviews were conducted with 13 of the trained and certified coaches who coach one of the Detroit PAL Leagues. As previously stated all these coaches had undergone all 3 levels of Detroit PAL Impact training which consists of a total of 9 hours of in-class instruction that focuses on such topics as Communication, Holistic Development of Athlete, and Mentoring. Coaches were asked whether they considered themselves to be mentors to their athletes and then coaches' philosophies of mentoring and their perceptions of themselves as mentors were discussed. Given their training it was expected that many of them would self-identify as mentors, however, what was not known was their conception of mentoring. Which of their activities did they believe constituted mentoring? Additionally, there was no way to know what benefits and challenges they felt were incorporated in the act of mentoring. This context allows the investigator to examine such questions and to juxtapose this reality with other youth contexts that claim to mentor youth.

Instrumentation

Coaches' Interview. While the researcher wanted to bracket (identify and isolate) the ideas he had about mentoring prior to interviewing coaches, he also wanted to ensure that some critical aspects of mentoring emerged from the interviews. The idea that there might be benefits and challenges involved in the exercise of mentoring functions, for instance, was one area about which he wanted to make sure he gained the coaches'

perspectives. He also wanted to focus on the ways coaches felt that mentoring could be made more effective. Accordingly, he developed an interview guide that focused on the five research questions that guided the study. By making the guide semi-structured the investigator hoped that there would be sufficient structure to place coaches' views in the context of the knowledge already known about mentoring while still providing enough latitude to gain fresh perspectives about how coaches, in this context, view the phenomena.

Semi-structured interviews that lasted between 45 to 60 minutes were conducted with each of the coaches. The researcher asked coaches to respond to basic demographic questions which captured coaches' ages, coaching experience, occupation (other than coaching) family context and the sports they coached. The first mentoring related question was; "Do you think you are a mentor to your athletes?" This was followed with the probe "Why?", or "Why not?" During this interview the researcher asked the coaches to respond to the following general overarching questions.

1. Are you a mentor to your athletes?
2. In what ways do you mentor your athletes?
3. Why do you mentor?
4. Are there benefits or challenges to mentoring?
5. Are there things that make you more effective as a mentor?

In the spirit of the phenomenological tradition and semi-structured interviewing, the researcher adjusted questions to suit the flow of the interview. Follow up questions emanated based upon the coaches' responses to these questions. Probes were inserted as each interview progressed. As the overall study progressed, the researcher adjusted

questions based on coaches' responses and based on knowledge gained from prior interviews. *(Please see the interview guide attached in Appendix A).*

Data Analysis

A two-phase process was used for data analysis in the present study. Each phase is discussed below.

Phase One. The recorded interviews conducted with all 13 coaches were transcribed verbatim by the researcher and a research assistant. These transcripts were read repeatedly to familiarize the investigator with the data. The researcher also played the recording of the interview as he read to have a clearer sense of the emotion and meaning being portrayed by the coaches. The researcher made notes about his initial thoughts about the interview and what surprised him about the interview, both as it relates to the substance of the interview and the process of conducting the interview. Additionally, initial thoughts about potential meaning units and codes were noted. In the cases where the research assistant transcribed an interview, she was asked to provide her initial thoughts to the researcher and these were discussed prior to the researcher reviewing the transcript himself.

Subsequently, a 3 to 4 page idiographic profile that summarized each coach's interview about his or her mentoring experience was created. This profile was structured around the main research questions for the study to allow for clarity. The purpose of this profile was to provide a holistic understanding of each coach's story when it came to mentoring. This allowed the investigator to provide contextual information to readers that is often lost when thematic analyses are conducted. More importantly, this step in the data analysis process allowed the researcher to have a clear sense of each coach's views

of the mentoring process and served as a check for the investigator as he sifted through codes and themes making sure the overall meaning conveyed by a coach was not lost.

Phase Two. The second phase of the data analysis process involved thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that this method is useful for researchers to sift through the data to find consistencies and patterns. They describe it as one of the core methods for qualitative researchers and point out that the method can be used across a variety of theoretical approaches including a phenomenological approach. One point that is important to note is that thematic analysis can be done both deductively or inductively. Because this study is exploratory in nature and seeks to give voice to the participants' views of mentoring in a sport context, the approach adopted was an inductive one. The approach was inductive to ensure consistency with the phenomenographic ontology that suggests that the researcher bracket (identify, and isolate) what he may know about the topic. By coding inductively, the categories and themes that emerge represent coach constructions of mentoring as opposed to how their perceptions might fit into pre-established research. In this way, the researcher hoped to provide more authenticity.

The data analysis generally followed the six phases as prescribed by Braun and Clarke (2006). In some instances, steps were taken to strengthen the process by referring to suggestions made by Ashworth and Lucas (2000). The following are the steps taken in the data analysis process:

1. The researcher and a research assistant transcribed the recorded interviews conducted with all 13 coaches verbatim. These transcripts were read repeatedly to familiarize the investigator with the data. The researcher also played the recording of the interview as he read to have

a clearer sense of the emotion and meaning being portrayed by the coaches. The researcher made notes about his initial thoughts about the interview and what surprised him about the interview, both as it relates to the substance of the interview and the process. Additionally, initial thoughts about potential meaning units and codes were noted. In the cases where the research assistant transcribed an interview they were asked to provide their initial thoughts to the researcher and these were discussed prior to the researcher reviewing the transcripts themselves.

2. The researcher and a research assistant both read all transcripts independently and discussed initial thoughts and views about the interviews. Each then independently read and coded one transcript (same for both researchers) and then met to discuss and compare what the other had identified as meaning units. This process was repeated across two more transcripts. Satisfied that there was some consistency in the way meaning units were identified between them, the researchers proceeded independently to code the rest of the transcripts. They subsequently met to discuss the codes identified and discussions were held to gain consensus. The goal was to capture the ‘true meaning’ of the phenomenon of mentoring conveyed by the coaches. All of the data that corresponded with each code were noted and recorded. This meant that the speech of various participants that conveyed similar ideas or perceptions were grouped by assigning them the same code. This approach is similar to ‘open coding’ as described by Glaser (1992), the

data are broken down in a systematic way to identify core components that exist across its breadth.

3. Codes were then examined in the search for themes. Again, this was initially done independently by the researcher and the research assistant. They then met to discuss how they thought codes might ‘hang together’ for each research question. This means that codes, which were thought to be similar, were grouped together, thereby forming broader levels of patterns within the data. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest the use of a thematic map that can visually show the pattern emerging from the data. Such a pattern shows the themes identified and also how they may link to one another. The researcher put together tables that showed the relationship of the themes with codes and also higher order themes.
4. The themes were reviewed to ensure that they could all be substantiated based on the data contained. This means that the researcher checked to ensure that the codes contained within each theme were consistent with and well supported based on the meaning units contained in each code. An attempt was also made to ensure that there could no longer be any amalgamation of themes. What this meant is that each theme captured its own distinct component of the data collected and that there is a representativeness of the thematic map of the data as a whole.
5. Phase 5 involved identifying the central component or piece of each theme and using that to give each theme a name. This name was selected in a way that accurately reflected the content of the theme. This

step gave the researcher an opportunity to again refine the themes and the codes contained within them. The goal in this step was to ensure that an initial read of the tables was clear to the reader and made logical sense.

6. The final step involved writing up the findings once the table of themes was finalized.

Steps to Ensure Rigor and Trustworthiness

In developing steps to ensure trustworthiness and rigor for this study, the researcher incorporated some of the suggestions and steps identified by Ashworth and Lucas (2000). The following section describes these steps.

Bracketing. Bracketing is defined as the “deliberate putting aside one’s own belief about the phenomenon under investigation or what one already knows about the subject prior to investigation” (Carpenter, 2007). It was one of the key steps identified by Ashwood and Lucas (2000) to improve the strength of phenomenographic research.

Boon, Johnston and Webber (2005) support this view,

“Despite the obvious difficulty in setting aside their view of the world, the interviewer must “bracket” his or her own understanding of the phenomenon in order to successfully record that of the interviewee.” p. 210

They assert that because the goal of this field of research is to capture the perceptions of the participants, there must be clear steps taken to differentiate the views of the participants from those of the researcher. Doing this allows the reader to judge more clearly the strength of the research. Van Manen (1990) describes bracketing as the isolation of what is known about a phenomenon in order to better allow us to view and understand it from the perspective of the subjective experience. Researchers needs to

“bracket” what they know about mentoring so that they can come to a better understanding of the ways in which coaches view it (intuiting). Intuiting involves finding meaning based upon participants’ descriptions of their “lived experience” (Van Manen, 1990).

In this study bracketing was achieved by asking very general questions of coaches; questions that did not make mention of the research already established on youth mentoring. An example of this is that concepts such as “instrumental benefits” and “psychosocial benefits” which are already well established in the Youth mentoring literature were not discussed with coaches. Additionally, the constructs of “natural mentoring” and “ formal mentoring” while well-established in the mentoring literature which held tremendous significance for this study were also not discussed. Overall the discussions held with coaches were done in a way to allow them to reflect on their experience of mentoring, on their own terms. There were two reasons for this. Firstly, the researcher did not want to inadvertently impose his views or ideas about mentoring onto the coaches’ accounts (bracketing). Secondly, the researcher also wanted to meet Asworth and Lucas (2000) suggestion of providing the coaches with an opportunity to reflect on their experience while mentoring in the hopes that it strengthened their description of the phenomenon.

Finally, bracketing was also woven into to the data analysis process. Prior to coding each interview the researcher read each transcript, and guided by his field notes made general statements about his initial thoughts about each interview and what surprised him about the interview. These were referred to prior to the identification of codes. In this way, the researcher’s thoughts about mentoring could be used to place the

interview into context. More importantly, the researcher could distinguish his views about the concept from those that emerged from coaches.

Triangulation. Triangulation has been described as a useful tool in the quest to understanding our world (Guion, Diehl & McDonald, 2011; Olsen, 2004). Researchers have defined triangulation (Methods Triangulation) as the combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods and methodologies to understand our research question (Denzin, 1978). Even more relevant to this study, triangulation also refers to the analysis of data from a variety of data sources (Data Triangulation) that can add texture and richness to the phenomena being investigated by facilitating a broader understanding (Diehl & McDonald, 2011; Patton, 2008; Guion). To further enhance the trustworthiness of the data the researcher enlisted the assistance of a colleague who is familiar with coaching and mentoring who read the transcripts independently to identify codes. This step provided a check on the researcher's interpretations because this colleague can interpellate the basis for the researcher's initial codes and themes. This process has been described by Creswell and Miller (2008) as 'peer review'.

Training of Research Assistants. In this study the researcher had research assistants assist him with the coding and analysis of the interviews. Two research assistants, one graduate student and an undergraduate were trained by the researcher who described the nature and purpose of the study to them and had them read past studies that have employed phenomenographic methods. They were also given articles that described thematic analysis to read. The researcher had them assist in the transcription of interviews and code independently. The researcher then reviewed their coding and compared it to his own.

Given their schedules, the graduate student eventually became the main research assistant and all of the coding and analysis was done independently by her and then compared to the researcher's. They sought to arrive at consensus for each code and to develop themes and higher order themes.

Journal of Interviews. The researcher also kept a journal of notes about his thoughts regarding interviews and initial elements he thought the interviews may have covered. These notes also included ideas about what might be changed in future interviews. The researcher used these notes when he conducted the first phase of data analysis and compiled his holistic impressions of coaches in their idiographic profiles. These allowed him to juxtapose various contexts and 'bracket' his initial thoughts about coaches from the process of analysis.

Member Checking. The investigator contacted coaches whom he had interviewed to clarify aspects of their interviews where necessary. In this way he ensured that he best represented their views about particular matters and did not overlay his own interpretations. In instances where coaches were willing, he also sent them their idiographic profiles and sought feedback about changes or recommendations. None of the coaches who responded (7) requested changes to what had been documented.

Reflexive Statement. Additionally, as described, the analysis of the data is an iterative which involves a great deal of interpretation. The goal of this study was to capture meaning from the participants' and not the researcher's point of view and, as such, it is important that the researcher recognizes his biases and limitations in conducting this study. Accordingly the researcher used a technique described by Creswell and Miller (2008); reflexive analysis. The researcher made a clear statement about what

skills he brings to the study, as well as his biases and goals. By doing this in advance, the researcher, and others, can hold up the researcher's analysis to scrutiny to ensure that it is consistent and 'objective'.

The researcher has had prior experience conducting interviews with individuals of varying ages across contexts. He has also been formally trained in qualitative methodologies through coursework taken during his M.Sc. and Ph.D. programs. During the course of his dissertation he also read numerous texts and consulted with professors who are experts in qualitative methodologies. He has also worked with Detroit PAL for the past 3 years helping them evaluate the outcomes for youth in their leagues. Finally, he has been working with coaches and athletic teams over the past 8 years. This experience, it is felt, gave the researcher an advantage to conduct the interviews required for the study. These experiences also make the researcher cautious about the biases he may be taking into the study; his own beliefs about mentoring, coaching and youth development, which may impact the way the responses of participants are viewed and interpreted. The researcher recognizes that he, like many, believes sport to be a context in which life skills can be developed and nurtured in youth. While this has been established empirically (Gould & Carson, 2008; Danish, Petipas & Hale, 1993) the researcher acknowledges that not all sporting contexts present the characteristics necessary for positive youth development (Larson, Eccles & Gootman, 2005). Accordingly, the researcher has to be mindful of this and take steps to critically examine the context.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The primary goal of this study was to discover whether mentoring, as perceived by the coaches who work with athletes within an urban athletic context, occurs within that context. It sought to investigate whether the work that coaches undertake and the ways in which they go about doing it involves mentoring. Additionally, the study was interested in determining what coaches believed were the benefits and challenges associated with mentoring and what they believed made them more effective as mentors.

The results of this study are organized around the five research purposes. These included:

1. Do coaches consider themselves mentors to their athletes and what in their minds is the nature of mentoring?
2. Why are coaches involved in mentoring? What causes them to do it?
3. What benefits do coaches believe are derived through mentoring in the sport context? For athletes or themselves?
4. What are the challenges that coaches believe they face when mentoring in the sport context?
5. What factors are perceived to influence mentoring effectiveness within the sport context (e.g. duration, quality of relationships)?

In the case of each of the five research questions a table outlining the themes and higher order themes that were identified, will be presented. Subsequently, given the extensive nature of the data, the themes which were most prevalent across coaches or those that demonstrated a unique perspective will be highlighted and discussed in greater detail.

The Presence of Mentoring within an Urban Athletic Context

A main purpose of this study was to ascertain whether mentoring as perceived by the coaches who work with athletes within an urban athletic context occurs within that context. Specifically, the goal was to determine whether the coaches attached to Detroit PAL viewed themselves as mentors and then to glean the extent to which mentoring actually took place and whether it reflected the ways described by the coaches. This purpose was examined by analyzing the idiographic profiles that were written to summarize each coach's interview. These profiles are contained in Appendix B and are organized around a series of topics that relate to the major purposes of the study and/or provide important contextual information. An inspection of these profiles revealed that all 13 coaches view themselves as mentors. In the main coaches described mentoring as being more than a coach. Mentoring involved coaching plus other roles and functions. The following quotations from several coaches express the reasons they considered themselves mentors. In response to the question, "Why do you consider yourself a mentor?" Coach Jada says,

"Cuz I think for me, it goes beyond basketball. I mean, and part of the reason that I decided to coach was because of what sports did for me in my life. You know, you learn about teamwork. You learn about, you know, work ethic. You learn about integrity. There's so many things, life skills that you learn in playing sports. And so, you know, a lot of the reason that I am where I am as far as in my career is because of what I learned through sports. And so for me to be able to give that back to kids, kids in my community, kids in the, you know, community of Detroit, you know, I just think that's, that's an awesome thing. So that's why I love, you know, coaching. Why I got into it in the first place."

In response to the same question, Coach Michael describes his role as follows,

"You try and impart as many ethical things as you can towards the kids. You try and impart a sense of sportsmanship and a sense of dedication to the sport while they're [a]long, you know, for as long as they play, for the few months that you

have them. You try and teach them the importance of teamwork. You try and teach them the importance of practicing and working hard and working as, like I said, as a team for your players. You let your children; your students know that you are there for them if they have something to talk about. If they want to talk to you. As difficult as it is, sometimes mentoring means that you are their surrogate father for the three months that you have them or four months that you have them. It's the free giving of your time, you know, to the children.

The Nature of Mentoring

Having established that these coaches viewed themselves as mentors it was important to specifically consider what mentoring meant to the coaches or what the nature of mentoring was in their eyes. To achieve this purpose all the coaches were asked to describe what they consider mentoring to be and to explain what, specifically, makes them a mentor. Responses from individual coaches were collapsed by question area and patterns across all participants were identified via thematic analysis.

The results of this process provided an interesting picture of mentoring in the sporting context and revealed that coaches viewed mentoring as involving five broad higher order themes: Roles; Functions; Skills; Opinions and, Mindsets (See Table 2). Additionally, coaches identified some additional broad descriptions of mentoring which did not fit into the other higher order themes but seemed to more generally elucidate their opinions of the activity. These higher order themes are also depicted in Table 2 and, where appropriate, the themes and codes within each higher order theme are identified.

Table 2
Nature of Mentoring

Higher Order Themes	Themes	Codes
Functions	I am available	Be approachable Be there for youth Be open to youth Reach out to youth

Table 2 (cont'd)

I build self esteem	Build youth up Don't put youth down Motivate youth
I build relationships	Build relationships with mentee Build relationships with parents Build relationships with other adults
I check in	Ask how youth are doing Call home I am persistent checking in I listen to their conversations Know what's going on in their lives
I provide resources	Be a resource Collect resources Connect youth with other adults Pay for things
I talk	I talk about race I talk about birth control I talk about everything I talk about grades I talk about life I talk about partner violence I talk about relationships I talk about sex / protection I talk about suicide I talk about things parents don't I talk about what's going on I talk about college
Preparing youth for next level (life)	Challenge youth Give youth leadership roles
Provide structure	Hold accountable Structure program
Spend time with youth	Give time to youth Spend time off court Spend time at practice

Table 2 (cont'd)

Mindsets	Be Patient	Use words instead of lashing out Don't engage in drama Don't overreact
	Care about youth	Accept kids as they are Emotional investment in kids Enjoy kids Accept kids as they are I make youth feel special Love kids
	Help kids	Deal with runaways Help how I can Help students with immigration challenges Help youth in some way Help youth meet goals Want to help
	Hope it works	Keep pounding Look for tipoffs Remember mentoring is possible Stay optimistic Success is difficult to measure Success is person specific Success is relative Success is youth identifying it Trust you make a difference
	I work hard	Mentor round the clock
	I am invested in youth	Interested in holistic development Think about athletes as people
	It's beyond coaching	Levels of mentoring
	Make a difference	I see a need Seize opportunities to make a difference
	Mentoring comes naturally	It's natural
	Mentoring is part of Coaching	It's hand in hand
		Hard not to mentor
		Mentoring helps coaching

Table 2 (cont'd)

	Nothing Shocks me	Nothing shocks me
	See good in youth	Realize youth value Try to mitigate context
Skills	Adjust style to child	Advice is tailored Age affects mentoring style Awareness of context Change standards to suit child Context affects mentoring Fill void for youth I mentor boys and girls I mentor everyone differently I treat all youth the same Mentor everybody Recognize differences in youth What you focus on Where you coach affects the youth you work with
	Balance sport and mentoring	Coach positively Not intentional Sacrifice winning Sacrifice practice time to deal with youth
	Don't get emotionally attached	Establish boundaries Give enough
	Empathize	Empathy
	Listen	I am an ear Listening
	Maintain relationships	Maintain relationships
	Make accommodations	Knowing how to communicate with youth Make lessons relatable Be flexible
	Recognize effort	Make sacrifices for youth Make work important Reward youth sporadically
	Recognize when things aren't right	Recognize wrong attitudes

Table 2 (cont'd)

	Reflection	I think about what I do
	Rule bending	Breaking rules Compromise Forge papers Youth spend night at my house
	Target specific youth	Take youth under your wing
Roles	A trusted advisor	Being honest Help youth with goals Allow them to make decisions Give advice Guide them Present different perspectives
	I am a teacher	Teach skills Teach values Teaching strategies
	Surrogate parent	I'm like a parent Keep them together Mentoring fills voids(family) See children as your own Stand in for parent We are a family
Opinion of mentoring	Anyone can mentor	Parents are mentors Teachers are mentors
	Cannot do it on your own	Be open to learn Coaches need mentors Having support from others helps Mentors need training
	Coaches & athletes benefit	Coaches & athletes benefit
	Different types of mentoring	Formal mentoring Informal mentoring
	Not all coaches mentor	Coach for paycheck Coach to win Don't cross line

Roles that coaches play. Roles that coaches felt they played as mentors to their athletes formed the first higher order theme making up the nature of mentoring category. themes included: teacher; a trusted advisor; and, surrogate parent.

Teacher. One important role coaches felt they played and the one identified by all 13 of the coaches interviewed was that of a teacher. Coaches described themselves as persons who teach their athletes a variety of things. These roles varied immensely depending on the contexts within which coaches found themselves but coalesced into three sub themes. Coaches taught skills which involved athletic or sport related skills like sportsmanship and spiking the ball or life skills such as loyalty, discipline and dedication. Sometimes there was overlap between some of the skill categories as they could be applied to their sport or to life in general. Coach Michael sums it up well when he says,

“Coaching may just be about winning the games and teaching them the fundamentals of the game, where the mentoring you’re also looking at life skills. And you’re pulling it together so when they walk out, they’re not just focused on the game or the sport. They’re building that sport plus their life skills together.”

Coaches also taught values such as responsibility, patience and how to be good people. While there were some opportunities to teach the sport and life skills simultaneously, some coaches showed a desire to impart specific values to their athletes regardless of their athletic ability and their athletic skills. They felt that these values would be most important in their future. Coach Robert, for instance, demonstrates this in stating,

“I think if I try to teach anything, I don’t even verbalize them but I think just the importance of being a good person. You know, I mean, everybody has a role in society. Some people are leaders, some people are scholars, and some people are workers. Everybody has natural talents and everybody’s position in society is valuable. So with that in mind, how do you be a good person?”

A trusted advisor. Another significant role that coaches identified as fulfilling as a mentor was that of a trusted advisor. There were ten coaches described themselves as someone to whom the kids could come to discuss issues or matters of importance to them. These things ranged from academic advice to things that were more personal like advice on boyfriends and domestic affairs. A key aspect in what the coaches described however was the openness youth felt to approach them and share. Coaches also simultaneously described mentoring as their responsibility to provide youth with advice. Coach Alicia in discussing her relationship with her volleyball players said it well.

“I take on, I feel like I take on the role of not a parent, per se, but another responsible adult that they can come to for advice, that they look up to, I guess, and don’t want to disappoint. So I do have that relationship, with some of my girls, where they don’t want to disappoint me because of the relationship we have and that being, they rely on feedback from me.”

Surrogate parent. Finally, nine coaches described themselves as a surrogate parent to the youth that they mentored, the third theme. They felt that mentoring was being able to “step in” as a parent and provide for youth the things that a parent might. In this regard for many, mentoring had no limit. It was about doing whatever was necessary for the child at the point in time. Some coaches described providing things that were not provided by parents including structure and direction. Coach Robert says,

“Mentoring is sort of basically, it comes from as young, you know, as a dad, you know, and these are the kids and basically, I have to show them some things they may not be getting at home. You know, as if they’re my own kids, you know, and mentoring to me is basically taking the kids up under your wing and showing them the right path, showing them guidelines, showing them boundaries that they may not be getting at home.”

Functions Coaches fulfill. All coaches discussed fulfilling many functions in the lives of their athletes and their specific comments coalesced into the higher order theme

labeled functions coaches fill. As mentors they felt that these functions made them more than just coaches but someone more central in their athletes' personal development. These functions highlight the diverse things that coaches provide for their athletes and ranged from simply "being available" and "spending time" with their athletes to "checking in" on youth and "providing structure". While all of the functions (themes) were identified and discussed by at least six of the coaches (see Table 2) there were five functions that more than 10 coaches registered. These five functions generally seemed to be more central to the role that the mentor/coach plays. These functions were: I am available; I build relationships; I provide resources; I provide structure; and I spend time with youth. These five will be discussed in greater detail.

I am available. A big part of mentoring for the coaches was being available to their athletes for whatever the youth might require. Coaches (11) described mentoring as moving beyond the traditional role of a coach and being a person with whom youth felt they could spend more time and to whom they can reach out for advice and to talk. For some coaches that meant being a physical presence with which kids could identify and on which they could depend. Coach Gary, who also worked as a security guard at his school exemplifies this in his following statement;

"so you have to, just like here at the school, what I do every morning, I'm on a door. I'm on my door. Uh huh. And I let the kids in the door. I stand outside on the door and as they come in, I say good morning to everyone. They don't even answer back, they don't answer back but you know what? It doesn't stop me from saying it. I continue to say good morning over and over, every day, as long as there's a school day, they come through that door and before you know it, they're speaking back because they get to find out that I'm there all the time."

However, "Being available" also meant much more to coaches. Ultimately, the theme was broken down into four codes that included being approachable, open, being

there for youth, and reaching out. These codes sum up how coaches viewed being available. Some coaches described that they needed to “*be approachable*”; athletes needed to feel that their coaches would be open to discussing more than just sport. One coach (Alicia) sums it up well when she says,

“Definitely. Being approachable. So if the kids are, you know, scared of you or don’t feel comfortable coming to you, then you really can’t, it makes it difficult to have a mentor relationship. So definitely being approachable.”

Other coaches felt that being available meant allowing youth to see you in a different light and that as a coach they would “*be open*” to youth. These coaches typically let youth into their lives so that athletes knew more about them and saw and understood how they lived. This approach is really summed up well by Coach Christy in describing how she has intentionally made herself available to her girls. She says,

“So when I bring the girls to my house, and I don’t do it as much as I used to. I used to do sleepovers at my house and part of that was intentional, they come see how coach lives. So a lot of the girls think I’m rich...I’m far from it, right, but then I get to have that conversation of here’s why I’m able to live like this. So I went to school. I got a degree. I got a good job. You know, dadada. I have a husband who also has a good job. You know I am able to have those conversations and that’s (pause) those are intentional things that I do beyond just, all right, practice is from 4 to 6 and, you know, make sure you keep your grades up.”

Coaches described being around their kids consistently so that the youth began to view them as a central part of their lives. Additionally, if youth did approach them with something they addressed it making sure that youth felt supported. Being available for these coaches meant, “*Being there for youth*” regardless of the reason or the time. As one coach (Alicia) puts it, in describing why she is a mentor,

“The first thing I’m going to say, the first thing that comes to mind is my availability. I make myself available to my girls and that’s before practice, during practice, after practice”

Finally, some coaches felt that they were able to identify youth who might need someone because of his or her personal situation. In this situation they felt that they needed to reach out to youth and let them know that someone was available. By reaching out the coach was able to learn more about the situation but also could become someone who could help the child deal with the situation. As one coach simply said, *“if you see that there is a problem there, you go to that person and you open up more.”*

I build relationships. Most coaches (9) spoke about building relationships not just with their athletes but also with parents and other adults in youth’s lives as being an important part of what they did as mentors. This theme was therefore made up of three codes; Building relationship with Athletes; Building relationships with Parents; and, Building relationships with other adults. Most coaches also described being able to build relationships as a central part of the mentoring process and what they felt they did. Since mentoring is a relationship between a mentor and a mentee, it makes sense that coaches would view relationship building as an integral part of what they did.

Building relationships with mentees. For many of the coaches these relationships were athlete-focused, meaning, that a big part of what they did as coaches involved building relationships with their athletes and forging a deeper bond. Many described being able to have a better relationship with their athletes as critical to the role that they were eventually able to play in these athletes’ lives. Some coaches described this relationship as fundamental to everything else that they did and felt that once such a relationship was forged that it made mentoring much easier to do. One such coach is Coach Robert who said,

“Biggest thing, you have to show the kids that you care. Number one thing. Throw everything out the window. I care about you. This is what we’re gonna do. Kids receive that, when they receive that you care, you got them. You got them. No matter what. You got them. Regardless of what you did in the past, regardless to what job you work, regardless to whether you’re the third house off the, you live in the third house or around the block or whatever, I care about you. I got your back. Number one thing.”

Other coaches who described building relationships with their athletes echoed this view and spoke about being able to show athletes a side of you to which youth could relate. Regardless of the task you perform as a coach, athletes needed to be reassured of their place in your esteem. Building the relationship moves you beyond the role of just a coach into a place where there can be greater sharing. Coach Venita describes,

“Yes. It helps tremendously because it establishes a bond and trust. The kids, they don’t look at you as, they don’t look at me as, oh, and this is a police officer. They don’t look at me half the time as just the coach. They look at me as a friend, too.”

Building relationships with parents. About half (6) of the coaches interviewed said that mentoring youth also involved building relationships with their parents. As a coach and a mentor they said they tried to involve parents in what they did so that the parents had the relevant information. These relationships also helped the coach understand some of the context that might exist at home and provided coaches with an opportunity to impact their athletes on a deeper level since the parents understand that they are forming a partnership. Coach Lisa’s statement describes such an approach,

“I’ll always tell them [parents], if you don’t get a call from me, you’ll get a text message. And then I find a lot of times I’ll say I’m sorry I send so many texts. Oh, no, that’s okay. That’s good. I’m glad you’re trying to reach out. So I find that if I interact with the parents more, they learn about me, I tell them about me and if it’s something that their daughter is going through, that I know one of mine has, I share. I share my experience so that they know, oh, you know, it’s not just me. I’m not alone in this.”

Provide Resources. Another function fulfilled by most of the coaches (11) was that of providing resources. The types of resources provided varied by context but coaches saw themselves as someone to whom the athletes could turn to provide them with tangible things such as food, transportation and money if necessary. Some of the cases outlined by coaches highlighted the drastic need for resources by some of their athletes. Take the case described by Coach Katherine,

“one of our students, his father was captured by immigration, I guess, and was sent to Mexico and so I helped a lot with that family and with going and, you know, helping with the court proceedings, translating, helping find money for rent. Helping with food. Helping the boy buy his books for college. So and just trying to be supportive of the family. You know, is there something you can do?”

In other contexts, the situations may not be as dire, but coaches identified a need to provide things which they felt the athlete may not be able to access on their own. This can be seen when Coach Robert says,

“I’ve had 20 kids, 20 football players sleep in my basement just to ensure that they’ll make it to the game the next day with proper nutrition, all of their equipment. They got enough sleep that night. You know what I’m saying?”

Provide Structure. Another function that most coaches (11) agreed that they provide for their athletes is that of providing structure. While coaches described doing this in many different ways, all ultimately talked about holding their athletes accountable and teaching them that there were repercussions for their actions. Coaches felt that being a coach led them to instill a sense of discipline in their athletes and that this discipline made them better players. They also felt though that such lessons taught within the sport context could resonate and help athletes develop holistically. Coach Jada who coaches basketball at the high school level shares her perspective on not letting two of her starters play.

“And the lesson there is about, I mean, yeah, these are two of my, this is the biggest game of the season, two of my starters. Of course, I don’t want to start two people that I shouldn’t be starting. So, and I know a lot of coaches that wouldn’t have. You know, but this is not about basketball. This is about them understanding when you make a decision, there’s always consequences to the decisions that you make. And you have to live with those. Live with those consequences. And so that was the message there. That was, it wasn’t a basketball message. It was a message of, hey, as an adult when you make decisions, there’s consequences to the decisions.”

Spend time with youth. Finally, most coaches (10) when asked to describe what made them a mentor said that they spent time with youth. These coaches described contexts in which they spent considerable time with their athletes, especially during the season. Some coaches emphasized that the nature of their sport forced them to see the girls and interact with them more, which ultimately led to more opportunities to mentor. One such coach was Coach Alicia who says,

“... I think the biggest one is time. So I see these girls during the season every day for three hours at least. More on game days. Whereas probably most mentors are once a week. At least from a face-to-face perspective. They’re probably not doing it every single day. And so that I think is the biggest difference is the amount of time that coaches spend with their athletes.”

The interactions with athletes also were not limited to practice time or only spent on the court. Coaches spoke about taking athletes to a variety of events, inviting them to their homes and even taking calls at night and during the off season to help youth with challenges they may have had. Coach Richard described his need to spend extra time with one of his players because of a personal situation,

“I just had a couple of years ago, or last year, a child who was having some very difficult times with his mother. They would lock horns and argue and fight with each other. You know, I found myself maybe having to go over to his house and maybe take him to lunch or take him to a movie and, you know, spend some time just maybe sitting on Belle Isle, talking to him.”

In some instances these relationships and these functions continued after the athlete graduated from the team.

Skills coaches possess/execute. In addition to performing particular functions coaches described mentoring as the use of particular skills. These skills, they explained, were part of the process of mentoring and were necessary as they mentored their athletes. They mentioned these skills as they described the process of mentoring and so these were not highlighted as skills that made them more effective but rather aspects of the mentoring process that needed to be fulfilled. Overall coaches highlighted 13 skills that they felt they used in the process of mentoring their athletes. These skills were, to a large extent, context and coach specific. While there was some overlap, these skills varied across contexts. Listening, Empathizing and Being able to Maintain Relationships were some of the more frequent skills that coaches identified as things they did while mentoring. Most of these skills were mentioned or discussed by less than half (5) of coaches.

Bending the rules. One skill that was highlighted was that of Bending the rules which was discussed by five coaches. This skill is interesting because coaches discussed having to bend the rules to be able to create the environments they wanted for their youth. Several coaches for instance discussed athletes spending the night at their houses to allow them to experience better nutrition or contexts. There was the feeling by some coaches that mentoring involved showing kids a type of life different from that they received at home. Coach Christy's view on birth control is a good example,

“Cuz I can't take them to get birth control. Right? I offer. I do. I tell them, if you can't talk to mom, come, I'll take you to the doctor. Right? I'll have that fight with your mother about it...”

Other coaches talked about manipulating the systems in their schools or leagues to allow their athletes to participate. This quote from Coach Katherine highlighted an attempt to bypass administrative things that could affect her players' participation,

"I remember one time, one of our students had like the wrong, you know how they have to register with the birth certificate or whatever and he had the wrong paper and didn't have a birth certificate and didn't have, so we had to frankly forge some shit for him, whatever. I'm not proud of everything we do but that's a minor thing."

Adjusting your style. The one skill that stood out across most coaches (11) was that of Adjusting their style to the child being mentored. Coaches talked about being aware of the child with whom you are dealing as you begin to mentor them. Mentoring therefore is not a uniform thing across youth and contexts but something that varies based on the child involved. Coaches felt that they were able to mentor because of their ability to adjust based on who their athletes were. It is their ability to relate to their athletes and make topics relatable that made them mentors. Adults and other coaches who could not do that would not be able to become mentors themselves. The quotes from several coaches highlight this view. Coach Jada says,

"So you know, first of all, you've gotta be relat[able] to kids anyway. If you're dealing with kids, you've gotta be relat[able] with kids. So I'm not gonna speak to you and we're having grown folk conversation versus how I would speak to a kid. So a lot of times, like during drills, you know, I'll say something like, so for example, so when we're dribbling, we're doing some ball handling drills, whatever, and I talk about how, you know, controlling the ball and I'll say you wanta take care of the ball. You wanta take care of the ball like it's your boyfriend, okay. And I'll say so who's your ball and it's whoever they have a crush on. So you know, I'll hear, you know, might be some One Direction, Justin Bieber, whatever and I'll say those, I'll say those names. But when I was at Southeastern and Henry Ford, I'm like, who's your ball? And you know, the names would be different. So is your ball Waka Flocka? Who's your ball? You know, Wiz Khalifa? So and it seems something, it's very minute, it's very little but it's real because if I say, if I'm in that environment and I say, and I name a One Direction guy, they're gonna look at me like, coach, you don't, you don't get it."

You know, and that's the last thing you want because then when they look at you as if you don't get it, then they don't feel like you can relate to them."

In the case of Coach Jada, being able to adjust one's style was based on socioeconomic and sociocultural things. Adjustments also needed to be made based on the age of the youth or even their specific situations. Coach Katherine conveys this idea as she chats about her relationship with one of her athletes,

"But with him, you know, I've opened up about some things that I probably wouldn't talk to any of the other players about and I've talked about some issues with depression or with, you know, like suicidal things in the past. And I would talk to him about it because it specifically applies to his situation and I think that's maybe something that he needs to hear or would benefit him to hear. But for example, I don't think I've talked to any of the other players about that because it doesn't really pertain to their lives."

Mindsets of Coaches. In describing mentoring and how they go about doing that with their athletes, coaches identified a number of qualities that are involved in the process. These qualities helped guide and shape the way they approach mentoring with their athletes and helped to transform them into more than just a coach. In many ways coaches spoke about these things as defining qualities in their approach to mentoring. In total coaches identified 12 mindsets that go into the process of mentoring. While the qualities are varied, those identified by more than six coaches will be discussed. These qualities included: Being Patient; Caring about youth; Wanting to help youth; Hoping that mentoring works; Viewing mentoring as more than coaching; Viewing mentoring as natural; and, Viewing mentoring as a part of coaching.

Being patient. Several coaches (7) talked about how patience was a quality they needed to have as they went about the task of mentoring athletes. They had to exhibit patience because of how different mentoring is now versus when they were youth and being mentored. In the past coaches could physically punish youth or even yell at them.

Coaches expressed that changes in laws and how informed today's youth are made it more challenging, forcing coaches to be creative. Today's coaches had to be able to think through how they reacted to the challenges they might face and, as such, being a mentor required patience to engage in the practice.

Caring about Youth. In addition to patience, a number of coaches (7) talked about mentoring directly involving caring for kids and caring about their outcomes. This caring led them to want to help youth and also made them willing to do whatever it takes to help youth. Mentoring described in this way is a state of readiness/preparedness to help youth with any challenge they might face.

“Whatever, whatever it takes to, because you have to be able to nurture the whole child because they have different areas. A coach is more or less, it's the father figure that they never had...Uh huh, and then I have kids that say, well, coach, I don't have no shoes. I don't have, so we'll go out and buy the kid shoes. And that comes out of our own pocket. They don't have their uniforms. We get them uniforms. Whatever it takes, to nurture the child, that's what we have to do.”

Hoping that mentoring works to positively influence youth. Coaches talked about a number of difficult situations in which they found their athletes. One quality that was part of their description of mentoring was a belief that mentoring would improve the situation and outcomes of their athletes. Mentoring was therefore characterized by a faith in the activity itself. It makes sense that coaches would be involved in an activity that they believed that would reap the dividends they expect. Coach Christy sums this idea up well,

“So being an optimist is probably another skill [quality] that mentors should have. Particularly, again, because of the environment that these kids are in. It may not be the same for people in different situations but to always see the good in a child because there's so many people that are ready to write them all off. They're just, we hope you graduate, right? We hope you finish high school. We

hope you turn out to be something. They get so many negative messages. So to stay optimistic. It's hard but it's not impossible."

Viewing mentoring as natural. One interesting finding suggested by some coaches (6) is that mentoring is something that comes naturally to someone. These coaches believed that mentoring was not something that could necessarily be trained. One had the disposition to do it or one did not. Being a coach, then, is not what made them mentors; rather they could identify mentoring in many different aspects of their life. They would be mentors regardless of what they did. Since they are coaches, it makes sense to them that they would mentor their athletes. They view mentoring as something effortless and automatic, a natural extension of themselves. Coach Jada said it well,

"You know, honestly, I feel like it's something you have or you don't have. I don't feel like it's learned behavior. I've always, for me, there's always been something in me that likes to help others out. So even like when I was going to school, like I initially went to school to be a teacher. I was going for secondary education. I switched my major several times but pretty much all of them were related to helping others out because I went from secondary education to social work to criminal justice...To TV film which is not about helping other people out. But it all came full circle with me getting into coaching and I think, you know, my broadcasting background is just something that I happen to be good at. You know, really good at. But this is something that I'm passionate about. This is, you know, a passion versus a talent. Even though I think, I believe I have the talent in this as well."

Viewing mentoring as part of coaching. The final quality that many coaches (9) shared was the fact that they viewed mentoring as an extension of coaching. Related to the idea that mentoring was an extension of themselves, many coaches saw coaching and mentoring as going hand in hand. So that while mentoring was more than coaching, while it was more involved, the coaching context was a context in which mentoring was a natural fit. It was a process or activity that enhanced the sport or the experiences that both the athletes and the coach had within the sport. Coach Gary says,

“Because coaching is, because a coach is more or less, becomes, because a coach spends a lot of time with kids and we begin to start teaching them things that, first of all, kids come, first of all, they come to a sport because they want to play the sport and then we begin to train them and teach them and then in training and teaching them, you also teaching them how do what’s right.”

Opinions of mentoring. The final higher order theme for the research question that focused on the nature of mentoring featured coaches’ general descriptions about mentoring and the process of mentoring. While the other higher order themes were comprised of accounts of what coaches did and how they approached the process of mentoring, this category was made up mainly of their descriptions and opinions of the act of mentoring. These were general descriptions unrelated to their account of how they mentored their athletes. The investigator felt it was important to include these as critical parts of the way that mentoring might be perceived in this context, but still important to distinguish these perceptions from the acts, which they considered to be mentoring, that coaches actually performed. While coaches viewed themselves as mentors and they were being asked about their experiences mentoring; they were simultaneously able to describe the act of mentoring from an objective standpoint. The two most interesting themes here were the fact that coaches believed that anyone could mentor and that mentoring could not be done on one’s own.

Anyone can mentor. In this theme coaches conveyed the idea that mentoring could be done by others and in other contexts. It was not unique to the context of sport even though sport might have its advantages. This is captured nicely in Coach Diane’s words when she says,

“I have worked at the Boys and Girls Club. I’ve only done it in the summer so it’s a limited amount of time but when I think about my co-workers that work with them year around, I’m pretty sure they do the same level of mentoring. It’s just not in a sport context.”

Cannot do it on your own. The second category of interest was that mentoring could not be done on one's own. Coaches acknowledged that while they worked hard and enjoyed the process, assistance was sometimes necessary. Coach Michael sums up this idea very clearly when he says,

"I would say it gets a little difficult sometimes when you are alone coaching but I have been very fortunate, one, I've had a person who's coached with me for the last, oh, god, 15 years maybe. He's been consistent. And over these last two years, my son, my oldest son, he has, I used to coach him so he has come back to help me coach a team. And then there was this young man who moved to Detroit and he went to PAL and said, hey, you know, I just wanta become involved. I just wanta help. So they sent him to me and he's been helping me coach so I've been fortunate for the last few years to have, you know, three other people help me coach which, you know, makes the task infinitely easier, when you can spread out some of the responsibilities."

Why Coaches Mentor

Another focus of this study was to investigate why coaches got involved in mentoring their athletes. Many coaches were coaching on a voluntary basis, meaning that they held other jobs. This meant that mentoring was an additional activity that they were taking on with their athletes; one, as they described, that involved building relationships and developing skills. Of interest is the reason they would, as coaches, take on this additional task. Some of the qualities discussed in their descriptions of mentoring, such as caring for kids and viewing mentoring as an extension of coaching suggest some of the reasons that coaches would be engaged in mentoring practices. Still the investigator thoroughly wanted to understand what motivated coaches to mentor so questions specifically focused on this question were asked. The analysis from the coach interviews points to six reasons why coaches got involved in mentoring (See Table 3). They are: to give back; the coach sees a need; the coach believes it works; it's a part of the coach's philosophy; coaches believed that sport was a good context within which to mentor; and,

youth sought out mentoring relationship with adults. The four themes which were most prevalent across all the coaches will be discussed in detail below.

Table 3
Why Coaches Mentor

Theme	Code
Give back	Coaches cared about me
	I identify with youth
	Pass on what I learned
I see a need	It's real(Life is tough)
	Kids need significant adults
	Youth need mentors
It works	Change in youth
	It has worked
	It sinks in eventually
It's my philosophy	I love kids
	I love sport
	It's convenient
	It's not about money
	Kids deserve to be mentored
	My religious background
Sport is a good context to mentor	Sport is not about winning
	Sport gives you unique perspective
	Sport provide captive audience
	Sport teaches valuable skills
	Sport teaches kids about life
	Sport teaches more than sports
	In sport you use your mentor
	Youth enjoy sport
Youth value relationship with adults	Kids think you're fun
	Kids want structure
	Kids want to be a part of a team
	Youth need attention
	Youth want someone they can talk to

Give back. One major theme that emerged as to the reason that coaches mentor was that they felt the need to give back. Most coaches (11) expressed that they had been mentored when they were younger and as a result they had managed to achieve success.

They credited their mentors for much of what they had achieved and saw the guidance that they received as a critical component of their achievements. Still there were three reasons that they felt the need to give back. For some coaches it was the fact that they were cared for by their coaches, for others it was the fact that they could identify with what their athletes were going through and the third reason to give back was that some coaches wanted to pass on the things that they had learned.

Coaches cared about me. Many of the coaches interviewed recognised that it was their coaches that had helped them and mentored them, teaching them lessons, skills and checking in on them. As such they felt an immense need to give back (to society). They thought it was important to mentor their athletes in the way in which they had been mentored and keep the cycle moving forward. They had received a gift and, as such, the onus was on them to give a gift now. This view is expressed well by Coach Gary,

“Because like I say, it goes all the way back to my childhood. Because someone gave me a shot. Someone mentored me. I was mentored by Mr. Bachmann at Christ Church recreational center and with baseball and basketball and, you know, we did all types of sports. Horse shoes and everything. But the problem, the thing to me is I always had it in me because of what’s someone done for me, I was able to give back...we live as mentors because what happened when I was coming up as a child, someone mentored me and [if] they had never got a hold of me, then where would I be? What situation would I be in?”

Identify with youth. While some coaches emphasized the fact that they had had caring mentors who made them feel the need to give back to others, others also expressed a connection to their athletes and an appreciation of what they were going through. For these coaches, they felt a need to help youth who might be in a situation with which they, the coaches, could identify. Mentoring was their way of protecting these youth who were perceived to be in situations similar to ones they had experienced when young. Coach Michael expresses this when he says,

“I didn’t have the most ideal childhood myself. You know, there was no father figure there. I mean, I had a father but, you know, rest his soul, he wasn’t a model father. You know, he, he didn’t go to baseball, my baseball games. He didn’t, he wasn’t... you know, he just wasn’t that kind of father. You know, he drank a lot and, you know, sometimes he was around, sometimes he wasn’t and you know, there was two things I was good at when I was younger—baseball and music. And I often did these things on my own. You know, there was no, no, so I, not only did I try and give that to my kids, I also try and, you know, do that to [for] other kids in the same situation that I grew up in.”

Pass on what I learned. Finally, coaches who wanted to give back expressed a desire to pass on the lessons they had gained from mentors and others to the athletes with whom they now worked. These lessons enabled them to be successful and they felt an urgency to pass them on. Mentoring was their way to pass on these things; things that were instrumental in their own lives. Coach Venita shares,

“Yes, I’ve been mentored. Even as a kid, I can remember being mentored in the 2nd grade by one of the strictest teachers. Her, her words were, you know, they were so strong that I still remember, you know, her rules in her classroom and I can remember me leading the group of girls in our classroom in singing when she left out and all of us getting a paddling when she came back. And her words to me was, you know, “you can be, it’s evident you’re an awesome leader but the question is what type of leader are you gonna be?” and that was in the 2nd grade. So that was my 2nd grade teacher’s mentoring. I remember my high school senior sponsor. She was a mentor. She gave very sound advice and I took it to heart. And you know, some of those same things that I learned growing up, I pass it on to the kids. It was effective for me and I see if it’s effective for them and yes, it is.”

See a need. Another major theme identified by coaches for mentoring their athletes was the fact that they saw a need to intervene. While mentoring interventions took many different shapes coaches shared an identification that their players needed them as coaches to be more than simply coaches and to become more involved in their athletes’ lives. All coaches identified this as a reason they mentored their youth. Coaches expressed that during their interaction with youth they developed a belief that they needed to do more than just coach to help youth succeed. Coaches were passionate about

the role that mentoring could play to help youth overcome the obstacles in their lives or simply to maximize their potential. There were three broad reasons of need that coaches identified. These were It's real, kids need significant adults, and youth need mentors.

It's real(life is tough). Many coaches (10) described how harsh life can be and the impact that that harshness can have on youth, especially in the city of Detroit. Circumstances such as death of a loved one, or living in less than ideal conditions can place youth at considerable risk. Youth needed to know that, regardless, they needed to function in the “real” world and, as such, they needed to be prepared for it. Coaches mentored their athletes because they saw the need to prepare their athletes for how harsh the world is. It was a reality that sometimes youth did not understand and one that could have less than ideal, if not deadly, consequences. Coach Robert shares his experiences growing up, mentoring and coaching on the Eastside of Detroit,

“You know, because, you know, coming from the east side of Detroit, we have a lot of guys that did some, made some bonehead moves in life and paid for it with their lives. You know, prison. Death, I mean, it's real, you know. Same thing that a lot of our kids here is gonna experience. You know, you hate to put it like... hopefully they don't but some of them do. You know, it's just reality”

While the consequences and realities of life need not be as deadly as those described by Coach Robert, other coaches, too, recognized the need to prepare their athletes for what might happen when they entered the “real world”. They, the coaches, needed to do more to be in the lives of their kids as mentors because in many cases their athletes were more vulnerable because of their age, their race and their gender. As such youth needed to understand the consequences of their current actions on their future selves. Coach Assistant Danielle explains,

“I think that [this] population has a higher risk of going to juvenile, and for me it was a great age to catch them before they get too far without having decision

making skills, and understand what decision making skills really is. It's for what's best for you, and maybe not what's best for all of your friends, but what really benefits you in the long run because now you're making decisions that affect you for the rest of your life... I don't think they understand like what a felony really looks like at 21. At 14, 15, 16, it didn't really matter because you hadn't tried to do anything yet. You haven't tried to get a job, you haven't tried to go to school, and they don't realize that some of those felonies they're make today, there are some jobs they can't get. Some education, like you can't go get financial aid... So, I don't think at 12,13,14,15, even 16 you realize oh wow. ...so this is their crucial age where you got to get them, help them understand listen, you made that wrong turn buddy, but that's going to ride with you from now on. I don't think they even get it."

Kids need significant adults. Coaches also expressed that youth needed significant adults in their lives to help alleviate the deficient conditions in which they may live or exist. Coaches described situations in which parents were unable or unwilling to provide youth with the support that they needed to experience a good quality of life and, as such, their intervention helped to buffer the impact of their circumstance. Broken homes, single parent homes, lack of role models and even cases of irresponsible coaches (e.g. doing drugs, screaming at athletes, not caring about their athletes) are all reasons for them to be involved in the lives of their athletes in a more substantial way. The coach becomes someone who can check in on the athlete and thereby provide support while simultaneously, holding them accountable. This is Coach Christy's view,

"so those kinds of conversations which is not why I got into coaching but it, it happens. Like oh, I saw the need that some girls just needed more investment than other girls needed because of the lack of parental involvement, or whatever the status was at their house, or the situation at their house. They needed someone. And I saw that I could fill that gap for a lot of the girls."

Whatever the reason, mentoring was geared to alleviate or neutralize those circumstances. Based on coaches' descriptions, there seem to be many families in less than ideal conditions living in Detroit. Coaches therefore had a role above that of simply

teaching sport; they felt that they could be a role model or tangibly support athletes in those conditions.

Youth need mentors. Coaches did not always mentor to correct negative situations. Sometimes they simply saw that they could add value to the lives of their youth by acting as role models or providing resources that could push youth toward greater success. Mentoring in this case was a means to enhance youth potential. Coaches saw themselves as a part of the network aiding the development of youth.

“Honestly, for me, I never wanted to coach out here. And when I say out here, I meant in the suburbs because I always felt like I was needed more in those other communities. At St. Clair Shores, at South Lake, at Oak Park, at Detroit Henry Ford and Detroit Southeastern, I always felt like those communities needed a person like me. They needed to see a someone like them that looked like them, that was from where they were from, that could relate to them. But is now where I’m at. And meaning, you know, went to college, bachelor’s degree, master’s degree. You know, you know, can communicate on a different level. Carries herself in a certain type of way so when you ask does girls mean anything? Yeah, girls does mean something. Although I have coached boys also but I think it’s important for girls in that environment to see someone, an alternative because they see what’s in the videos and they watch BET and that’s what they see. They see, you know, basketball wives and they see, you know, it’s a lot of the images of Black females that they see are not necessarily the most positive images and I think, you know, it was important for me for them to see an alternative.”

Sport is a good context to mentor. Many coaches (8) felt that they needed to capitalize on the opportunity to mentor the athletes they had because sport is such a great context within which to mentor kids. In these coaches’ minds, part of why they mentored was because they had such a great opportunity to do this type of work. Coaches felt that sport provides them with a captive audience and that athletes enjoyed it; making them more willing to listen, to talk about life skills and character. Therefore they leveraged the things that youth loved about sport to teach the other areas that they wanted to emphasize. Some coaches shared that sport is also a great context because it is amenable to teaching

life skills. The skills needed for sport were similar to other areas of youth's lives and so sport could make lessons relatable. In their minds, mentoring would not be as easy in other contexts as it is in sport. Also as one coach shared sport does not only build character but reveals it,

“The other thing that sports does, you get to see a lot, you get to see almost the full person. So you see them when they lose and how do they act? You see them when they win, how do they act? You see them engaging with other people, socializing. So you see a bigger, a broader perspective of the person...than maybe just that one time when you're sitting there having lunch, you know, having a conversation. So you really get to see how the person is. Sports build character. Sports reveal character, right? So you, you can use sports to change that character, right? If it's negative, you can hopefully shift it, use force to shift it to positive. But as a coach, as a coaching mentor or mentoring coach, right, to be able to see that whole person means you can address more with that individual athlete.”

Youth value relationship with adults. The last higher order theme that the majority of coaches (11) spoke about was the fact that youth desired and sought out the mentoring relationships that developed within their teams. This is interesting because it means that mentoring occurred not only because of coaches but also partly because youth desired such relationships. One coach shared that youth,

“wanta have someone they can talk to. There's a judgment free zone that they can live in, within that person. I think the biggest thing I've heard, I've heard young ladies say it all the time is just literally having someone to talk to”

Some coaches mentored to fulfill the demand that their athletes had for such relationships. They became a person in whom their athletes could confide, with whom they could relate and build a relationship and someone the athletes allowed to correct and push them. Coach Lisa says,

“For some of the girls, because I am different than other adults in their lives, so different in experience, different in my background, different in my relationships, different in my professional work that I do. I think they know that they can ask me

different questions or they'll know they get different answers or they get a different perspective than they would get from their kind of usual suspects. Sorry. It's a term I use a lot."

Benefits of Mentoring

One major line of questioning for coaches was what they considered to be the benefits of mentoring. When coaches were asked why they mentored, they indicated that they mentored because they saw a need and wanted to give back to society, hopefully pass on some of the lessons that they were taught by their coaches and mentors. Coaches clearly, had a strong interest in mentoring so what they felt came out of mentoring was of particular interest. What were coaches' goals when they began mentoring their athletes, what were they hoping to achieve? What did they feel that they had managed to accomplish through their relationships with their athletes? All these were the types of questions to which coaches responded. Overall there were three higher order themes (See Table 4). These are: coaches believed that mentoring was a benefit to their athletes, mentoring benefitted them (the coach) and mentoring benefited the society as a whole. Far fewer coaches discussed the societal benefits that mentoring might provide. Most focused on the benefits that mentoring had for the coaches and the athletes involved in the process/relationship.

Table 4
Benefits of Mentoring

Higher Order Themes	Codes
Coach Benefit	Appreciation
	Acknowledgement
	Getting feedback
	Getting hugs
	Kids appreciate what you did
	Maintaining relationships
	Parents value mentors
	Youth respect me

Table 4 (cont'd)

	Enjoy youth relationship	Build strong relationships Enjoy soccer players I enjoy it
	Feel Fulfilled	Feel like I make a difference Fulfills calling I feel good Personal edification See youth in positive light Seeing youth happy
	Financial	Money Stipend
	New Talent	Develop future employees Youth have abilities that I've lost
	Seeing youth become successful	Coach pride in youth It all comes back Knowing you helped Get married Seeing kids achieve success Seeing kids change
	Athlete Benefit	Achievement
		Academic achievement Career achievement Life achievement Sport achievement
	Having somebody	An experienced trusted advisor Father figure Role model Somebody who cares Somebody who is honest Someone who lets them be Someone to talk to Someone who can help Someone who gives advice Someone who listens Someone who sees all points of view Somone who supports them in life
	Improved well being	Happy kids Kids' high self esteem They have fun Youth pride in accomplishments

Table 4 (cont'd)

	Youth pride in mentoring experience	
	Preparation for life	Skills
		Support
		Values
Societal Benefit	Make sure world is in good hands	Make sure world is in good hands
	Youth impacting others	Youth impacting others

Athlete Benefits. There were four themes that emerged when coaches discussed the benefits that mentoring had for their athletes. All coaches agreed that athletes could benefit through the process of mentoring. There were four ways that coaches felt their athletes would benefit. It was clear the coaches felt that athletes who were mentored could achieve more, they could have someone in their lives, they have improved wellbeing and they are better prepared for life. In describing their goals in mentoring athletes, these are the four themes that stood out.

Achievement. Coaches felt that athletes who were mentored would be able to achieve more; whether that achievement is in life generally or in more specific areas like academics or sport. Coaches spoke about their athletes developing excellent sport specific skills because of the time that coaches put in developing the relationships with them. An area identified by many coaches (8) was the focus on their athletes to perform better in the classroom. This focus caused a number of athletes to get better grades. Athletes might do this because they were being held to a standard or because attaining good grades was a requirement for participation on the team. A major benefit highlighted by coaches was the fact that many of their athletes would make it to college. In fact that was a major focus for coaches; ensuring that their athletes understood that they could make it to college and might be able to use their sport to gain a scholarship. Ultimately, coaches

believed that athletes who were mentored would be more successful and better people. Coach Christy described her relationship with one of her athletes that highlights some of her views of success.

“then I had another athlete get pregnant. An athlete from here got pregnant which really just... that one, I was like no, this is, right? And I was so disappointed and she knew I was disappointed because she avoided me for months. Like I couldn’t catch her. I couldn’t come up here and find her. I couldn’t catch her and she wouldn’t call me back. Like nothing. And finally at graduation, right, like you can’t avoid me. I’m right here. So we were able to mend that relationship. But she still went to college. She still, she’s playing volleyball in college as a mother. And so she’s successful. So far, right? So far. And I’m able to stay in touch with her and check on her and send books to the baby. Something else I do, right? I buy books for everybody, right? They tease me because I don’t buy toys, I buy books. So what could’ve been a failure hopefully will, you know, be a success.”

Having somebody. Coaches felt that athletes benefitted from mentoring as it provided them with someone they could turn to for advice support, acknowledgement or comfort. Who this person represented for the athletes varied greatly depending on the context in which they found themselves and the needs of the athletes. Some athletes came from broken homes and were seeking father or mother figures. Some athletes had no one in their lives with whom they could share problems and concerns. Others did not have someone who would be brutally honest with them; giving them advice that pushed them whilst letting them know about the challenges that they would face. Some kids did not have someone who would assist in any way possible, or needed. Coach Katherine described the role that she plays with her kids.

“I think most of them would think that, I think most of them know if they had a problem, they could come to me and that they have somebody who not only is your coach, not only was your teacher, but somebody, I don’t want to say is like your friend but it is. I mean, now you are older. This is like your older friend who you know you could come to for anything; if you needed anything. And I ask them and I tell them, like you know, if you need something, you know I will help you. I can’t do everything for you but I can try to help you to the best of my ability.”

Improved wellbeing. Coaches felt that athletes benefitted from mentoring as it improved their well-being and quality of life. It was their impression that youth felt better about themselves and had more fun when they were mentored. Mentoring was therefore a way to improve youth self-esteem; which many coaches felt was important, given the context within which youth lived. The conditions in some areas of Detroit were difficult and some youth came from rough parts of the city. Someone believing in them and allowing them to see the value and beauty in life was an integral part of improving their outlooks on life. Coach Gary was one of the biggest proponents of improving youth self-esteem. He says,

“How do I want them to... I want them to think, I want them to think good about themselves, you know. Positive that, to a point to where doing stuff they can achieve...It’s nothing they can’t achieve if, if they’re in the right frame of mind. And if we get them to begin to change the way they begin to think about the environment they came in and everything is not right or I’m down on myself all the time, you’ll begin to get them to think that positive and begin to start liking themselves.”

Preparation for life. Finally coaches felt that athletes benefitted from mentoring as it prepared them for life by equipping them with skills, values and the support needed to be successful. Again, these skills and values varied but coaches wanted to broaden the youths’ perspectives, get them to learn decisions making skills, learn respect for each other and play as teammates. Coaches also provided their athletes with the support they would need as they learned these skills and values. Sometimes that support came in the form of comfort, other times, as Coach Richard describes, it comes in the form of honesty.

“You know, letting the kid know I do have a backup plan. Okay, letting the kid know, okay, I can be successful other than dribbling a basketball. I can be successful other than throwing a baseball; catching a football. I can do behind the scene things and be just as important. Make just as much money as they do by

running up and down the floor, running up and down a field. Okay. Because every kid is not gonna make it. In their mind, they'll think I'm gonna be a professional athlete. And just sitting here and being honest and just like I said, that goes back to being honest with these kids. Every kid is not gonna make it so if you don't make it, what are you gonna do? What is your backup plan? And I think all that plays a part in being a mentor."

Coach Benefits. While mentoring is typically viewed as a process geared to assist those being mentored, all coaches interviewed also felt that they themselves benefitted as a result of mentoring their athletes. Again these benefits ranged across the contexts within which coaches worked and depended on the life experiences of each coach. Additionally, some had to be pushed a bit to view some of the outcomes of mentoring as "benefits" arguing that that's not why they mentored. They accepted however, that as unintended as it might be, mentoring did result in benefits, tangible or otherwise. Overall, 6 themes emerged as seen in Table 4. The two that were most common across coaches were Appreciation and Seeing youth become successful. There was also some financial benefit from mentoring for some coaches. These three themes will be looked at in greater detail.

Financial. While the coaches who were paid to coach indicated that they did not do it for the money, receiving compensation is definitely a benefit of their roles as a coach. Six of the coaches who were interviewed indicated that they were paid to coach. Many coaches pointed out that the salary was comparatively small, and while their payment was to coach, mentoring went above and beyond just coaching. Still, this is notable because there are few roles in which mentors derive some financial benefit from their activity. If coaches' major goal was to mentor and sport was simply the vehicle with which to do it, it means that, though small, they were paid to mentor. These two quotes capture the coaches' feelings about their "stipends".

“So I’m paid to coach. We get paid at the end of the season...I guess a stipend. It’s \$2800 which sounds like a lot but...We start in August and go through November and that’s just the season, right? So that doesn’t include when I come up here in the off season, the stuff we do in the spring, you know, all the other extra stuff.”

“no, it’s paid. Yeah. It’s, it’s paid. And you know, I don’t necessarily do it for the money but of course, it’s nice to get paid to do it because of everything that I put into it so...”

Seeing youth become successful. For most coaches (8), seeing their youth become successful was one of the ways they benefitted from the process of mentoring. Many expressed that having a child go on to achieve great things or overcome adversity was one of the ways they measured success. It also kept them motivated to mentor. Success, for many coaches, was seeing their mentees mature and achieve success in adulthood. This points to the fact that in most cases, coaches realized that their reward was not immediate, that they were making an investment in their athletes and this investment might not reap dividends for years to come. Coach Jada says,

“So this is about, yeah, of course, I wanta win games. Who doesn’t, right? But this is about when my, when my players now, eight years from now, that they can come back to me when they get out in the real world and say, coach, thanks. Thanks for teaching me how to get here.”

Appreciation. Another benefit for coaches was the appreciation they received from athletes and parents for the assistance they provided. Coaches were touched that people acknowledged their contribution years afterward and, in some cases, had tracked the progress of some of these athletes. This speaks to an unspoken commitment that coaches have made to remain emotionally invested in the lives of their athletes. The emotion associated with a former athlete or parent crediting a coach in the child’s development is one of the greatest things that coaches said they could experience. When

one takes into consideration the challenges that coaches faced, one realizes that the emotional investment can be double edged. Still, the acknowledgement allowed them to feel good about themselves and about their sacrifices; those that truly go beyond the game that they coach. This idea is expressed when Coach Gary describes how important it is to receive feedback from past players,

“the benefit is seeing a kid come back to you and tell you, yeah, coach, you’re my mentor. You played a big part in my life. You played a big part in me being successful. You played a big part in me knowing that I could go to college. Knowing that I could, I could do things that other people have told me I can’t do. And the benefit of hearing that, that’s worth more money than anything to me.”

Coach Lisa described a more emotional response to the athletes’ feedback. She also expressed how challenging it must be to remember all that you have said to your athletes throughout the years.

“she sent me this long inbox that said, ‘Coach Lisa, thank you!’ and it just made me cry all over again. ‘Like you’ve always been here for me. You got me my start in this. Everything that I do, I owe it to you.’ And I’m like, all I did was, I didn’t remember that I had told her, they tell you things that you don’t remember you say because there’s so many that come through... But just to get the feedback from them, that say things like that, then I know, okay, I guess I was a mentor.”

Societal Benefits. While only four coaches spoke explicitly about the societal benefits that mentoring could have, one wonders whether more coaches tacitly hoped to have a similar impact. A few coaches expressed the idea that what they did with their athletes did not remain confined to that specific coach-athlete relationship but rippled outward impacting others and ultimately the larger society. One coach pointed out that the world is circular and, as such, what she does can affect her own future. Mentoring, as described by this coach, sounded like something that all adults should consider,

“I mean, I gotta live in this world with these kids, you know. You gotta live in this world with these kids. And at some point, these kids are gonna be controlling

what happens to us. So the more that I could help and guide and steer in the right direction, you know, the better.”

Challenges of Mentoring

While mentoring was something that all coaches identified as a beneficial experience for themselves and their athletes, they also all identified challenges associated with the process of mentoring. Some challenges were specific to the situation and context in which coaches coached, while others seemed to be shared regardless of circumstance. Overall there were 10 themes that captured the challenges that coaches identified (See Table 5). Additionally, only one coach identified challenges that athletes might face in the mentoring process. If there are challenges faced during the mentoring process it is not something that athletes have to undergo. While all 10 themes are listed in Table 5 some of the more prevalent themes, those that stood out across all 13 coaches, will now be discussed. These include: applying the right mentoring style; attitude of youth; having resources; parents; unstable homes; and, emotion. Where relevant, subthemes of these categories will also be discussed.

Table 5
Challenges of Mentoring

Themes	Codes
Applying the right mentoring style	Being consistent with everyone Boys need a different style Use different avenues for each kid Girls are emotional Some youth are harder to reach Sport is limited Younger girls not as focused
Attitude of youth	All youth cannot be saved Getting youth to trust you Some youth don't want to change Youth are unpredictable

Table 5 (cont'd)

	Youth inexperience
Balancing team vs. indiv. needs	We lose a lot
	Balancing team vs. individual
Coaches job is to win	Coaches screaming selfish coaches
Different Time	Being afraid Kids are different Kids know what you cannot do Negative influences
Emotional	Becoming emotionally overinvolved Fatigue I get mad It's emotionally exhausting It's frustrating Some youth are annoying
Having resources	Lack of other resources Lack of training Money Time
Parents	Lack of parental involvement Parents challenge coach
Politics	Administration Interacting with others Rules of the sport
Unstable homes	Home context affects mentoring No adults in youths lives Youth have adult responsibilities Parents actions affect youth

Applying the right mentoring style. One of the challenges expressed by most coaches (8) was the fact that you have to match the style you have as a mentor to the athlete you are trying to mentor. If that was not done, coaches felt they may not be able to develop the type of relationship necessary or get their messages across. They described

mentoring as much more difficult of a process than coaching and the personal connection with each athlete has to be there for you to be successful. As a mentor of a team of athletes a coach has to create a relationship with all his or her athletes at a level that allows them to be effective. This can be challenging. Relatedly, the challenges experienced by one athlete may be different from those experienced by others. A mentor-coach has to have a variety of styles in their repertoire and be able to match them to the particular mentee and situation when necessary. This makes the process of mentoring tricky and challenging. As a coach, you already have to be versatile to navigate the variations in your athletes. To do that when mentoring adds some complexity to the job. Coach Richard describes it as using different avenues for each kid. He says,

“..., you always have to find different avenues to go. You always got to find a different way to go. It’s a different way to go after each kid. There’s not one kid that you go after the same way because of that behavior, because of that mindset, because of what’s going on with them at home. Because what is lacking at home. You always got to find different avenues to go after them.”

Attitude of youth. One challenge that all coaches identified as impacting the process of mentoring was the attitude of the youth they mentored. While all coaches found mentoring to be a valuable experience to their youth, they did not think that all youth readily welcomed mentoring with open arms. This led to challenges for coaches, since many youth did not readily subscribe to the things that coaches wanted to do nor the things they wanted to teach. Mentoring youth was not a straightforward process, in all cases, but one in which coaches had to win over their athletes and in some cases solicit the buy-in from their charges. Some of the sub-themes in this category addressed, in a more nuanced way, the challenges that coaches faced from their youth. The five sub-themes in this category were: some youth don’t want to change; getting youth to trust

you; all youth cannot be saved; youth inexperience; and, youth are unpredictable. These will be briefly explored.

Some youth don't want to change. Not all the athletes with whom coaches work welcome the mentoring relationship with their coaches. These athletes might be comfortable in their circumstance and be unwilling to take the assistance that is being offered to them. This makes the situation difficult for the coach and it can often lead to frustration. Ultimately, as Coach Jada describes below, the coaches have to make a decision. They have to choose between that player and the others who are on that team. They have to decide whether their investment makes sense. Coach Jada explains,

“That’s, cuz there’s, there’s kids, so I had a kid at one of the high schools that I coached at and she was, she was decent. She could’ve been a talented player but she was a troubled kid and there were, I had quite a few issues with her but the reason that I kept giving her opportunities and kept, kept her on the team was because I knew the minute she wasn’t with this team, and I wasn’t constantly, constantly talking to her, then the trouble was gonna escalate. So it got to a point where there was an incident that just, we just, I couldn’t do it anymore because now, I got, I have 12, I have 12 kids and one kid is getting 90% of my attention. Now, she needed it but at some point as a coach, you have to say, well, I can’t neglect all these other kids that are open to receive my message because of this one kid. Now it’s starting to be a detriment to the team. So an incident happened, had to let her go and a lot of it was because of the school. She literally got kicked out of the school. And it was, and this is, you know, I’m completely being honest right here, there’s, it, she got kicked out of the school on a Thursday. On Tuesday, she was in the paper. She had broke into someone’s house and, you know, they caught her and she was sent to jail. So in four days of her leaving the program and being kicked out of school, she was in jail. And that’s what I knew but, you know, you can’t save everybody. You try to but you know, she was, she was a kid that I, I was reaching for a little bit and then, you know, it just fell off.”

Getting youth to trust you. Getting youth to trust you was one of the challenges that all coaches mentioned they had to overcome. Sometimes the lack of trust stemmed from the fact that youth/athletes were new to the school or the program. In other instances this lack of trust had to do with the context from which the youth themselves had come. If

they grew up in a situation where there was no one they could trust, it would be difficult to trust anyone in this new environment. Finally, a lack of trust could emanate from the differences that might exist between the coach and the athletes. The next two quotes illustrate the lack of trust that coaches faced, but point to two very different reasons for them. The first is from Coach Gary describing a new student/athlete at his school.

“so that’s what makes it when they first come, just like we get a new, say we get a new student here at the school and the first thing they do is they’re on the defense because they don’t know anyone. They’re on the defense cuz they don’t know anyone. They don’t, they don’t trust the people around them cuz they haven’t gotten to know anybody and then it’s hard. So you have to kind of like ease your way in because they don’t just automatically just graft their self to you. They don’t automatically just say, oh, you look like a nice person. I think I will begin to trust you. No, you have to earn their trust. And it comes to, and it’s hard sometimes because some kids just don’t know how to let their guard down.”

The second quote comes from Coach Katherine discussing why she may not have as close of a relationship with some of her athletes.

“You know, sometimes there could be... I’ve thought about this a lot and I don’t think it’s as big of a problem but you know, it’s always questionable when... I don’t even know how to say this without sounding tacky but I’m kind of a blunt person so you know, I’m like a White woman, whatever. Can you take advice from this person? Or is this a good person to be giving you advice?”

Youth inexperience. While many coaches tried to impart lessons and knowledge to their athletes, not all athletes grasped this knowledge immediately. Sometimes they could not understand what coaches were trying to do long-term and some coaches described this as a challenge. Coaches felt that the inexperience of their athletes did not allow them to understand the lengths and sacrifices that coaches were making. This, in turn, caused many of the lessons to be lost. Many coaches spoke about lessons sinking in eventually, and having to mentor in spite of the lack of recognition or acceptance on the part of their athletes. There seems to be a suggestion that mentoring may have some

latent effects once youth are able to apply the lessons. That application however was not immediate and could be impacted by the level of their experience. This “hit or miss” nature of mentoring might well have to do with the developmental nature of youth and adolescence. The following description by Coach Christy sums this up well.

“So going into it, yeah, of course, I thought my words would be, you know, I’m all knowing, right? I’ve already been there. I’ve been a teenager. I know what you’re going through ... but just over time, I realized, oh, they don’t, they’re not, it’s like it’s kinda clicking but not. They’re listening to be respectful but then I would see habits, the same habits, they would be repeating. It wouldn’t be until they’re like seniors, so if they heard it as a freshman, maybe as a senior, it finally clicked. So even the young lady that said, you know, she walked away, it was probably two years, right, between like the first time it happened and her telling me she walked away from a fight. So doesn’t mean I give up though. I still have the conversations.”

Parents. Another major challenge that coaches described experiencing in their quest to mentor their athletes was the athletes’ parents. Coaches interviewed (12) said that parents posed a challenge in their quest to mentor. The challenge posed by parents fell into two categories (sub-themes). Parents were either not involved or were too involved, not allowing the coach to mentor. There was also not much overlap between the types of parental challenges experienced by coaches, suggesting that context, again, determined the way mentoring manifested itself.

Lack of parental involvement. Parents were perceived as a challenge if they were uninvolved in the lives of their kids. In this case the coaches felt that they were working on their own and there was not enough support being provided at home. The coach was trying to do things to better the circumstance of the child/athlete and there would be a lack of support by the parent and some coaches even described a disinterest. This might manifest itself in the form of parents not attending games or parents not taking the time to

chat with the coach about particular issues that are affecting their child. Coach Richard described it well,

“But the support part? That’s where we have a big, big problem. Real big problem. The sport support aspect from a parent. And I’m not saying all parents but you say, say out of 100 parents, you might have 45%. You know, and that’s something, as a mentor and as a coach, that’s something that really, really weigh on you... Not having the support of a parent of your child. That somebody else taking an interest in. You know, that somebody else is stepping in and not so much as being a parent but somebody that’s stepping in to guide your particular child in a right way. Okay. And then once you do that, and you send that kid home, and then you see that kid come back the same way that he came back, it’s, it’s, it really weigh on you as a coach. Because it’s like okay, I’m teaching them one thing, then they go home and come back and come back a totally different way. You know, it’s, it’s not as parent, coach, mentor working together. It’s just like coach mentoring, just sitting out there on an island by his self.”

Parent challenging coach. Contrastingly, parents were also a challenge if they opposed the coaches’ values and approach. In these cases coaches felt that parents were undermining the work that they were putting in with the athletes. Parents might be distrusting of the coach and perhaps even jealous of the relationship that the coach might have with the athlete. Even worse, it might manifest itself in parents having more selfish goals for their children such as taking care of younger siblings or working to provide for the household. Some of these goals, based on the coach’s description might deprive athletes of educational and athletic opportunities. Take the description of one athlete given by Coach Alicia.

“you try to reiterate something. You see a special need in someone and you try to mentor that or try to, you know, consult them. But then you realize that the reinforcement at home is just not gonna be there. So I tried hard to get this girl into school and to college. Her mom’s goal for her was to have her home, babysitting the kids since she was of that age. My push was to get her to school. Get her to go away, far away to school because she was a good player and she could’ve gone for free. At the end of the day, she ended up staying home and, and helping her mother at home. Going to school nonetheless, not doing as well as she could have. She could’ve taken a Division I scholarship, should have.”

Having enough resources. Some coaches stressed that it was challenging to mentor because of the resources that it took to get it done. These resources varied, from time, training and money but coaches acknowledged that they sometimes could not do more for their athletes because of the constraints of the resources at their disposal. Many coaches talked about using their personal funds to purchase equipment and uniforms for their athletes and to fund outings. Additionally, mentoring took up much of their time and since all of the coaches were employed full time, mentoring, in addition to coaching, could sometimes put a real strain on time for other things in their own lives. Coach Michael describes his emotions about that.

“You know, so, so sometimes that can be... I’m gonna say it’s an unwanted burden but it’s a burden that you accept because, you know, sometimes those things happen at the most inconvenient time. My kids are out of the house. I’m sitting up here with my wife or whatever and, you know, now somebody calls you and, you know, they want some of your time or, you know, the parent wants you to be the mentor/father and, you know, they just, they’re just reaching out for some kind of help or whatever. And sometimes, sometimes it’s a bit inconvenient, you know, cuz I like my quiet time, too. But it’s just part of being, if you do it, if you really love what you’re doing, it’s just part of being a coach.”

Emotional nature of mentoring. Another challenge identified by nine of the coaches is the emotional nature of the mentoring process. As a coach who is developing a deeper relationship with athletes, some coaches find themselves becoming personally attached to their athletes and the challenges the athletes have. As a result the coach is sometimes devastated when athletes cannot achieve particular goals because of financial or other types of lack of resource issues. Other coaches described having to manage how open they are with their athletes so that the athletes do not become too attached. This was especially the case for coaches who coached a different gender. The biggest emotional challenge described by coaches however, was the disappointment or frustration one might

feel if athletes did not live up to their potential. Coaches described an almost sickening feeling and one of deep regret. In some cases coaches blamed themselves for not doing more. Now that they have invested their time in the athlete, they expect athletes to be successful. This quote by Coach Christy described how she felt when one of her athletes became pregnant.

“ I remember the first girl that I coached that got pregnant, and she wasn’t, she was on my club team so I didn’t know her as well. I didn’t spend as much time. I was like, ugh, what could I have done, right? I was, like really, I was having this conversation with somebody. What could I have done differently to make sure she did not get pregnant? And so it was kind of a, probably nothing, right?”

Unstable homes. The final challenge that the majority of coaches (8) spoke about was the instability of the context or the homes from which their athletes came. This theme suggested that mentoring athletes was more challenging if there was not stability in the home lives of the youth. Coaches suggested that cases where youth had single parents or were forced to take on adult roles impacted the ways in which youth would interact when they came to practice and to school. Sometimes older kids had to care for their younger siblings while parents worked. In other cases youth worked on weekends to earn extra money to provide for the family. They also described that even when parents were involved, the dynamic of the parents’ relationship with the child or with one another could also impact the child and pass on issues that the coach might then have to address. Some situations were so bad that the child may not have a home at all.

“A lot of the households aren’t really households. I had a kid that played soccer for me and I dropped him off late one day at his house and he told me that, Mr. Robert, please don’t laugh at my house when you see it. And I dropped him off at an abandoned house. The whole house was boarded up and he went in through the back. And I mean, you’re talking about kids squatting in homes. You’re talking about kids that by the time they move in a house, from kindergarten through 3rd or 4th grade, they’ve moved 12 times. You know, how can a kid, you

know, you're trying to teach a kid values and morals and what's right and what's wrong and this kid, I mean, had a different house four or five times out of the year. They're not in stable situations. You know. So I think that's the biggest hurdle when you talk about challenges and mentoring our kids. You know, home has to be stable for these kids to be, or receive it effectively. You know?"

Factors Affecting Mentoring Effectiveness

All coaches interviewed expressed a belief that mentoring worked. They described mentoring as something that they had used first-hand to bring about changes in the lives of their athletes. Some had been mentored themselves and as such reflected on the value that mentoring had played in their own lives. In short, mentoring was viewed as a transformative process that could improve the success and achievement realized by athletes. Coaches did accept, however, that certain factors made mentoring more likely to be successful. Accordingly, these were aspects of mentoring on which they focused and tried to implement. In specific ways, these factors influenced their coaching and mentoring philosophy and coaches ultimately realized that they needed to pay attention to these things. Overall coaches identified six factors as critical to the process of mentoring effectiveness (See Table 6). They were the Coach Philosophy, Coach/Athlete relationship, Mentoring Skills, Parents, Sport as a Context and the Youth Context. There were four factors identified by over 10 coaches as being critical to the success they have in their role as mentors. These were Parents, Mentoring Skills, Coach/Athlete Relationship and Sport as a Context. These will now be discussed in greater detail.

Table 6

Factors that Influence Mentoring Effectiveness

Themes	Codes
Coach philosophy	Commitment to youth
	Easy to talk to
	Recognize everyone is the same

Table 6 (cont'd)

	Structured
Coach/Athlete relationship	Player age
	Relationship with mentee
	Youth can identify with you
	Youth trust coach
	Youth views are solicited
Mentoring skills	Ability to manage youth
	Be logical
	Being a parent helps
	Being a teacher helps
	Consistency and patience
	Don't take things personally
	Experience mentoring
	Flexibility
	Give feedback
	Knowing your limits
	Mentoring background
	Recognize teachable moments
	Reverse psychology
Parents	Building relationship with mentees families
	Kids value parents opinions
	Parents trust coach
	Parents appreciate coach
	Parent more involved
	Parents more supportive
	Parents showing up
	Parents working with mentor
Sport as context	Access to youth
	Youth enjoy sport
	Kids look up to coaches
	Leverage sport
	Number of youth
	Sport makes things tangible
	Type of sport
Youth context	Consistency in other areas of youth's life

Table 6 (cont'd)

Home dynamic
Knowing context

Parents. Parents played a critical role in the success of mentoring relationships of their children. Twelve coaches identified parents as being a gatekeeper of these relationships and hence they augmented the impact of the coaches' efforts or undermined them. If coaches had a good relationship with parents or if parents knew, understood and trusted what the coach was trying to do the child was impacted more positively. Coaches certainly felt supported when parents supported their efforts and credited that support as something which enabled them to achieve the results that they sought. Some coaches described deliberately building relationships with parents and clearly explaining their goals to foster that alignment. Others simply stated that some parents were more involved and more supportive, which fostered a better, more positive experience for youth. Some coaches suggested that when athletes recognize that parents and coaches are on the same page they are more likely to conform to the lessons being taught and the suggestions being given. Another common view was that alignment with parents provided the coach with insight into what was taking place at home, and in the role of a mentor, information was key. Coach Lisa described it in this way,

"The parents are the, are the gold coin, you know. The parents are, you know, even, even somebody that I might perceive as a bad parent or something, just me knowing them and them knowing me, it can help the kid ... I think that's what's helped me. My whole career, I was always on the phone with the parents. And I learned that you always start out with some good things about the kid and there always are good things, always. And so the parent sees that you're on the same page. You know, and then you just get to know them and if you're on a first name basis with the parent or even just a friendly basis with the parent can make all the difference in the world."

Coach/Athlete relationship. The one factor identified by all 13 coaches as influencing the success of mentoring was the relationship that the coach fostered with his/her athlete. All coaches stressed, on multiple occasions in their interviews, the importance of the coach-athlete relationship in the realization of their objectives. The length of time the coach spent with youth, the age of players, whether or not a coach solicited player's views or whether or not a player could identify with the coach all impacted that relationship. Regardless of the reason, however, coaches tried in all that they did to foster as strong a relationship as possible with their athletes. Once such a relationship existed, youth were more likely to listen to what a coach had to say and put some of those lessons into practice. Without such a relationship, youth would be untrusting and thus, a coach would not be able to correct them or challenge the players' way of thinking or behaving. This relationship was the foundation of all mentoring initiatives. Mentoring could not occur until the players had arrived at a point where they felt that they could interact with the coach in a particular way. Many coaches believed that the athletes' acceptance of their role as mentors was important and without it coaches recognized that they would be having little impact. It would be, in the words of one coach, "a one way conversation." It makes sense that if the roles of mentoring are to teach and guide, a relationship in which one looks to the coach, as a teacher would be central. The following quotes by three of the coaches highlight the central role all three think the relationships they have with their athletes are to their overall success as mentors. The first quote is from Coach Richard describing his mentoring of his athletes.

And it's something about these kids, once they buy into you, you can teach them. Okay, and that's one of the big things that, not patting myself on the back but that's one of the big things that I think that I'm really, really good in because I can get them to buy into what I'm doing. Buy into what structures I want to place

in their life. That's one of the big reasons why mentoring, I think I'm a pretty good, decent mentor is because of that."

This next quote by Coach Kathleen also shows that her relationship is what she leverages to have deeper conversations with her athletes. It is the relationships that allow her to move beyond sport and discuss things that are more relevant to the child's overall development.

"So yeah, naturally, some, in some cases, and a lot of kids are gonna like you and others are not, are gonna be very lukewarm about you. So you know, the more of a relationship you form with the kid, the more you're able to mentor, give them advice. Ask them how that math class went today. Are you gonna be good on your report card? What do you gotta do before report cards are graded, you know. You can get into all that with somebody that you have a good relationship with. So yes."

Finally, this quote by Coach Alicia shows that while her approach to all her players might be the same she recognizes that those with whom she has greater success with are those with whom she is able to develop a better relationship.

I think I try to be a mentor to all of them but some of them, I think if I'm not it's because they won't open up. They won't share. I have a lot of girls that are very quiet. No matter how many tricks I have up my sleeve to get them to open up, I just can't get it done. And I don't know what the issues are. Maybe they're not, they're just quiet. But then they're, the ones that I think you mentor the ones that are willing to open up to you. You're, it's according to who is willing to open up and how much. And if you notice a problem and wanta get involved, you know, how far will they let you go? How much will they let you in? So to me, that's what it depends on."

Sport as a context. Ten coaches stressed that one of the factors that made their work as mentors successful was the fact that they were doing it within the sporting context. These coaches believed that sport provided them with an advantage over other persons who might want to mentor youth. There were a number of reasons they identified why sport lends itself so well to mentoring and provided a strategic advantage to coaches.

The first was that sport coaches believed that sport could give them access to many youth. As an individual who wants to mentor and give back, the context of sport provides an audience and once you coach continuously, that audience multiplies over the years. The second reason coaches felt that sport is advantageous to mentoring is the fact that youth enjoy sport. Coaches suggested that the context of sport makes kids willing participants to the process of mentoring. Many youth complied with coaches so that they were able to play or participate. Finally, coaches described the context of sport as one that made the skills they wanted to teach relatable. Coaches felt that it was easier to teach certain skills and traits through sport than through other contexts. Whether it was that youth enjoyed it more or simply the fact that their learning styles were different, coaches said that sport made things tangible for youth. As a coach who wants to mentor therefore, the sport context was ideal. Coach Robert described it in this way.

“Well, the hook is soccer. The hook is sports regardless, whether it’s soccer, whether it’s football or whether it’s baseball because they’re raring to go. So you use that as your tool to gain focus. Now you got that focus because, hey, if we don’t get through this piece, we can’t move to the next level. So the hook is soccer... that’s the hook. Don’t get me wrong. They’re ready to go with that. So let me get, let me get a couple minutes of your time. Let’s, you know, I know you’re ready to get out here on this field, you know... so again you have more leverage with sports when it comes to mentoring.”

Mentoring skills. The final factor shared by most coaches (10) that impacted their success while mentoring was the mentoring skills that they possessed. This factor relates to the fact that many coaches suggested that being able to match up their styles to what youth needed could be a challenge and suggests that some coaches could be better mentors than others. There was a wide range of skills that coaches identified as being critical in making the mentoring experience more effective and impactful. In all the cases coaches described these skills as things that helped them navigate their contexts better

and ultimately enabled them to have success with their youth. Interestingly, very few of those skills crossed contexts. In fact very few were shared between coaches again pointing to differences in the contexts that coaches worked and differing needs within those contexts. While there were six sub-themes that overlapped contexts, the ability to recognize teachable moments and the ability to know your limits were two subthemes that were identified by coaches across three or more contexts.

Recognize teachable moments. All coaches in describing mentoring spoke about themselves as teachers. Accordingly, it makes sense that one's skill as a teacher would factor heavily in your ability to mentor effectively. Some coaches shared that in addition to being able to teach, knowing when to teach was equally as important. Mentoring relies on youth receiving your message. As a result, *when* you give that message could be more important than the message itself! These coaches described the ability to recognize these moments as one of the things that gave their message greater impact. This made their lessons relevant to the lives of their athletes and allowed them to transform more lives. Coach Richard gave an example of this approach when he describes his work with his basketball team. He said,

"I'm just gonna give you an example. An example of say, say what I had to do today, I had to walk out and leave my team in there unattended. Okay, where's the discipline? Where's the respect? Okay. Where does your responsibility come in? And being a coach, just like I did when I came back in, I came back in and I seen some of these things wasn't being implemented. Boom!! Right there was the time to teach."

Knowing your limits. Coaches suggested that while they wanted to help every child that they encountered, they had to be reasonable in their expectations. Success and effectiveness, therefore, was not an absolute measure but something that had to be juxtaposed against the resources one had at one's disposal as well as the contexts from

which your athletes came. Coaches also stressed a need to identify what was under your control. If you could do that then you could truly measure your effectiveness. Coach Kathleen has a powerful quote that sums this idea up. Having coached and mentored for over 40 years, it seems logical that she, more than anyone else, would be able to get this right.

“I learned this a long time ago, you decide that you’re going to have a circle of excellence, at least the best you can do, you know...and everything within that circle is gonna be excellent, as best you can make it. And whatever else goes on outside the circle, you just, you know, try to deal with it on a basis of let’s keep trying something else that can work and let go of the bad part because most times, you don’t have a lot of power.”

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This study provided an opportunity to examine coaches' perceptions of mentoring their athletes. The results point to a wide range of interesting views about mentoring and how coaches believe it might work within their sports. This discussion will be divided into several parts. First, the results of the study will be briefly summarized. Second, the findings will be placed in context of what we already know about youth mentoring, positive youth development (PYD) and life skill development in coaching. This will be done to illuminate what has been learned about coaches who claim to mentor and where they fit compared to what researchers have already learned about mentoring. There is a vast body of literature examining youth mentoring but very little on how mentoring takes place within the context of sport. Third, based on the findings and the author's knowledge of the literature a model of coach mentoring will be forwarded. Fourth, the strengths and limitations of the study will be discussed as well as future research directions. Finally, the results will be considered with regard to their implications for youth development in the specific context of the study and in a more general sense - what mentoring might mean for coaches.

Key Findings

The results of the study showed overwhelmingly that not only do coaches consider themselves to be mentors to their athletes but they also place a great deal of thought and resources into their mentoring efforts. All of the coaches involved in this study were involved in mentoring in addition to a variety of other responsibilities that they held. Mentoring their athletes is therefore central to who they think they are,

highlighting the extent to which many of the citizens of Detroit have gone to influence the rebound that the city is currently experiencing. Specifically, the coaches interviewed felt that they were teachers and role models to their youth and were willing to spend and invest a great deal of time in them. At times, they even invested their own finances into their proteges. Mentoring for these coaches involved different roles and the use of a variety of skills. Coaches saw themselves as having mindsets and values that prioritize youth and youth success. Mentoring, therefore, was more than coaching but exemplified a commitment to the holistic development of athletes. Many coaches emphasized the deep caring they had for their athletes and the emotional attachment and commitment to their protégé's success. Further, the results illustrate that coaches are involved in the process of mentoring for a range of reasons. Chief among these is the fact that they believe mentoring works. Coaches hold this belief based on their own experiences of having been mentored or based on the work that they currently do with their own athletes.

The results also illustrate that all coaches believe that mentoring yields benefits while simultaneously being fraught with many challenges. Coaches pointed out that one reason that athletes benefit from mentoring is that by definition the process is geared toward youth development. Mentoring is, by definition, "assisting someone less experienced or younger". They also described however, the many ways in which a coach him or herself might benefit from mentoring activity. Additionally, some coaches indicated that the society, at large, benefits from the act of mentoring since athletes who are mentored can go on to impact others in the society and influence change. Despite all these benefits coaches were readily able to admit that there are challenges that might accompany their work. The ability to reach each and every child is something that

coaches shared as a major challenge. Equally challenging, was the ability to balance the involvement of parents who, coaches shared, could be too involved or not sufficiently involved in the lives of their athletes. Also challenging is reconciling the resources and the emotional attachment that mentoring can involve.

Finally, coaches shared certain factors that could make the act of mentoring more effective. The identification of these factors demonstrate that coaches recognized situations in which they could yield greater success. They also adopted strategies that might help them realize such success. This finding also points implicitly to the fact that all coaches recognized that not every mentoring relationship would be a success. Accordingly, one of the factors that all coaches identified as impacting the effectiveness of mentoring was the relationship that the coach had with their athlete. It was the foundation on which all of the other factors interacted since coaches could only mentor if they were allowed to by the young person.

While the above findings are in line with the purposes of the study two totally unexpected findings emerged. The first focused on how emotional mentoring was for individuals and how firmly rooted it was in their identities. The second was how they sometimes broke rules to insure the wellbeing and development of their players.

When conducting the interviews with coaches, the investigator was surprised to learn of the extent to which coaches began sharing personal information. Two coaches talked about their own attempted suicides. Another shared the death of a child by suicide, two others spoke about their marriages and challenges they had had while one coach talked about his father's alcoholic and abusive past. One reason these revelations were surprising was that nothing in the line of questioning pursued was designed to solicit

information of this manner. Another reason is that such information does not immediately appear to be relevant to the professions of coaching and/or mentoring.

The investigator spent much time considering why such accounts arose during the interviews and what they might mean to the process of mentoring. It was concluded that so many coaches shared such personal experiences because of how central mentoring is to the core of one's identity. Many coaches, for instance, spoke about mentoring out of a need they saw in the lives of their athletes. Their understanding of what that need is comes from their own struggles and hardships throughout their lives. These 'traumatic' experiences identified by coaches were inadvertently accessed since these memories are partially responsible for the coaches' worldview and by extension some of their reasons for mentoring their athletes.

Shockingly, many coaches spoke about breaking rules as a way to help their athletes. More interestingly, they viewed the ability to make such transgressions as a skill that coaches should have to make their mentoring more effective. This is shocking since the purpose of youth mentoring is to improve the condition of youth and also to teach them, imbue them with life skills. It would seem counterproductive to break rules while mentoring since it could potentially teach the youth wrong ideals. Youth would be aware that their mentors were doing something "illegal" and because mentors function as role models there is the potential that children could develop these inappropriate or 'bad' habits. Why, then, would coaches do this? Was it because they were 'bad' persons? Perhaps it was because the struggles of the inner city were so tough that coaches felt they had no other choice. Coaches felt such a strong connection to their athletes that, much as a parent would do anything for their child, so too would these coaches. Some of the rules

which were broken included forging documents, not reporting student/athlete change of address, taking students to get birth control pills and having students sleep over when they thought it was necessary.

Coaches realized that they had to “go above and beyond” if they were to truly assist these children. They could not allow the structure of the city, the rules and dynamics that had held these children back to simultaneously limit them. It means that coaches in this study felt that their ability to influence the structure in which they existed was critical to their success in grooming their kids. In many ways the coaches were teaching their athletes a form of agency (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). Agency is critical in many instances to escape challenging conditions. One that is necessary for success in such contexts. One that shows that success is possible when one understands the system well enough to work within it. While such lessons may not have been explicit, one wonders how much of this system ‘manipulation’ is observed and internalized by student-athletes. One must also wonder if there are negative side effects to modeling such rule and law breaking behavior.

Finally coaches wanted to teach their youth that there are some risks which are worth taking. In many instances coaches said that for many of these athletes no one *had their back*. These coaches, in breaking rules for their youth, are proving once and for all that they do have the athletes’ backs. They are willing to do anything to ensure that their kids are successful. Breaking the rules allows them to create opportunities for a group of youth that may have little opportunity otherwise. Youth mentoring is concerned with improving youth conditions and ultimately improving youth outcomes. The goal of these coaches’ actions is no different. Is it the nature of coaching, the nature of the inner city

and the contexts youth come from or are natural mentors able to bend the rules in ways formal mentors cannot?

Integrating the Findings with Existing Research

Mentoring in Coaching. All the coaches interviewed in this study identified themselves as mentors to their athletes. This is an extremely important finding. It is exciting because it confirms that sport, and more specifically, coaches, are a critical part of the development of our nation's youth (Ewing & Seefeldt, 1996). This finding confirms the vast array of literature that has advocated for the study, development and training of coaches so that they can be more intentional and deliberate in their teaching of life skills. An estimated 40 million youth participate in organized sporting activities annually. It means that coaches are in positions of influence to a vast number of the youth of our society. While the results from this study cannot be extrapolated, given its methodology, one can surmise that if the vast majority of current coaches in the U.S. considered themselves to be mentors, it means that the sport context may indeed be a space for tremendous teaching and acquisition of life skills, character and values (Gould & Carson, 2010). In fact, unpublished surveys conducted with many of Detroit PALs coaches reveals that almost all of them see themselves as mentors.

The finding that coaches consider themselves mentors is also significant because it provides an avenue to fill the void and great need for mentors that currently exist in the U.S. (Broderick & Shelton, 2014). All mentoring programs (formal) have identified a critical need to involve a non-parent significant other in the lives of the youth they serve. This task has been particularly difficult because mentoring usually involves considerable time; time to which many individuals do not commit. The Corporation for National and

Community Service estimates that only 18% of the adult population who volunteer their time are involved in mentoring activities. This means that only 11 million of the 65 million persons who volunteer annually are helping to guide the next generation of U.S. citizens into adulthood. Even further the group of individuals most likely to be mentored is those ages 16 – 24. In fact the data reveal that the propensity to mentor decreases as persons get older. This need is even more profound in inner city communities and communities of color (Broderick & Shelton, 2014). In communities where high school graduation rates are low and rates of violence and incarceration are high, mentoring has been established as a feasible mechanism to improve outcomes for youth (Tierney, Grossman & Resch, 1995). It is these types of statistics that have led for initiatives such as My Brother's Keeper.

One interesting observation is that coaches did not discuss mentoring their athletes to become future coaches. In the work mentoring literature as well as in the field of education, the process of mentoring is viewed as a tool to develop future professionals in the field. Logically, as applied to sport, this would mean that coaches would be guiding their youth to eventually become coaches, and would be teaching them the requisite skills. The fact that coaches did not emphasize this type of mentoring may be due to the context in which these coaches coached. Coaches placed a great deal of emphasis on providing youth with skills, opportunities and structure and these were related to the needs that coaches identified in the lives of their athletes. Potentially, given the harsh nature of Detroit, there was a greater need to teach youth life skills than to teach them the core elements of a profession such as coaching. The second possibility, is that these coaches were mostly volunteers. As such, perhaps they did not view what they did as a

job or a career. Their role as mentors then was based much more on the models adopted in youth mentoring approaches than those used in the work mentoring literature.

Relationship Quality. One of the reasons for conducting this study was the lack of research that exists focusing on coaches as mentors to their athletes. A major finding of this study is that coaches perceive themselves to be mentors to their athletes. To what extent, though, do coaches match the manner in which mentoring is defined by the youth mentoring literature? Rhodes and Dubois (2005) caution that all youth adult relationships ought not to be classified as mentoring relationships. One criterion to be used to determine a mentoring relationship is the “relationship quality” or the bond formed between the mentor and mentees. Research in the field of youth mentoring has shown that the strength of a mentor’s relationship with his mentee leads to greater outcomes (Herrera, C., Grossman, Kauh, Feldman & McMaken, 2007; Nakkula & Harris, 2013). It seems that some of these coaches might be classified as mentors given the relationships they have with their athletes. Coaches described athletes spending the night, paying for athlete’s tuition and forging documents for athletes as a part of their mentoring activities. Those activities seem to involve a great degree of trust and commitment which speaks to relationship strength. Similarly, coaches in this study also described a need to develop integral relationships with their athletes in order to be effective. It would seem that not only are some of our coaches true mentors, but they also understand the role that relationship building plays in realizing the objectives they have for youth.

Definition of Mentoring. The range of activities that coaches considered to be mentoring was another significant takeaway of this study. In some ways such a finding is not surprising given the lack of an established definition for mentoring (Eby, Rhodes, &

Allen, 2011). It is well established that the professions of teaching, counseling, coaching (business) and mentoring have significant overlap in terms of their definitions and purposes (Haggard, Dougherty, Turban & Wilbanks, 2011) and there have been several calls for a unified definition. Still within the youth mentoring paradigm there is some consensus around what mentoring is and what it involves; the holistic development of the individual (DuBois & Karcher, 2008). Much of what coaches described as their activities met this definition. While coaches shared very different activities as examples of their mentoring experiences, they were all very concerned with ensuring that their athletes were developing. In fact one critical distinction that they made between coaching and the coach who mentors, is a concern with the athlete's development off the field of play.

The field of youth mentoring has been particularly concerned with what activities and relationships are considered mentoring. This concern stems from a desire to distinguish mentoring relationships from other similar ones, like teaching and coaching (DuBois & Karcher, 2005). The results of this study suggest that too rigid definitions of what mentoring is and in what contexts mentoring might be found may cause researchers to overlook instances where mentoring is taking place. Coaches in this study had surprisingly deep connections, ones that meet DuBois & Karcher (2005) definition and exemplify the closeness connectedness and trust that Eby, Allen, Evans, Ng & DuBois, (2008) describe as important in defining mentoring. Additionally, coaches provided many functions to their athletes exemplifying the qualities of 'natural mentors'. Sport therefore may provide a prime opportunity for the study of natural mentoring and how these relationships might develop and transition over time. The field of youth mentoring would be best served to consider all fields in their research of mentoring relationships.

Functions of Mentoring. One way in which ‘true’ mentoring relationships are identified is by examining the functions provided and the benefits realized by the individuals involved (Holland, 2009; Ragins & Kram, 2007; Underhill, 2006). This study demonstrated that similar to youth mentoring relationships in which youth derive instrumental and psychosocial functions (DuBois, Holloway, Valentine & Cooper, 2002), athletes were able to gain and benefit from their relationships with coaches. Coaches described the emotional support they provided for athletes and also the various ways (financial, books, transportation, clothes, jobs) in which they provided tangible support. In fact coaches’ descriptions of the activities in which they engaged with their athletes, Checking In, Talking, Providing Resources and Being Available demonstrate the wide range of functions that coaches provided to their athletes. Based on this it would seem that coaches can provide the balance of functions that youth mentoring has been shown to provide (Eby et al., 2013).

Mentoring Benefits. Coaches identified a range of benefits that athletes derived based on their relationship with them. Athletes who were mentored achieved more; a fact which is consistent with other studies which have found that youth who are mentored have improved outcomes (DuBois, Portillo, Rhodes, Silverthorn & Valentine, 2011). Coaches also described their athletes having improved wellbeing and being better prepared for life. This is similar to notions of resilience described by researchers in the youth mentoring and PYD literature (Benson, 2006; DuBois & Rhodes, 2006).

Consistent with the literature coaches also identified that they too, in addition to their athletes, benefitted from the process of mentoring (Noe, Greenberger & Wang, 2002). While they got involved in mentoring to meet the need they felt their athletes had,

they simultaneously were able to appreciate that mentoring benefitted them. Whether it was the appreciation that past athletes or athletes' parents expressed for their assistance or the stipends some of them were paid, mentoring, coaches recognized, helped them in some way. One of those ways is described by Hegstad (1999) as the sense of satisfaction they get from the activity. Coaches benefit from mentoring because it allows them to feel that they are fulfilling a purpose. The ages of the coaches (mentors) and the fact that they also had full-time occupations e.g. teacher, police officer and counsellor seem to suggest that these individuals like to assist and help, perhaps pointing to a sense of fulfillment being derived from such activities.

Mentoring Challenges. Mentoring also posed challenges to coaches. This, again, points to the similarities between the activity in this context and other contexts described in the research (Elkin, 2006). One area that was unlike the existing literature is the balance that coaches described having to maintain between their functions as a coach and their goal of mentoring. Coaches suggested that it might be difficult to provide individuals with the attention they needed because doing such could result in animosity from other players or even cause the coach to neglect relationships with others on the team. The pressure to perform and win is also something that has to be managed and certainly, each coach has to make a decision about the importance that winning has for each of them.

Natural vs. Formal Mentoring. Some distinction is made in the literature between formal mentoring relationships and informal ones. This distinction is important since the impact of informal relationships is thought to be stronger (longer lasting effects, greater duration, stronger mentor mentee relationship) and the mechanisms through which both types of relationships function are also different (Cavell, Meeham, Heffer, &

Holliday, 2002). While both types of mentoring have been found to produce positive effects, natural mentoring relationships function strictly based on the relationship between mentors and their mentees while formal programs, function through the mechanisms of the relationship as well as through the support, resources and structure that the organization-administrator provides. This leaves some interesting questions about whether coaching constitutes formal or informal mentoring.

Logically, it was assumed that most coaches are natural mentors. This is because the relationships that coaches form with their athletes will be based on similarities in backgrounds and mutual interests. Coaches are drawn to sport due to their love of the game and athletes participate for similar reasons (Cavell, Meeham, Heffer, & Holliday, 2002). The mentoring relationship that is formed between them is, therefore, born out of mutual interest in the sport. Ragins, Cotton and Miller (2000) contend that this mutual interest is possibly a reason why natural relationships are longer lasting. In this study coaches described some relationships with athletes that lasted well beyond the time that their athletes still competed on their teams. Some described attending weddings, house warmings and sending gifts to former athletes' children. This points to the potential for coaches to be considered natural mentors of their athletes and for athletes to benefit from the characteristics of such relationships. More coaches taking an interest in mentoring is, therefore, good for the field of mentoring since natural relationships last longer and have longer lasting effects (Cavell, Meeham, Heffer & Holliday, 2002, Ragins, Cotton & Miller, 2000). While there was no way to test this premise in the current study, the investigator does note, however, that some coaches were able to identify relationships with student athletes who had made it to college, gained employment or achieved other

success. These coaches felt that they had had some part to play in that success perhaps underscoring the fact that there might be lasting effects. Further study looking at this element is needed.

The model of mentoring through Detroit PAL, however, has created a hybrid model. Coaches who participated in the program were trained to teach their athletes lifeskills and were certified by the organization, although it should be noted that this training is fairly minimal (less than 9 hours in total). This makes these coaches similar to mentors in formal programs who are trained to mentor (DuBois, Holloway, Valentine & Cooper, 2002). Detroit PAL also has a process through which coaches are evaluated and go through ongoing training each year. One wonders therefore whether the extent of mentoring which was observed in this context was found as a result of an integration of both processes. Coaches, through their love of sport have forged integral bonds with their athletes and this passion is enhanced by the training they receive from Detroit PAL initiatives. Research on mentoring should, perhaps, focus on how natural mentors, or potential mentors can be supported.

Group vs. Individual Mentoring. Another thing that is unique about mentoring within the sporting context is that it is a blend of both individual and group mentoring. While both forms of mentoring have been shown to result in positive outcomes (Mitchell, 1999) most programs adopt one approach or the other. Coaching is unique because the extent to which the coach develops relationships at the group or individual level varies for each coach. Most coaches said that they tried to impart life skills and life lessons to all of their athletes. Indirectly, therefore, coaches suggested that athletes may have more power than they did in determining whether relationships transitioned from the group

mentoring format to one more closely resembling traditional one-on-one mentoring approaches. In this way youth agency in the process of mentoring is apparent since athletes have the opportunity to manage how close they get to the coach and consequently, the level of exposure to the lessons the coach is trying to impart. One question not addressed by this study is whether the athlete's level of interest in the sport being coached and the coach's ability, impacts the extent to which such relationships form.

A Model of Mentoring in Sport Coaching

While this study was not designed to generate a grounded theory, as the findings were emerging and being analyzed and the investigator integrated what was found into patterns a working model to explain how mentoring might be involved in coaching began to emerge. Specifically, all coaches described that, as mentors, they were different from the 'coach' who only taught technical and tactical skills. When they began describing how what they did could be considered mentoring, however, it was apparent to the investigator that they were describing different types of relationships with their athletes. This model, depicted in Figure 1, therefore recognizes the distinctions made by the coaches between coaching and mentoring and also outlines the continuum of coach mentoring relationships described by coaches and interpreted by the investigator.

Given the researcher's understanding of the coaching and youth development literature, some points of transition and questions that might guide the distinctions apparent in coach mentoring styles were introduced. Accordingly what was produced is a combination of the coaches' perception of mentoring combined with the knowledge of the investigator.

An inspection of this working model reveals that it depicts how individuals might be distributed and/or move along a continuum that passes from coaching to mentoring. What the individual coach or mentor does, how sport is perceived and how we might call that adult (coach, mentor coach, etc.) are also depicted. In essence, the model shows that the extent to which coaches teach psychosocial and life skills, have a philosophy that is geared toward specific athletes or feel connected to their athletes and teams are all elements that define the type of mentor that they are.

The results of this study demonstrated that while all coaches mentor, coaches perceive mentoring in very different ways. Accordingly, coaches all had varying responses to what it is they did that constituted mentoring. In fact there were 41 themes which described the things that coaches did that they considered to be mentoring. Across these themes there were some commonalities but the many differences had to do with the contexts in which coaches found themselves because coaches were dealing with different groups of youth. A major reason for the differences, though, had to do with coaches' styles of mentoring their athletes. Closer examinations of those styles suggests that the reason for the variance in mentoring activities across coaches may have to do with their philosophy of coaching and or mentoring.

Figure 2. illustrates where coaches within the study would fall relative to the three categories Coach Mentor, Mentor Coach and Mentor. Coaches' views also allowed for a fourth category of Coach into which none of the study's coaches fell but which all coaches used as a reference group with which to demarcate themselves as mentors. This serves to give the reader a clearer sense of the types of coaches interviewed and how they differed in their approaches. The researcher suggests that coaches' responses to the

questions, “What I do with youth?” and “How I perceive Sport?” might account for some of the variance between coaches. Though very preliminary, it is believed that such a model might be useful for future examination of mentoring in sport since it allows some framework through which the phenomena might be studied. Below each of the four types of coaches represented in the model are discussed.

Coach. In their descriptions, all the coaches interviewed made a clear distinction between, simply coaching and mentoring. That distinction had to do with the way the coach views his job with his/her athletes and the way that he/she views sport as a context. A coach who is not a mentor sees sport as a context in which he is trying to achieve sport specific goals such as teaching the skills and tactics of the game and win contests. As such, his or her job is to teach the technical and tactical aspects of the game and develop the athlete for any other purpose is not part of his or her task. The coaches interviewed suggested that mentoring involved more than simply teaching the technical and tactical aspects of the game and had to do with developing the athlete as a person. Hence there is a point at which coaching transitions into mentoring. The Model of Mentoring suggests that this type of coach is going to be primarily concerned with teaching his/her athletes the x’s and o’s of the game. They will also view the context of sport as one in which one winning is the primary goal.

This type of coach may be teaching some psychological skills associated with the sport such as leadership and teamwork which could potentially transfer as a means or a way to make their team more successful. In fact, this type of coach might be mistaken for one who is involved in mentoring but the interviews with our coaches suggest that this coach’s perception of sport will not change even though they are teaching such skills.

She/He is teaching these skills for the purpose of helping the team and athlete perform better and win more games. However, there is a point of transition where the coach begins teaching life skills. That transition distinguishes him or her from the coach that does not. Still, such a coach will still have a perception that the purpose of sport is to win and will, therefore, treat their athletes simply as athletes. While as a coach they have now moved beyond simply teaching tactics and technique and have thus transitioned into teaching life skills, they are still preoccupied with winning and have no real interest in development of the athlete outside of the sport context. In this way it is the combination of their view of their role with their athletes as well as their perception of sport that combines to allow us to categorize them.

Coach Mentor. Mentoring involves thinking in some way about life outside of the sporting context. There is a transition point from simply coaching and caring about winning to thinking about what the athlete might be getting out of the sport apart from mere sporting experience. As a mentor the coach considers that the athlete is more than simply someone to whom they teach sport skills and sport strategy. The athlete is someone who has life beyond the context of sport. Sport therefore is initially viewed as an opportunity to teach skills that can be used in other contexts. This coach is concerned with ensuring that whatever skills can be gleaned through the sport he or she coaches is maximized by the athlete. Typically, when one views life skills development in the sport literature, we find several of these types of coaches and related programs (Smoll & Smith, 1989). They are teaching hard work, goal setting, leadership, teamwork, communication and conflict resolution. These skills are useful in the sport that the athletes play but also can translate to other spheres of student athletes' lives such as

school or at home. However, such transfer would be implicit as the coaches makes few or no attempt to discuss how these skills transfer to other contexts. The coach is a mentor because their focus is not on simply teaching sport but also ensuring that athletes can develop skills that may assist them in performing well academically, or within their communities. The coach emphasizes these skills and little attempt is made to go beyond them.

Mentor Coach. At the transition point on philosophy, coaches begin to view the sport context as an opportunity to teach things that goes beyond sport. The coach views himself or herself as someone who has a clear philosophy about life and thinks that their philosophy can assist youth in their development. They are different from the coach who is simply teaching the basic psychological skills that typically come with respective sports and instead are inculcating the values and skills that they deem important because of their experience or because of the profession they occupy besides coaching. Such a coach therefore has a clear philosophy of life and is using sport as a vehicle through which they can pass on that philosophy. Their philosophy is what needs to be taught through the sport rather than emphasizing the good elements of sport that already exist.

The model makes a distinction between the coach who teaches what he or she believes is important for the youth and one who is tailoring and adjusting their lessons, skills and values to what youth might need given the context within which they find themselves. The model suggests that a transition with respect to connectedness will occur for the coach who makes this shift in philosophy since it is their deeper connection to their athletes that will allow them to understand that what they had done hitherto can no longer work. As coaches work with their athletes they begin to recognize what makes

them unique and become more invested in their personal trajectories. Connection and the strength of their relationships with youth will allow them to distinguish between athletes on the team so that what is taught and presented may also be influenced by the athlete's individual needs.

Mentor. Finally, the model describes the mentor who also happens to coach. This individual views sport as an activity they happen to do. They do it as a means to an end, that end being the ability to mentor the youth who come to participate in sport. Coaches who fall within this category might not have a great deal of knowledge about the sport they are coaching. In fact the coaches interviewed who fell in this category did not necessarily like the sport that they coached. They began doing it because of a need that the youth had to fill the position of coach or because of the desire they had to teach youth about proper nutrition and staying off the streets. This coach also has very deep connections with members of their team and in many cases the family members of their team. Team members will often turn to them for a variety of support, ranging from food, to equipment to emotional support. It was these coaches that went above and beyond and in many instances were considered to be surrogate parents to many of their athletes.

While the proliferation of research on life skills development in sport and positive youth development (PYD) through sport and the preparation done by Detroit PAL led the investigator to expect that there would be many coaches who taught life skills through their sport, what was surprising was the number of coaches who had deep connections with their youth and could be classified as full fledged mentors. Many of the vignettes shared by these coaches revealed that they were embedded in the lives of their athletes

and in many instances, those of their families. This shows the potential that coaches might play in mentoring their kids.

Many of the coaches spoke about the advantages they had since sport was a context in which youth wanted to engage. Coaches then leveraged that interest to provide their kids with the support they needed. In fact more than one coach described the central role they played within their community. In this way the research which points to natural mentors being able to build deep connection with their mentees is apparent. The bonds formed by these coaches with their athletes are those based on mutual interest and liking. As such they are strong and are likely to be long lasting. In fact some coaches shared that they are still in touch with many of their athletes. Additionally, many of the coaches talked about the bond that they still had with their coaches and mentors demonstrating that such bonds are long lasting. Ragins and Cotton (1999) report that persons in natural mentored relationships had greater outcomes, inclusive of compensation and felt that the relationship was more effective than those in a formal mentored relationship.

Summary of model. Such a model is useful as it can help us to begin framing questions relevant to deepening our understanding of mentoring and coaching and how they interact at the youth level. Very little research has focused on how coaches may be mentors to their athletes. Accordingly, this first study was exploratory in nature. What this model provides is a framework that can be used to further test the ways in which coaches mentor their youth.

The model of mentoring in coaching also raises some questions that can be examined in future research. A main one is what makes coaches interested in becoming more involved in mentoring initiatives? Some research suggests that ‘generativity’ might

be a factor that contributes to persons getting involved in the act of mentoring (Kram, 1983; Ragins & Scandura, 1999). Based on Erikson's stages of psychosocial development, individuals have a need to assist in developing the next generation thereby giving them a sense of purpose. Coaches in this study did speak about passing on the knowledge they had gained to their athletes. One wonders however, the extent to which coaches remain concerned with tactical and technical aspects of sport as they become more involved in mentoring initiatives. Future research should examine the tension that might be created as coaches try to fulfill both roles. Benefits and challenges associated with both roles can also be explored.

Other questions that immediately come to mind are:

1. Under what circumstances does a coach move across the respective points of transition?
2. Relatedly, why might someone move left to right (become more of a mentor) versus right to left (become less of a mentor)?
3. Are such transitions a result of an accumulation of experience and knowledge?
4. What life circumstances and experiences determine where a coach begins on the continuum?
5. Does a coach lose his focus of winning in sport as he moves toward becoming a mentor?

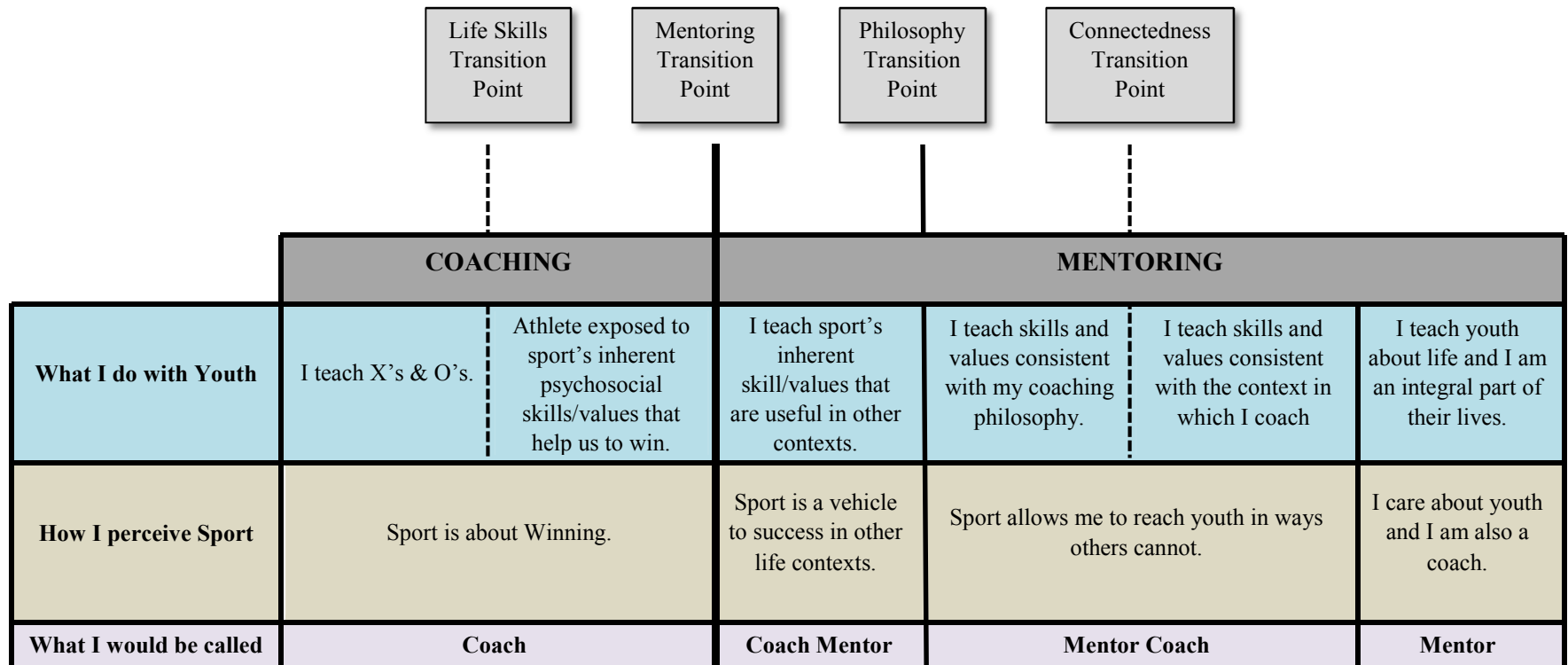


Figure 1. Model of Mentoring in Coaching. This figure illustrates a typology of mentoring practices exhibited by coaches interviewed based on what they did with their athletes and how they viewed the sporting context.

		Life Skills Transition Point	Mentoring Transition Point	Philosophy Transition Point	Connectedness Transition Point	
			</			

Figure 2. Coach Classification. This figure illustrates the groups in which the coaches interviewed would fall based upon what they do with their athletes and their perceptions and descriptions of sport as a context.

Study Strengths, Limitations and Future Research Directions

This study had a number of strengths. First, it was one of the first investigations aimed at studying mentoring within the sporting context. Second, 13 coaches who had extensive experience mentoring youth were identified and interviewed. Third, a phenomenographical methodology was used that allowed the participants to reveal their perspectives on mentoring with considerable freedom from investigator questioning bias. This study allowed the investigator to understand what coaches might be doing for their athletes and fills a void for such work in the sport psychology and coaching literature. As an example, the model of mentoring developed from this study might be used to study other contexts (other than Detroit PAL) and assist in developing working hypotheses that can be tested in those contexts.

While the study had a number of strengths it also had limitations. The results from this study come from a very small sample of the wider coach population. This means that as interesting and rich as the data are, there is no way to know conclusively, if these views are representative of the wider population of coaches. Even further since all the coaches in the study all worked with Detroit PAL and in the city or suburbs of Detroit their view of mentoring their athletes is, in some ways, restricted to that context. Their view, therefore, is a very unique one. Like all Detroit PAL coaches these coaches receive training that focuses on the organization's character and health and wellbeing goals, hence, there is no way to know to what extent their training affected the fact all coaches said they were mentors. Would the present findings pertain to 'regular' untrained coaches? This is reinforced by the fact that the types of professions that the coaches held were in the helping professions. Their approach to mentoring might therefore be an

extension of a broader world view that got them involved in such careers. This is something that should be examined.

Based on the findings of this investigation there are a number of future research directions. First, only the perceptions of coaches were assessed in this investigation. Perceptions of the athletes mentored by these coaches will be very important to assess so that the findings might be triangulated and extended. Do the athletes think that coaches are mentors? This will be a critical next step since coaches alluded to the fact that mentoring was not possible if athletes did not allow mentoring to take place. It would be interesting therefore to explore whether athletes perceive their coaches to be mentors. Further, to what extent are coaches mentors? Is it simply to teach sport related skills, and basic life skills or do athletes believe they have a deep connection with their coaches similar to some of the dynamics that some of these coaches described.

All the coaches said was their mentoring was based upon the relationship formed between the coach and athlete. Since the investigator had not spoken with the athletes there is no way to know what their views on the matter are. In hindsight, the questions about mentoring could have been more specific. A follow-up study that gets more specific and asks how mentoring works and why it might work in those ways is critical to conduct. What, specifically, are the dynamics that build and facilitate trust between the coach and the athlete for instance? What, specifically, allows the coach to get the kid to open up? What are the factors that coaches have already identified that interplay with one another to get mentoring to function so well? What role does demographics play in all this and what role do other factors play? Past work on youth mentoring has examined the

role that some of these factors play in achieving mentoring effects. It might be interesting to see how this might manifest itself in sporting contexts.

This study has also allowed for an examination of how mentoring might work in a youth sport context when coaches function as mentors to their youth. It was learned what coaches do is consistent with the definitions of youth mentoring advocate by experts in that field. While Detroit PAL and similar organizations advocate for coaches to teach life skills, in this context many coaches viewed their role as much more. This bodes well for the field of mentoring in sport and perhaps suggests that sport might be a place where the shortage of mentors in the wider society might be filled.

One question also left unanswered is the impact of gender on the mentoring relationships that coaches had with their athletes. Detroit PAL has a relatively even mix of males and females (46% females) who volunteer to coach youth across the 26 sports that are offered. One wonders if the fact that 9 females and 4 males were recruited for this study might point to a higher propensity of females being involved in mentoring youth. The researcher is also curious about why that might be the case. Even further, there is evidence to show that the functions that mentors provide might vary when they are in cross gender matches versus same gender matches. Allen and Eby (2004) found that male mentors typically provided more instrumental functions and females more psychosocial functions. This finding was not supported in this study and as such the role that gender might play in sport mentoring should be studied more closely.

One reason to look to sport is the positive, open minded attitude coaches here showed for the process of mentoring. Another reason to look to sport is the unique way that sport might be leveraged by being both a place for formal and informal mentoring to

take place simultaneously. In doing so mentors can take advantage of the benefits of natural mentoring processes which fosters longer term relationships and has lasting impacts and also benefit from the support of a program which has the structure to provide training, evaluation and tracking, all elements which have been associated with formal program success.

Practical Implications

Coach Parent Relationships. This study has revealed that many coaches, especially in Detroit see the need to bolster the chances of their athletes success by teaching and supporting them in ways that go beyond x & o coaching. While this is commendable they noted that their success in this regard is not automatic. They stressed that the support of Parents/Guardians was a critical factor in whether they could connect with youth in meaningful ways. Parents as described by coaches were gatekeepers, of information and of support that could provide coaches with an advantage in their quest to become mentors to their youth. Programs that would like to use coaches as mentors therefore should try to foster stronger coach/parent relationships. Such relationships should clearly communicate what the goals of the coach and the organization might be and the ways in which parents can support those goals. Further, opportunities for parents to express their doubts, fears and concerns about the relationship should also be provided since it seems that in many instances coaches and parents may not be well aligned as it relates to goals for the child.

Coach Education. Programs with a desire to leverage the coach as a mentor should also consider the role that education of coaches can play in developing fully to perform this function. Clearly, Detroit PAL has played a critical role in selecting and

training the coaches interviewed. It seems important to note therefore that there may be specific skills and education that might make coaches more prone to want to mentor their athletes and also more successful at the task of mentoring. Many of the coaches in this study spoke about being able to relate to student athletes in their quest to develop closer relationships. It is clear therefore that an understanding of skills such as empathy, motivation and communication might be critical tools for any coach. While such skills should already be a part of the coach's competence, the coach who would like to mentor perhaps requires them even more. Organizations should therefore provide opportunities for coaches to develop and hone these skills if youth mentoring is one of their objectives. One potential avenue for that development is to have more advanced coaches, like those interviewed, teaching other coaches. The hope would be that these coaches would not only pass on their knowledge about the skill of mentoring but also their passion and desire to engage in the practice.

Relatedly, a few of the coaches interviewed had very little knowledge of the sport they coached. They stressed that since their goal was mentoring, such a knowledge was less important. While the researcher understands this sentiment, there are two concerns. The first is that sport is by its nature physical and as a consequence, coaches who are ill equipped to train their athletes could potentially be putting them at risk to be injured. Lack of proper techniques when warming up or executing specific skills can have deleterious effects for the athlete. In communities like Detroit where many view sport as an avenue to a better life, that makes such a risk even more severe. Organizations who employ such coaches might benefit by ensuring that they are trained with a baseline of knowledge about their sport and about physical activity in general.

The second concern has to do with the nature of natural mentoring. One of the explanations for natural mentors being able to develop stronger relationships is rooted in the fact that they and their mentees have similar interests. The relationships then is strengthened through their interest in a particular activity. If coaches do not have the same love, or understanding of the game they coach as their athletes, therefore, the advantage they might possess as natural mentors may be lost. Further, will they attract or retain youth who might legitimately have an opportunity to succeed at their sport? While it is commendable that there are persons willing to get involved in an activity for the sake of educating youth, the question remains whether they are the best persons to do so, within this context?

Coach Training

One area of potential concern is the fact that not all of the coaches who were interviewed were formally trained to coach. In fact, in some instances some of them did not even play the sport that they currently coached. While that speaks, in large part, to their interest to be involved with youth and give back regardless of their limitations, it leaves the question about the level of athletic/sport instruction that student athletes under these coaches' charge would be receiving. While youth would benefit from having a significant adult in their lives, it does not necessarily mean that they are developing their sporting skills. While this is not the scope of this study, one potential recommendation for an organization like Detroit PAL is to provide support and encouragement to their coaches to become qualified and certified in coaching their respective sports, especially since one of the organization's goals relates to producing healthy young people. Research has shown young people who do not feel competent in their sport and movement skills do

not stay engaged in sport (Ulrich, 1987). Overall this will ensure that athletes not only have an opportunity to develop, holistically, but can also benefit fully from their sport participation.

Further while all of the coaches in this study were trained to view sport as a context in which mentoring could take place, the extent of their knowledge about best practices related to mentoring was not explored. The investigator would surmise, given the variance in their approaches to mentoring, that the skills, values and support provided to student athletes varied depending upon the philosophy, training and experiences of coaches.

Still it is also important to note that Detroit PAL as an organization, is doing much to develop its coaches into mentors for their athletes since, all of the coaches interviewed based on the investigator's selection criteria identified themselves as mentors. This means that the identification and training by Detroit PAL, is accurate in its ability to recruit or produce coaches who have this belief and mindset. As the results also suggest, these are individuals who not only view themselves as mentors but have an overwhelming belief that the process of mentoring works and that there is a need for mentoring their athletes. They are willing to do this in spite of the many challenges that they identified. Such an effort demonstrates a commitment to the task of holistically developing their athletes; one that goes far beyond that of simply coaching them.

Judging Success. Like all programs based upon best practice, many have tried to determine whether mentoring is effective in improving the conditions of those being mentored. Overwhelmingly the research suggests that it is effective (DuBois, Holloway, Valentine & Cooper, 2002). One limitation to such work, however, is that it is difficult to

judge success within a formal program where variables can be controlled easily and other contexts where so many things are outside the control of the coaches. One of the many frustrations that coaches had for instance was determining the context from which kids came. They knew it would impact the work they were trying to do but they were not always in a position to get that information from the parent or the child.

Formal programs have an advantage, then, in the way that they define success. Success can be determined a priori and then the program and interaction between mentor and mentee structured in such a way that not only is success achieved, but it can also be measured. In natural mentoring programs such as these, where the ‘agenda’ of mentoring might be determined by coach or by the child, determining success is a much more messy affair. Perhaps this is one of the reasons that the coaches involved have to be so optimistic in what is taking place. There needs to be a comfort with uncertainty or a strong faith and belief that what one is doing will work. Short of that, there is very little way to measure and account for your success. It may be easier to judge success in formal programs. Many of the coaches in this study spoke about planting seeds since “it takes a village” to bring about the change required and they may not be able to reach everyone themselves. Success in their minds may always come.

Potential for Sexual Abuse. The final aspect of this study that warrants future investigation is the fact that some of the qualities exhibited by mentors is similar to those portrayed by sexual predators who may be involved in “grooming”. This aspect of sexual abuse involves gaining the trust of potential victims and building rapport so that the relationship becomes more familiar (Brakenridge & Fasting, 2005). Peterson (2004) makes the case that the nature of the relationship that coaches have with their athletes

creates the opportunity for sexual abuse to be particularly high. Grevis and Dunn (2004) argue that the role that coaches play in the lives of youth “is robust with the potential for misuse”. Certainly, the relationship that some coaches described with their athletes in Detroit provides them with opportunities to abuse that relationship, although in this study no evidence or hint of any kind of abuse was evident. Still, coaches had youth spending the night at their homes and in many instances were providing them with transport and financial assistance. A paradox seems to exist, then, where many well-meaning coaches acting as mentors will engage in extreme and unorthodox practices that have the potential to help their proteges while at the same time putting themselves, Detroit PAL and the youth at risk.

Engaging in these behaviors is also concerning because some coaches thought that “bending rules” could be a useful skill in order to mentor effectively. What rules got ‘bent’ however seemed entirely up to the coach and it seems unlikely that Detroit PAL had complete oversight of what may have been taking place. Baker, Connaughton and Zhang (2011) point out that most youth recreational organizations are not immune from prosecution if their “volunteers” were to engage in pedophilic activities. An organization like Detroit PAL therefore needs to be particularly vigilant in its recruitment and selection of coaches and in implementing policies about appropriate and inappropriate mentoring practices. Further the type of training that the organization provides and the oversight given must factor the ‘dark’ potential that the relationships that coaches might develop can be used. This organization runs sport leagues for over 13,000 youth annually and has upwards of 2,000 volunteers. It would be disheartening if

the organization's reputation is tarnished because of the actions of one or two unscrupulous coaches.

Summary

This study interviewed 13 coaches who coach within an urban sport context to understand the way in which they mentor their athletes and what they thought of the process of mentoring. All coaches thought of themselves as mentors and described a range of functions and activities that are consistent with the variation that exists within the mentoring literature. The study revealed that mentoring occurs within the sport context and that it occurs in similar ways as other youth contexts. One area of potential future study is whether sport might provide hybrid models of approaches to mentoring since coaches have the opportunity to mentor at the group or individual level and also may be considered both natural and formal mentors given the broader structure within which they coach.

The study also pointed to areas of future research such as exploring coaches mentoring in other contexts and getting youth perceptions of coaches as mentors. Finally the study recommended that programs trying to use coaches as mentors would be best served by instituting training on both the technical aspects of the sport as well as mentoring skills in their quest to develop mentors. Additionally, the relationship that coaches have with parents should be leveraged to ensure greater mentoring success.

APPENDICES

Appendix A. Coach Interview Guide

Demographics

Name	# of years coaching
Age	# of years coaching this sport
# of sports coached (what sports)	Level of coach certification
Context coached (club/school)	# of years in current position
# of athletes on team	Family context
Volunteer	Profession (if a volunteer)
Educational level	

Mentoring Questions

ARE YOU A MENTOR TO YOUR ATHLETES?

- Do you consider yourself a mentor to your athletes?
 - If no, why would you say you are not a mentor?

IN WHAT WAYS DO YOU MENTOR?

- How would you define mentoring? What makes someone a mentor?(training/experience)
- In your mind is there a difference between mentoring and sport coaching in general?
- In your experience do all coaches mentor their athletes?
- Are you a mentor for all your athletes or just some of them?
- If yes, do you think you are more of a mentor to particular athletes on your team? (Get names)
- In what ways do you think you are a mentor to your athletes? (Tell me what you mean by mentoring that makes it more delineated to me)

WHY DO YOU MENTOR?

- Why do you mentor your athletes?
- Have you ever been mentored? (Please explain)
- Do you consider yourself a mentor to persons in other contexts? (Please explain)
- How might that relationship differ from the one you have with your athletes?
- Over your coaching career have you always been a mentor to your athletes?

ATHLETE PERCEPTIONS OF MENTOR

- Do you think your athletes feel that you mentor them?
- How do you know that?
- What do you think they expect from a mentor?
- What do you think your athletes most value in your mentoring?
- Do you think athletes understand what you are doing or your intentions?

BENEFITS/CHALLENGES

- What are the benefits of mentoring?
 - Coach
 - Athlete
- What are some of the challenges to mentoring athletes?
- Are the challenges similar or different to coaching challenges?
- What role if any do parents play in your ability to mentor/coach your athletes?
- Does a parents' role change in your mind depending on whether you are a mentor to athletes or just a coach?
- How do you deal with those mentoring challenges or overcome them?

WHAT MAKES YOU EFFECTIVE AS A MENTOR?

- To what would you attribute your success as a mentor?
- What would you recommend future mentors focus on?

OTHER MENTORS

- Who else do you think is a mentor to your athletes?
- Do you think that these 'mentors' do anything different to what you do?

Appendix B. Idiographic profiles

Coach Jada

Mentoring Context. Coach Jada coaches High School basketball in a suburb of Detroit. It a relatively good area of the city and even Coach Jada remarks that at the end of practice here all the students get into their cars and leave. Like so many of the higher SES areas in Detroit and its suburbs, the demographic of the school is also predominantly white. This is the only coach of all that I have spoken to who coaches a predominantly white team. She says that in the past she worked with several inner-city schools and believed that her role was to show young black women how to behave and be successful. When questioning her about her philosophy of coaching and mentoring I challenged her on why she would settle here in spite of her claim to be helping those most in need. She responded in a shocking way. The girls here she says are no different than those in the inner city; in some cases there is no one at home, in others there are people at home who don't speak to you, in either case, there is still no one listening.

Profile of Coach. Coach Jada is single and does not have any children. Perhaps this is reason she has time to coach high school basketball while also simultaneously coaching a college team. She began coaching 15 years ago having completed her college playing and at the age of 41, is coaching at her dream school. While she loves coaching at the high school level she says she prefers to coach at college since you are allowed to choose (recruit) the athletes with whom you work. She says that at the high school level, you work with what you have. This she says is what makes high school sport a perfect opportunity to mentor. Coach Jada says you have to learn to build players up and adapt your strategy to the personnel that you have. These she believes are key ingredients to

any successful mentor. She is paid to coach but says that it's not done for the money. When you do as much of it as she does, you have to have a love for the sport.

Coach Jada has not gone to school to coach but developed her skills as a coach by working with other coaches and going to various clinics. She says that an important part of her philosophy is to continue growing and improving herself as a coach. Having played basketball for most of her life, she credits the sport with giving her some wonderful life experiences and introducing her to coaches who have been great mentors to her. She says that the sport taught her a lot of life lessons and life skills, and so part of her purpose is to pass some of those onto her kids.

Coach Jada grew up in the inner city but eventually attended this high school in the suburbs. She says that this 'dual' upbringing has allowed her to understand life on both sides of 8 Mile and allows her to translate her lessons into various languages. The girls on either side of the 'Mile' do not speak the same language and the references you make will not apply in the same way. Context is a big piece of mentoring in her mind and she says what she does is bridge the gap for youth to allow them to see things from a different perspective.

Extent/Nature of Mentoring. Coach Jada is really interested in helping girls become more successful in life. She says that having graduated with a degree in Media and working in the Media industry for several years she realized that that was not what she wanted to do. Mentoring, she says, has always been a part of her. She believes that people who do it well are natural and as such born with the innate ability or gift to do it. It is something she says that cannot be taught. Given her poor upbringing she says she first wanted to assist girls who came from the inner city but she says that it can be very

challenging to do so as you are sometimes at odds with the parents and the students themselves. Her love for basketball led her to accept the coaching position at this school, her Alma Mater. When she came to coach here she realized that the girls here had different circumstances but similar challenges. That and the support she has received from the parents here have led her to remain and become an integral part of the school community. Her goal is to equip her students with decision-making skills and transform them into leaders. To do this she takes them on trips to expose them to different contexts and holds them accountable for the decisions that they make.

Value of Mentoring. Coach Jada mentors because of the value she believes mentoring holds for the youth with whom she works. She thinks that it can teach them valuable life skills and life lessons; skills such as leadership and decision-making. She is giving back some of the benefits she received when she participated in sport and was mentored. She mentions during the interview that she only recently told her past coach, whom she considers a mentor, thanks for the assistance he had given to her. She says it is her responsibility to pass some of those lessons on to other kids. She says it is especially important to mentor girls who typically do not have as many role models and exemplars. She takes extra effort to make sure that she not only imparts good advice but that she lives what she is telling them to do.

Benefits & Challenges of Mentoring. Youth who are mentored develop self-confidence and feel supported and listened to. Coach Jada makes the point that many parents in this context do not have the time to listen to their kids and spend time with them given their other responsibilities. As a result she says she contributes a lot to the girls by being there and available to chat with them, listen to them and give them advice.

While this is not the typical group of girls you would expect being mentored in the city of Detroit, she says “they need me too”. She also says that her upbringing allows her to provide some context to the girls that they may not be able to experience otherwise.

A huge part of what Coach Jada teaches her youth is repercussions of their actions. She says that kids need to have structure and understand that they have responsibility for their team as well as themselves. She says that she tries to get them to understand that what is best for them is not always good for the team. Another huge lesson she teaches is decision making. She says that a core component of being a leader is being able to make decisions. She tries to teach her girls the ability to make decisions by giving them the autonomy to make those decisions and holding them accountable for them.

Finally Coach Jada teaches her girls how to speak properly in public. They should speak audibly and in a manner that allows persons to understand them. That demonstrates their maturity and leadership; things she is trying to inculcate in them.

Factors influencing effectiveness. Coach Jada believes that the sporting context is one that makes mentoring more effective since she says that sport captivates youth and makes them far more attentive to the lessons and skills being taught than any other context. Youth have fun in sport and the context therefore makes lessons far more relatable.

Another important factor is the ability to get youth to open up. Coach Jada describes being relatable as an important part of being a mentor. She believes that an important part of mentoring is building a healthy relationship with your players, and so much of her time is spent talking with them and getting them to open up. In this way she

says she can assist them with personal challenges that they have. It also allows her to drill home her lessons even more.

Coach Robert

Mentoring Context. Coach Robert coaches the sport of soccer in a Middle school on the eastside of Detroit. Many of the kids who attend the school come from lower SES households and even the school is under resourced. I interviewed Coach Robert at the school and saw first-hand, a soccer pitch that had no grass, just dust and makeshift goal posts made from PVC. Accordingly, Coach Robert sees his role as trying to make the best of limited resources and providing some stability in the lives of the kids with whom he interacts. He is also a teacher at the school and so he has the opportunity to interact with the kids not just as a coach.

Profile of Coach. Coach Robert is a teacher at a Middle School in the East side of Detroit. At age 46 he has been coaching different sports for the past 26 years. Most of his experience has been in coaching football and he played the sport all through high school. He is married and has 5 children of his own. Currently he is coaching the sport of soccer, a sport he has never played, and only learned when he started coaching it 6 years ago. He has his Masters' Degree in Education and has been teaching for the past 20 years. He coaches a soccer program which is aligned with USSF "Soccer for Success" program. This program is geared toward educating kids about healthy nutrition and the value of physical activity and exercise. It uses soccer as a platform to have this conversation and provides coaches with material to enable them to have informed discussions. It also involves testing of students' pre and post program to monitor growth across the program and pays coaches a stipend for their work.

Coach Robert believes that mentoring is the core of everything he does. Even further, he believes that his ability to mentor effectively is based on the skills, and experiences that he has had so far in his life. One of the things he feels that distinguishes him from other coaches is his ability to relate to kids and motivate them to do better. He contends that the skill is not something that all teachers and coaches possess. He also has a positive outlook regarding kids and thinks that having grown up in similar circumstances he understands what some of these kids go through. His faith in their ability to succeed he thinks also allows him to approach them differently. Finally, he discusses the importance of practicing what you preach. He says “anybody can talk a good game but you have to show it in your actions”.

Extent/Nature of Mentoring. Mentoring, to Coach Robert, is supporting kids and “having their back”. A good mentor is someone who cares about, guides and shows kids the right way to behave and act. One needs to view the child as a whole person and not just think about their athletic ability. Regardless of their athletic potential, all kids need to be mentored, so that they become good people later on, and interact well with others in the world. A mentor may need to vary his style and his approach based on the kid with whom he is dealing. Some kids need more from their mentors than others. This he says varies a lot depending on the child and the context from which they come. A kid’s home context can impact the value that a mentor can add.

A basic function of mentoring is checking in on kids. He says that many youth do not have that taking place. He suggests that when you check up on kids, after school, outside the season, it shows them that you care about them. Communicating with their parents also helps build a network of support for that child and fosters better relationships

with parents. He believes that sport is a wonderful context to teach life lessons since sport is a hook that draws kids in. Mentoring in the context is easier since kids will trade off learning a little for the thrill of playing the game afterward. Sport teaches a lot about discipline, hard work and teamwork that he sees as valuable skills for the rest of life as well. He credits the values instilled in him through sport for a lot of his work ethic and sense of responsibility. He says that the joy of working with others to achieve a goal is irreplaceable. It is something that sport provides.

Value of Mentoring. He mentors because he believes kids need someone who cares about them to guide them and motivate them. He speaks about the differences in philosophies that other teachers and coaches have and questions the value to kids. He says that growing up, his coaches mentored him and now that he is older he sees the wisdom and value of their words. He feels that part of his responsibility is to pass on that wisdom and that philosophy of the world. Additionally, he says mentors have tried some of the ‘stupid’ things that the current generations are going to try. These mentors then also have a responsibility to try to save them from futures that will be dark and doomed.

Benefits & Challenges of Mentoring. Tangible things that kids need such as food, shelter, clothing are some of the most straightforward things that kids get through mentoring support. He also sees it providing them with information to prevent mistakes and missteps. On top of this he points out that mentoring helps by providing kids with support for whatever challenges or difficulties they may be going through. He makes the point that even though as a coach you may be trying to teach discipline and provide structure, the coach has to be flexible and understand the needs of the kids he is serving.

His approach has to be adaptive to the child with whom he is working. One of the challenges that arises then is being consistent with your kids.

While he says he does not coach for the stipend that he gets, he does point out that every little dollar helps. The money he receives from coaching this program then is definitely a benefit of being a coach/mentor.

The biggest challenge he identifies is the context from which some kids come. He says that some of the challenges kids have to live with may be insurmountable. Also the context at home may erode the values that you are trying to instill as a coach. He also says that sometimes parents place children in a tough spot because of their own challenges or situations. As a coach or mentor you may then have to deal with challenging situations because of it.

Factors influencing effectiveness. One of the most important factors identified by the coach is the kids' belief that you are there for them and want them to succeed. He says that if what you do is not perceived in that way you end up fighting a battle with kids rather than working with them to move them forward. Kids need to trust that you will not spill their secrets, you will not laugh at them, and you will understand the hardships they undergo. Relatedly, another factor affecting your effectiveness is the skill you have that can motivate kids. Coach Robert underscores his ability to keep kids in line without admonishing them. This alludes to a skillset and a craft that is developed through trial and error. He says that the other coaches who work with him "cannot do what I do". He also says that working with parents is something that makes you effective as a mentor. Kids take note if you are on good terms with their parents or significant others and

recognize that it is harder to get up to mischief if that relationship is in place. He says that checking in on kids also serves to build an effective relationship with parent/guardians.

Coach Alicia

Mentoring Context. Coach Alicia has coached volleyball for the past 12 years. She is currently coaching a team of middle school girls and has done so for the past 4 years. She has kept in touch with a numbers of her players and has coached at a variety of levels. As such, her description of mentoring and her experience doing it comes from a mélange of experiences with different age groups. Some of those relationships have transitioned as girls have grown up and moved on to other phases of their life. She juxtaposes some of the differences between coaching older versus younger girls.

Profile of Coach. Coach Alicia is a volleyball coach who has been coaching at various levels for the past 12 years. Even though she has coached other sports, she describes coaching volleyball as her love and her passion. She has coached at a variety of levels, coaching high school kids when she first started. In the past four to five years however, she has begun coaching middle school aged girls. She played volleyball in college and transitioned into coaching the sport she enjoyed. Alicia worked for many years as an athletic director and recently began a job in youth enrichment. She is engaged and has two children. She typically receives a stipend for the current position she coaches and has even started her own travel club for the sport.

She says that her initial intention was not to mentor but that that emerged. She believes that both her experiences in sport and the coaches she has had drive her to want to give back and share some of the lessons she has learned. Mentoring is being available

to youth to help them grow and develop. The mentor is a resource whom athletes can tap into for a variety of things. It is critical then that they are present and that athletes believe that they are approachable. She seems to genuinely enjoy spending time with her athletes and thinks that ultimately her role is to make them better women. In a context where she says there are not enough female role models, she feels her responsibility is to show her players how to become 'respectable' young women. The time she spends with them allows her to understand what is taking place in their lives and allows her to guide them while providing a positive example.

Extent/Nature of Mentoring. Mentoring for Alicia starts firstly with being a role model to the youth she coaches. One of her greatest goals as a mentor is to show and teach young ladies how to act and behave like a young lady. She says that this often leads her to implement rules within her practice that regulate the way girls dress, and act. She views herself as a resource to her girls and mentoring as being available to the girls to assist them with a wide range of things that they may need. Mentoring starts by putting yourself in a position where your athletes know you are available and willing to help. Alicia says that at a basic level she checks in on all of her girls. She talks to them about their grades, their family life and about things that might be going on in their lives. Her relationships with athletes however, have led her to pay for college tuition and allow athletes to spend the night at her house. The expectations she has of her athletes are high when it comes to their behavior, their dress and their language. Alicia describes that they should act and dress like ladies and even further she is very clear on the etiquette to be observed when addressing adults, and when texting or calling. She believes that teaching them these things prepares them for life and the world beyond sport.

Alicia maintains the relationships she has with some of her athletes. They call her regularly, updating her on where they are in their lives and in their careers. In some cases she checks in on them making sure they are maximizing the potential she believes they have. She mentioned one instance of an athlete who she wanted to go to college who was persuaded by her mother to stay in Detroit and babysit her younger sister. Alicia says that she calls her every month continuing to insist that she go to school. She also says since she is so involved in the sport of volleyball she sometimes asks other coaches about past players. Though she doesn't say it explicitly Alicia alludes to girls getting away from Detroit through education. Their academic success therefore seems to be a major focus for her.

Her perception of coaching and mentoring changed when she interacted with other coaches and saw their approach to coaching. It is then she says that she consciously began trying to develop and build relationships with her players. In spite of that she says that many of her early coaching philosophies have a mentoring focus and she had not thought about them in that way until our interview "Give me what you got, I will give you more." There is also an overwhelming desire for Coach Alicia to help the next generation of girls who might be struggling due to a lack of role models or resources. Alicia describes personal sacrifice to provide for girls financially. She also spends lots of time with them at various activities and provides them with opportunities to coach and mentor younger athletes.

Value of Mentoring. Coach Alicia mentors because she would like to give back to youth. She describes some of the coaches she has had in the sport as being extremely influential in her life. She even says that one of them in particular is still a mentor to her

and that she reaches out to him for advice and counsel in different matters. She also appreciates that while all her girls may not get the value of her mentoring now, that it will click for them eventually. This is part of the reason a mentor should be available so that youth can access them, as they need, when they are ready.

Benefits & Challenges of Mentoring. Alicia says that for her the benefit of mentoring to youth is providing them with someone they can go to for advice; someone they can trust and from whom they know they can get support. Girls who are mentored will have increased confidence, leadership skills and self-esteem since they feel supported and have someone giving them encouragement.

As a coach Alicia thinks she benefits since she gets the satisfaction of seeing girls change, develop and go on to be successful. Knowing you had a part to play in that, she says, is satisfying. Although she gets paid to coach she says it is not much and most of it goes back into the athletes and the coaching.

Alicia says that the biggest challenges to mentoring are time and frustration. She describes some of her athletes not realizing their potential and letting you down. That she describes as painful. As a mother of two, working fulltime and also trying to run a business, going the added step of mentoring is sometimes a struggle, time-wise. Alicia talks about making hard choices and wondering how these sacrifices of time impact her daughter, who sometimes wants Mommy to herself.

Factors influencing effectiveness. Alicia recognizes the value of building relationships with her girls and letting them know you are approachable. She says that if youth are unwilling to open up to you then you are unable to assist them in the ways you might like. Girls, especially, she says, need to know that you care. Listening, she cites as

a very important skill that all mentors should possess. She says that getting player feedback, understanding how they feel is important in forging an effective relationship with athletes. One critical thing to which she also refers is the time that is spent with players. Alicia describes relationships with athletes who she has known for many years. She says nothing can replace time stating that she has a better relationship with those players she knows longer. They also know her longer which also helps. She also suggests that a player's age is a critical aspect of them appreciating the lessons you are trying to impart. She describes the case of one young lady who only recently began appreciating their relationship because her current coach is very different and only focused on the sport.

Coach Diane

Mentoring Context. Coach Diane coaches volleyball at a high school in Detroit. She also does some coaching of a Club volleyball team. She sees herself as more of a mentor to the girls at the high school given the nature of her relationships with them. She talked about her mentoring at both the high school and club collectively as she didn't see much difference between them in terms of her approach. Her interview focused on her approaches to mentoring in both contexts though she described the High school context more given her closer relationship with players there. She also expressed that there was some overlap between the players who played for her at school and those who played in the club.

Profile of Coach. Coach Diane is currently an Athletic Director at a youth sport organization. She coaches at the high school and club level in her spare time and has been doing this for the past 8 years. She has a Masters degree in Sport administration and a

Phd. in Sport Psychology. She has also taken classes in Coaching. She believes that she is a mentor because she does more than simply coach the sport with her athletes. She views herself as someone who can push athletes to see things in themselves that they don't yet see. This mind-set comes largely from the value she believes that coaching and mentoring played for her. Having gained so much through some of her former coaches, she feels it necessary to give back and fulfil what she describes as a purpose.

Sport represents what she describes as a convenient place where her desire to help youth and her love of sport converged. She views sport as a springboard for many of the youth with whom she works; one which can get them to college, different countries and jobs. As such much of her teaching is done in and through the sport, she amplifies the lessons taught and makes connections to life off of the court. She views herself as a surrogate parent, being particularly tough with her girls because she says she sees their potential. She describes her philosophy as one that gets her involved in their lives off the court and having a sense of what's going on in their personal lives. She tries to develop relationships with her athletes so that they feel like they can come to her and share things.

Extent/Nature of Mentoring. While she stresses and emphasizes life skills and lessons through her coaching of the sport it seemed evident that Coach Diane viewed the girls' performance in sport as a central element of success. Here were girls who could play and sport was an avenue to teach them some life lessons and also allow them to reach opportunities and experiences that might otherwise be untouchable. This is clear when she describes taking her girls to tournaments in other cities and in parts of the city where they will be the only black players. This she says teaches them to face their anxiety and fear of playing against "white" teams and also will allow them to showcase their

talents for other coaches. Two big lessons for her are leadership and having confidence. She tries to instill these in her players as she works with them. She believes that the sport context is especially beneficial for teaching life lessons because it is competitive and allows you to make the lessons in a more relatable manner.

She believes that her mentoring could be more intentional. What she does is based on when the need arises. She will identify and use teachable moments to drive home the lessons she might want to teach. However, while she may not view her style as an intentional one, she describes many experiences she provides for her girls that might suggest otherwise. She puts the responsibility to make decisions on captains, she takes the girls to play in tournaments at the highest level in the state, and she communicates directly with girls not parents. Each of these things seems to put the responsibility for decision making on her athletes.

While Coach Diane does identify a couple players with whom she keeps in contact, she has not kept in touch with the vast majority of her players since they have left the team.

Value of Mentoring. One of the things Coach Diane emphasized in her interview is that she does not want to coach in the suburbs. As someone who grew up in the inner city, she views her role as pushing the current generation of girls in the city toward excellence. Coach Diane therefore views mentoring as being able to shape and mold the next generation by guiding them and challenging them in ways that they have not been before. She sees a lot of potential in the girls she coaches and says that many of them can play at the next level.

She adds that as girls do not have similar opportunities to boys and often lack role models, she feels an added impetus to mentor them and provide them with said role model. She attributes her knowledge of this to the research she has done. She credits volleyball and her coaches for allowing her to go to college to see Hawaii and achieve a lot of things in her life. She believes that she needs to help her girls achieve similar things. Mentoring is her way of giving back, of passing on her knowledge and experience to the next generation.

Benefits & Challenges of Mentoring. Coach Diane views the major benefit of mentoring to be an improvement in girls' self-esteem and ability to lead. Much of her coaching seems geared to having them realize that they are capable of leadership and putting them in positions where they can work things out on their own and make decisions. If they do not make the 'right' decisions, she holds them accountable for that. Another benefit she describes is that girls are able to get scholarships to go to college thereby utilizing their athletic potential to get an education. She feels that they are so talented that volleyball should help them get an education.

One benefit of mentoring for Coach Diane is the fact that she gets remunerated for coaching. Like many of the other coaches though she considers it a stipend and does not coach or mentor for the money. She expresses that she could coach in the suburbs and make more money if that were her main motivation for coaching. Her passion though is working with inner city girls. So she describes the joy she feels when she gets appreciation from players and athletes. She says it is enough for her to feel that she is improving someone else's life.

She says that one of the challenges she has is that athletes might be upset about their playing time which in turn affects their relationship with her and her ability to mentor them.

Factors influencing effectiveness. A critical part of mentoring for Coach Diane is getting the girls to open up to her. She stresses that though she is pretty hard on the girls, and challenges them, it is important that they think they can trust her. She says that it is also important to let girls see your fun side. Girls should relate to you and not believe that you are picking on them because you do not like them. She says she does this by spending time with them off of the court and also engaging in light-hearted conversations. Continuous improvement is also something that Coach Diane stressed. She says that she is continuously looking for ways to improve and for tips that make her a better mentor and a coach. Her sources vary from the internet to coaching clinics and even other coaches.

Coach Kathleen

Mentoring Context. Coach Kathleen has coached swimming in different contexts. She has coached both swimming as a sport as well as lifeguarding. Some of it has been for the Rec Department, some of it for the high school where she taught and some of that fell under the auspices of Detroit PAL. So she speaks, I think, interchangeably about all three contexts though there seems that there was overlap with some of the programs. This means that Detroit PAL simply sent youth interested in learning swimming to the School program.

Profile of Coach. Coach Kathleen is a 70-year-old coach who has been coaching swimming for the past 5 – 7 years. She was formerly a teacher in the middle school and

high school and transitioned to coaching after she retired from teaching English. She has a BA in English, and a Masters in Education. She has been married for 45 years and has two children and five grandchildren. She received some compensation for swimming through Detroit PAL and through the high school. Her main drive for mentoring seems to be based on her compassion for others and an attempt to help them rise above their circumstance. She seems to be greatly influenced by her family history, particularly the struggles her own parents endured as immigrants to this country. That has led her to value others and the contributions they can make to society. Ultimately, she feels that she needs to try to make a difference. Some of that drive comes from the graduation commencement speech (her graduation) given by Lt. Governor Milliken in 1967 in which he urged the graduating class to respond proactively and positively to the revolts in Detroit and try to bring about positive change. She recalls the line, “To you much has been given and therefore, from you much is expected”. Accordingly, she felt that she needed to be a voice and a champion to those who may not have been given as much. Coaching swimming and lifeguarding therefore was simply an extension of her work as a teacher in Detroit Public schools and a another vehicle through which she could teach the life skills she felt were necessary in that community.

Extent/Nature of Mentoring. Kathleen believes she is a mentor but makes a distinction between formal and informal mentoring. This distinction led to her initially being reluctant to participate in the interview as she felt that she had not been formally assigned that label in the work that she has done with athletes. It seems that she places a greater value on formal mentoring since the role is more demarcated and clear. Her belief is that informal mentoring leads to a position in which you reach far more kids but you

will not know where and when you are needed or even what skills you need to bring to the table to assist.

She believes that mentoring through sport is more fun and that fun environment helps coaches reach kids in ways that other contexts may not. Regardless, mentoring to her is a means of teaching and educating her athletes; providing skills that may be critical to them later on; in different settings. She tries to provide avenues for them to connect and utilize those opportunities. She sees a mentor as someone in a position of trust in the lives of youth. Importantly, they have been placed in that position by the child based on the coach's (teacher's) willingness to function in such a capacity and also their ability to build a good relationship with a child. To become a mentor is to become a place of support for that child; to offer them unconditional love, respect and acceptance. Be willing to listen and not overreact but simultaneously find creative ways to deal with the challenges youth may have.

Value of Mentoring. She believes that all youth are vulnerable and thus mentoring provides an opportunity to be supportive. She especially stresses that in the context in which she taught, many youth had the need for someone who would support them, care for them, invest in them (time, emotion) and try to help them be successful. Mentoring's value to her therefore is its ability to help youth achieve success in whatever sphere of their lives.

Simultaneously, mentors provide an example to youth and parents of the way things can be done and the things that can be achieved. Kathleen stresses always trying to remain calm and remaining positive in the situation. Mentoring seems to hold greater impact when the mentor is in contact with the parent and they are able to discuss

approaches and challenges. In some instances, they are able to work together to help the child.

Finally, she feels that youth may not always appreciate what you are trying to teach them and get them to do. That she says may take place over time as "the village" interacts with the child, however that child will always appreciate how you made them feel. The value of mentoring to the youth in Kathleen's mind then is that they have someone who cares for them and values them. She sees that as an important outcome.

Benefits & Challenges of Mentoring. One of the benefits she identifies for mentors is the satisfaction of knowing that you have helped. She says that her former athletes often embrace her when they see her making her know that she meant something to them. That recognition means a lot to her.

Kids are unpredictable and so what they like and dislike and even their responses to you can change from day to day. It is challenging for a mentor to adjust to that. You have to be able to "shrug and move on". She feels that this is more challenging in the middle school versus the high school. She also identifies that other persons who may be involved in the program might present challenges such as interpersonal conflicts or having differences in opinions about the structure of a program or its activities. There is also the potential for conflict with parents who may not understand your approach to doing things.

Relatedly, since parents are so critical to your success maintaining open dialogue and communication with them is also a challenge.

While she does not say it explicitly, she alludes to potential frustration that can occur in the process of mentoring. This is the case especially when one does not know whether or not you are making an impact, or as you get older and "tired".

Factors influencing effectiveness. She stresses though that involving parents is key in both types of mentoring. A parent knowing how much you value their child allows you to gain credibility and traction. Being organized, being clear about what you want to do and when you want to do it. Getting buy in from youth and parents. The extent of the relationship that you have with a child greatly influences your ability to mentor them. "

Coach Richard

Mentoring Context. Mentoring in this program is very structured. It is a 12-week program. At the start of the program the players fill out a registration form in which they list interests and areas they would like to explore. These help shape and guide the program designed for that year's group. This program is a group effort that has some very clear activities and roles. There is a formal literacy segment that takes place before practice on a Saturday. There are also tutoring sessions geared toward helping youth with their grades and classes at school. I attended one session in which resume writing was being taught. There is also a feedback session in which topics of relevance are taught and discussed. It is an organic program in which each coach plays a different/specific role. The type of sport played varies throughout the year. The group remains in touch and transitions across sports. One challenge for players, then, is learning about new sports and skills. Visitors are asked to address the group about anything from which they think the group might benefit.

Profile of Coach. Coach Richard has coached about 15 years in total. The sports he has worked with are baseball, football and basketball. He has coached basketball for the longest, which is about 8 years in total and he has coached with Detroit PAL for the past 10 years. Most of the work he does is voluntary but he does get paid through Detroit

PAL to do some mentoring work in this program. He is single parent with one 14-year-old son. His first foray into coaching started years ago when an older coach invited him to coach a team at the Matrix Center in Detroit. He played sports throughout high school and a bit in college so he was not new to sport. He has not however, been formally trained in coaching though he has done several coach/training sessions with Detroit PAL. He has an Associate Degree in Liberal Arts and a Degree in Substance Abuse Counselling. He admits to not having structure when he grew up and he saw as he got older what having structure means in the lives of youth. He felt that some structure would have benefitted him. Additionally, he worked as a substance abuse counsellor in the court system and through some of that work he realized that many youth have been missing a positive influence in their lives. Mentoring for him is a means to provide that structure for youth. He says that if you can get kids to buy-in to what you do, mentoring can be a positive influence. Structure for him seems to be the way in which he believes that that can be done.

Nature/Extent of Mentoring. Coach Richard thinks he is a mentor since he provides kids with the structures that they may not have in other aspects of their lives. He feels that he becomes a father figure to many of his athletes and that allows him to generate the buy-in necessary to mentor them. He feels that mentoring is about becoming a father figure to youth while simultaneously not becoming their father or parent. This requires knowledge of boundaries and roles. A mentor in his mind is someone who is able to build on the weaknesses that a child might have; somebody who is caring, somebody who is there for them. A big part of mentoring for him though is challenging the youth to realize the potential that they have even if they do not know they have that

potential. He views sport as one of the best mechanisms to reach these particular youth since it teaches them life skills within a context in which they are motivated to participate. He says once kids buy-in, you can teach them anything. You get that buy-in by being fair with them and being honest. His biggest goals are to get them to read at grade level, get their grades up and recognize that there are other things in life than sport (playing sport). His program is guided by PAL's 5 core values; Leadership, Discipline, Team Work, Respect, Responsibility. His mentoring though seems to function at two levels, one is the program that he has structured and the other the more personal relationships he has with players as he drops them off, picks them up etc. All this is done in an effort to create buy-in.

Value of Mentoring. To help kids understand that they can do anything that they set their mind to and that they have someone who is there to support them. Mentoring provides someone who can be honest with them since many of them haven't had honesty in other aspects of their lives. Bad athletic "role models" have also made it more important to have mentors since youth do not have the types of role models that they should. He values the advice that his mentors gave him and seeing them as role models. Accordingly, he feels that the existence of positive role models is critical for youth. He feels that kids value trust, fairness and coaches challenging them. Some kids he says want him to be a father figure while others ask and thank him for providing them with structure. In this context he says just being there is important to youth. Overall he feels that while there are similarities, a coach whose focus is mentoring gets more out of his players than a regular coach.

Benefits & Challenges of Mentoring. Coaches benefit in mentoring by seeing kids change. Having a kid come back to you and admitting that you influenced them and helped them accomplish the successes that they had. It's worth more than money. Kids benefit since they get role models, and someone who can advise them and provide them with the structure that is necessary for their success.

He admits that not all kids get what you are trying to teach. You may end up losing some of them. Often there is nothing you could have done differently to help them. It can be frustrating. Coaches are not able to help kids in all areas because they are not suitably trained. Additionally, parents may not give consent to allow the coach to assist. It is a challenge to sometimes not have the support of the parents that you would like. Why would parents not help someone that is taking an interest in your child especially since many of them say that they want this type of program and say that it is valuable for the youth? The values of parents often clash with the mentor as well. The program(mentor) may be used as a babysitter. If parents were as involved as they should be the coach would be more attuned to the challenges or unique circumstance that the child has at home.

As it currently exists, coaches have to find about these things in a round-about way. While he doesn't identify it as a challenge he says that mentoring girls is not the same as mentoring boys since girls can get attached quickly and develop romantic feelings especially in situations where they find a male adult who cares.

This, he says, can be exacerbated if they do not have a father in their lives. He believes therefore that women should mentor girls.

Factors influencing effectiveness. Getting kids to buy-in to what you are doing is a critical part of mentoring being effective. If you get them to buy-in, you can get them to do anything. Reaching the child is a critical part of being effective as a mentor. Kids look up to their coaches and can use a mentor to their advantage. He contends that some of his kids do not do enough of using the resource at their disposal and so it is something that they have been trying to encourage more athletes to do. Changing/adapting your style to the kids with which you are. Kids are different and as such it is important to be “versatile” with your words. Kids have a lot more power in the relationship than they had previously. Parental support and understanding of the role of a mentor is also key. Some youth might need resources (psychological help) that they are unable to acquire. Keep pounding the pavement. Hope that kids get it.

Coach Venita

Mentoring Context. Coach Venita has coached the sport of softball for the past 10 years. In the last 6 years she has begun coaching in Detroit Pal’s softball leagues. Her players are middle school girls from a middle school in the inner city of Detroit many of whom she describes as having weak family foundations. She says that these players cling to her and as such she begins to fill a void. Many of them who play on her team she describes as being new to the game. As such her role is primarily to teach them the rules of the game and also some of the basic skills. Mentoring is a natural extension of what she does using the love the kids have of sport to drive home specific lessons.

Profile of Coach. Coach Venita has been coaching softball and t-ball for over ten years. Six of those years have been spent coaching in Detroit PAL leagues. At age 49 Coach Venita is a police officer by profession. She had one daughter and is not married.

She is still working on her college degree in Education and hopes to transition to the teaching profession in the future. She says that she has never been formally trained to coach but that she had done some courses through Detroit PAL. She says that she coaches because of her love of the game of softball and her love of kids. She wants all kids to have the opportunity to play and fall in love with the sport in the same way she did. She has been paid to coach in the past but describes that payment as minimal and not why she does the job. Being paid she says also depends on where you coach, which school etc.

She says that her profession did not necessarily prepare her to work with kids but she has a love for them and a motivation to help. Several kids on her team are lack a significant adult in their lives and she readily fills that role. She is dedicated to making sure she helps these girls, she wants them to learn the sport and experience the joy it brings. She wants them to have fun but she also wants them to get some structure and some discipline. She wants them to learn that there are consequences if they do not give 100% in what they do. She believes that the sporting context makes those lessons very vivid. Kids can easily see the rewards of their effort in some aspect of the game. Even though they may not win, she says, they might improve their sliding, their pitching, or their fielding. This can give them a sense of pride and accomplishment. Playing sports also brings a sense of camaraderie with other players as well as with the coach.

Extent/Nature of Mentoring. Mentoring for her is about providing kids with adequate structure and supporting them through vulnerable periods in their lives. She believes that sport is a great context in which youth can learn life skills and character. Sport she says is a hook that gets kids focused. She does say that sport is not the only context that might provide that edge but it is one which, as a coach, is an integral part of

what you are doing and so it can be used as a vehicle to help develop things like leadership, discipline, self-confidence, social skills and emotional management. She tries to mix learning with fun saying that, as a mentor, you have to remember that these are kids. Ultimately, she wants to be viewed as a friend; someone her girls think they can trust and count on for conversations and sharing. She describes giving firm love; enough love so that they understand and know that you care but firmness so that they understand that there are repercussions to their actions and that as a coach you are in charge setting rules and boundaries. She says that as a coach you need to be able to balance what you do with your players. You need to know which days to go hard in practice and which days to you have no practice at all and just do fun activities.

She focuses on developing sportsmanship, giving your best effort and continuous improvement as non-sport related skills. She is extremely interested though in making sure that the girls are able to talk and get things off their chest. In some cases she has what she terms “real talk” sessions in which players can vent as long as it’s done in a respectful way. She sees herself potentially as a liaison between kids and their parents; making sure that they have a voice and that parents understand how they may be feeling. She does not only mentor as a coach but also has set up a youth group in the city that teaches leadership skills. Sometimes she has her team join this group to go on outings and participate in respective activities. They have been on camping trips, to the courthouse as well as to the theatre.

Value of Mentoring. Coach Venita had a daughter who committed suicide at the age of 14. That loss she says made her more attuned to the need for kids to have someone to talk to besides parents. While she did not speak about the suicide directly, it seems that

that loss shaped her coaching philosophy and approach to mentoring. The reason she ensures that young ladies are able to have fun and express themselves is that she believes that what she did for her daughter was not enough. Youth sometimes needs others they can talk to and she wants to make sure she can fulfil that role for others.

She also describes wanting to play a similar role in the lives of her girls as some teachers and coaches played for her. She believes that she was mentored and that that mentoring helped her make better decisions and deal with situations in a better way. She hopes to pass some of those expertise onto kids. Coach Venita also mentioned the concept of negative mentoring, which she describes as someone who leads others down a wrong path. She says that there are many of those types of individuals in the city and so one of the things she is trying to do is counter the prevalence of such individuals by guiding and showing kids the correct path.

Benefits & Challenges of Mentoring. A major benefit of mentoring for the girls is their level of self-esteem. Coach Venita really wants them to be happy and proud of the effort they give whether or not they win matches. Mentoring provides them with a listening ear, someone who can reaffirm them. Mentoring also helps them to grow as leaders, increasing their confidence and their ability to manage the disappointments they have in life. Overall she says kids who are mentored will be happy because they are able to be loved and appreciated by an adult while having fun.

Coach Venita's job makes coaching particularly challenging as she sometimes works on night shifts while having to coach or attend games during the day. Time then is also a factor when it comes to mentoring, as she has to juggle and balance her work

schedule and also her fatigue. This is crucial with a group of middle schoolers who are particularly energetic.

Parents, she believes, can be more involved in the team and also share with coaches more about the things taking place at home. This she says puts the coach in a better position to assist the child. Additionally, parents sometimes rush kids home, not allowing the coach to finish up the conversations they may be having with the team or player. Finding the time to mentor then becomes difficult if parents are always in a rush. Getting kids to open up is also a challenge as is getting them to trust you. At the same time, being consistent can also be a challenge, as the mentor has to be responsive to the needs of the group and the concerns of individual players. Sometimes she says she has to go off schedule to address something topical or urgent and this can lead to differential treatment for some players.

Factors influencing effectiveness. One of the most important parts of mentoring with youth she says is allowing them to have fun. Kids will gravitate toward you if you are a fun person and someone they enjoy being around. She really focuses on fun because it allows her to develop a bond with her players. That bond she defines as critical for them to trust you, to want to share with you and talk with you. She describes the affectionate names they call her as an indication that the relationship has transcended that of simply coach – athlete.

Different players require more mentoring than others. Coach Venita describes that players come from a variety of backgrounds and it is typically those who have less stable situations and circumstances that gravitate to you more. Those are the ones with whom you can have a bigger impact because of your conversations and the time that you spend.

Coach Katherine

Mentoring Context. Coach Katherine lives, teaches and coaches in the Southwest area of Detroit. It is an area that is predominantly Hispanic and has a large population of persons who have emigrated from Mexico. A number of these individuals have entered the United States without proper documentation making the area one that is extremely poor since a large number of persons here cannot find legitimate work. Youth in the community face several challenges. In addition to poverty and lack of resources, many come from homes that have been torn apart by deportation and immigration related arrests. Further, kids are often left to fend for themselves in a system unknown to them and their parents. What makes it worse is that many of the adults who come here do not speak English placing heavy burdens on the shoulders of their kids. Coach Katherine coaches soccer in a middle school in the area. Soccer is a sport that is extremely popular among the kids in the community and as such they field a particularly strong team.

Profile of Coach. Coach Katherine is an 8th grade middle school English literature teacher. She is married with 3 kids. Her husband is an immigrant from Mexico who was imprisoned for about six months pending deportation proceedings. He was eventually released, but that experience made Coach Katherine understand first-hand the challenges that a lot of families in the community are facing. Having graduated from the University of Michigan, Coach Katherine moved to the area because of her love for Spanish culture and her belief in living in the community in which one works. She says that that has made her a central part of the community's fabric. People who live here know her from the church, the school and the restaurants. She says as a coach this helps

because people, especially in this community where outsiders are not trusted, see her as part of the family.

Coach Katherine is 38 years old and has been coaching for 12 years. She reluctantly started coaching the boys' soccer team after the team's former coach suddenly quit the sport. Coach Katherine agreed to coach the soccer team because she pitied the kids who would not be able to play in the league if they did not have a coach. She admits that she knows little about coaching soccer and actually does not have a great understanding or love for the sport. She readily admits that she acts more as a manager for the team and enlists the help of former players to help with teaching the kids the technical aspects of the game.

Coach Katherine has a deep sense of love, caring and responsibility for the people who make up her community. She mentors because she believes that she is in a position to help and wants to see the kids here do well. Her role, in fact, has little to do with the sport of soccer. Rather, soccer has become an activity that brings the kids together and allows her to interact with youth in ways that teaching alone could not do.

Extent/Nature of Mentoring. Mentoring to Coach Katherine means helping many of her students in whatever way that she can. In this context, the youth face many challenges. Given the language and cultural barriers, parents are often unable to act as advisors to their kids, especially in the realm of education. They come to the United States and meet a system with which they are unfamiliar and one that is based in a language that many of them do not speak. A lot of what Coach Katherine does, therefore, is guiding kids through the education system. She guides kids about what classes to take and connects them to resources for studying and career counselling. She explains that not

many of her kids have anyone in their family who has attended or graduated from college. So getting many to the point of starting college is a major achievement. Additionally, because of their status some who qualify for college are ineligible for financial aid and other types of benefits so she tries to identify resources that may help there. Sometimes that means reaching into her personal finances.

Another significant part of mentoring for Coach Katherine is spending time with her players and having conversations with them about a range of topics. She describes having them come over on weekends, having picnics and barbeques, going to dinners and festivals. During these times she says she gets to know them well as they share about their lives and they have fun as a group. She also says that she shares a lot about herself and her life because of the amount of time that she and her players spend together. Many of them, she says, were around her when her husband was imprisoned and so they know about the emotional time that was for her. She has had to determine what she speaks about to which athletes and that decision is usually made based on their own personal situations. A popular topic she says however is masculinity and relationships. Being a female coach she tries to have them see a different side of “being a man”, one that is not based on the machismo or sexualization that Hispanic culture can suggest at times.

Value of Mentoring. Coach Katherine mentors because she sees a need in her community, where many parents are undocumented and in unfamiliar circumstances. She feels the need to be there for kids and to help them achieve their goals. Notwithstanding the individual goals students set for themselves, a huge part of her drive is to get them to college and to get a degree. Many of the families here are poor, and need guidance about the way the education system works.

She also believes that there is a need for some kids to get support from a significant adult. Such support is not always possible for these kids due to their family situation or the roles they have to take on within their communities. She views mentoring as a means for her to allow them to be kids and give them some emotional support and guidance at times.

Benefits & Challenges of Mentoring. In this context, Coach Katherine identifies some very tangible benefits of mentoring. As a mentor, she is able to connect kids to resources for school, help them navigate the educational system and help buy books and pay tuition. She provides translation services, has forged documents and has had kids spend the night. As a mentor she is there to help them in whatever capacity they might need. Since many of the families here do not have legal status, they require a lot of assistance.

One benefit she identifies is the joy it brings to her to see kids succeed and enjoy themselves. She says that because she tries to have fun with the kids with whom she shares a relationship, mentoring is an enjoyable experience. She talks about the emotional investment that mentoring requires and the toll it can take on the mentor. She says that many nights she has sat up wondering how to achieve things on behalf of the kids. She also describes situations in which she has invested her time and risked imprisonment by falsifying documents that kids here do not have so that they can play or attend school. The last major challenge is the time that mentoring takes. She has had to sacrifice time with her own family to look after and spend time with the kids on her team. She views it as a joy and a pleasure but talks about the sacrifices that she sometimes has to make.

Factors influencing effectiveness. Being an integral part of the community is one of the factors that Coach views as responsible for her success. She talks about her inability to go anywhere in the town without seeing and past student. This is something of which she is proud and is one of the reasons she came to live in Southwest Detroit. Building a good relationship with youth and their families is also critical because she says if players don't open up or parents do not trust you it would be difficult to give them advice and guide them toward success. Ultimately, truly caring about kids she sees as the driving force behind success. That caring allows you to do what needs to be done, when it needs to be done.

She says that a key to being an effective mentor is also being able to determine what to say to which athletes. She has had some former athletes who were imprisoned and others who have graduated valedictorian. Not all lessons apply to all the kids equally. A big part of mentoring therefore is matching the lesson and the advice to the right kid in the right context.

Coach Lisa

Mentoring Context. Coach Lisa coaches volleyball at a middle school in the Detroit area. This middle school is one of the better schools in Detroit and has a fairly robust sports program. The volleyball team has been successful for the past 3 years since Coach Lisa has been in charge, winning the league they have competed in on all three occasions. The kids who come to this school are from a mix of backgrounds, but as a charter school, it has not suffered some of the shortages that have faced some of the Detroit Public Schools.

Profile of Coach. Coach Lisa aged 46, has been a coach for the past twelve years. She started because she saw a need for parents to get involved in coaching and to assist the teams in which their athletes participate. She is married and a mother of seven children (6 girls and one boy). She says that she started coaching by getting more involved in the sports in which her kids were involved. She has coached at all levels of the sport, middle school, high school and elementary school. That led her to coach cheer for a number of years but she shifted to volleyball since it is less intensive (competitions) and less expensive. She has been coaching the sport of volleyball for the past 10 years and while she spends most of her time in this sport, she sometimes assists other teams to coach their cheer teams. She says while she is paid to coach, she does not do it for the money. As a former volleyball player she says she wants to pass on the joy of the game and to have her girls compete at a very high level.

Her approach to mentoring she says is about getting more involved with girls in terms of other aspects of their lives. As someone who had previously attempted suicide, she says she understands some of the turmoil that the girls she works with are going through. As a coach she believes she needs to provide girls with an option to approach her to discuss some of their challenges as well as a platform through which she can talk to girls about issues that they may have to address themselves. Sport, she believes, provides her with a context within which she interacts with youth on a personal level and she tries to live her life in a manner that parents can trust her and athletes can identify a positive role model. She is also very focused on working with parents to help them solve situations with their kids.

Extent/Nature of Mentoring. Coach Lisa views her role as a coach as someone providing an extra layer of support to kids and their parents. She says that mentoring is about working with parents to help kids achieve their goals and to push them in a positive direction. She defines a mentor as someone who steps in for a parent or fulfills a role that potentially parents cannot. As such she does not see mentors fulfilling any specific or prescribed roles since the needs of the child and their circumstances can vary. The coach must create a space where youth can talk about and discuss some of their challenges and potentially difficult circumstances. The need to create this space is also more important than winning trophies and championships. While she says that anyone can mentor she stresses that knowledge of particular situations and the experience of parenthood are beneficial to the mentoring process. She believes, for instance, that she would be a much better mentor to girls than boys because she has raised 6 daughters. Her experience of parenting girls she stresses has equipped her with knowledge of the challenges and developmental experiences of girls. She says that raising her son was one of the most challenging experiences she had because he was so different from her daughters.

She highlights several examples where she has partnered with parents to guide an athlete on her team. These examples evolved based on a variety of experiences, some in which the parent reached out to her and others in which she identified behavior that may be problematic and reached out to parents. In both cases however the end result was increased dialogue between the coach and the parent and coordinated discipline where necessary. In some cases she speaks to the child where a parent feels they cannot and in others she has parents echo her messages at home to reinforce what she is teaching. That level of dialogue between parents and coaches she feels is important to have an impact.

Mentoring for her is also about allowing her players to become better and reach the next level of the sport. She says that a lot of what she does with her Middle school team is to prepare them to perform and make varsity teams at the high school level. She is proud when her girls are able to accomplish that and feels that those types of achievements also contribute to developing their self-esteem. She says that she often keeps in touch with her players and goes to their games even after they move on.

Value of Mentoring. She shared the role her one of her coaches played in getting her to understand her importance to the school and her family when she attempted suicide in high school. She says that because of a rough childhood she never felt the love and acceptance at home that she got from this coach. She mentors to provide a similar avenue for girls and parents who need help. She describes situations in which girls have lost their parents and other in which there are single-parent moms who have reached out to her to help them counsel and guide their daughters. Life presents a lot of these situations and the coach needs to help youth navigate such circumstances.

She also alludes to a number of coaches who she believes coach sports for the wrong reasons and who are not as responsible as they ought to be. She says that this creates a void and a need for responsible role models in the lives of youth. Some coaches she says only coach for the money, especially those who teach and coach. Additionally, many coaches yell at kids and take illicit drugs. She says that that is part of the reason she coaches: to provide a space for her kids and athletes to have an adult in their lives who is responsible.

Benefits & Challenges of Mentoring. The biggest benefit of mentoring for youth is that it will allow them to realize goals in their lives and build increased self-esteem.

Coach Lisa says that she tries to build relationships with her girls in which she able to understand their challenges and help them overcome them. She also tries to encourage them to achieve their personal goals by coaching them and motivating them to work towards them. This gives them increased self-esteem and allows them to achieve in other aspects of their lives.

The biggest benefit to the coach is to see the kids move on with increased confidence and self-esteem. She feels good knowing that she can provide this 'service' to parents and their kids.

Factors influencing effectiveness. One of the biggest factors that Coach Lisa believes affects her ability to be effective as a coach and mentor is the training that she received from PAL and from her degree in college. She says that knowledge of psychology and knowledge of youth development in sport has really made her understand her role better and the types of things she can do to impact kids and their development. She says that as a result she has encouraged a lot of coaches especially at the high school level to go to PAL to learn more about coaching and mentoring of kids because she sees in many instances such knowledge may be lacking.

Having an open trusting relationship with the child is another factor that greatly impacts your ability to be effective. All her players have her email and phone number and she encourages them to contact her whenever they may need to. Additionally, she says that even though many times she may challenge girls and correct them she stresses to them that she loves them and values them. Her guidance comes from a place of love like the guidance from a parent. This, she says, allows them to trust her enough to share with her. When kids are open and receptive of the feedback that you give, that's when you are

able to have an impact. To this end she also gives her players a token of her appreciation when they move on. A rose and a card that lets them know how much they mean to her.

Finally, she says that having a close relationship with parents can also help the effectiveness of mentoring. When coaches have a good relationship with the parents of a child, they have a better sense of the home context and the challenges that the child and the parent might be facing. This puts the coach in a better position to help.

Coach Michael

Mentoring Context. Coach Michael coaches with Detroit PAL and has done so for the past 17 years. He coaches youth aged 9 - 14. He usually gets a team of individual youth who want to play and need a coach. This means that the youth are typically unfamiliar with each other and can range across the spectrum in terms of level of skill. His task therefore is to put them together as a unit and assess where they may be in terms of skill level. Some of the players come from his school so he is more familiar with them but roughly two-thirds of the players do not attend the school at which he teaches.

Profile of Coach. Coach Michael is a baseball coach who has been coaching voluntarily for the last 17 years. He is married with two sons and has a degree in Elementary Education. He has only coached through the Detroit PAL sports leagues and only coaches baseball. He played baseball growing up and has always loved the sport. While he typically coaches during the summer with PAL, in the past 5 years he has had a school team. He started coaching through his two sons since he wanted them to play the sport as well. He doesn't have any formal training to coach the sport. While he has done IMPACT training with Detroit PAL, he describes PAL's training as mentoring training.

Further he feels that one cannot be trained to be a mentor, it comes from one's love and commitment to the youth.

Coach Michael is a teacher by profession and he has taught for the past 20 yrs. He did not have a great relationship with his father. His father was often absent and he drank a lot. Sport and music became outlets for him. He feels that he needs to be there for the kids that are in similar situations. His reflection on this began when he started coaching his own kids.

Extent of Mentoring. He thinks he is a mentor. A mentor in his view is someone who gives of his time and heart to kids. He describes it as the free giving of your time and being committed to them and their development. He feels that within sport that it is a combination of the love of the game and the love of the children. A large part of his mentoring seems focused on the development of skills within the game. Things such as academics, work ethic, discipline, sportsmanship, and teamwork are important things for him. It does not seem though that he has specific things to teach. He believes that you should have conversations with youth. He believes in identifying where kids are and giving them what is necessary. He describes the great athlete who may need to learn how to work with those who are less talented and the weak player who has to build confidence. In spite of this he describes having to go beyond since you have to become a role model and a source of advice for some players. This may mean having to take players out and share and talk and just being there. He sees this as part of being a coach. He is simultaneously aware that the sport context is 'brief' and as such the coach does not have the time to develop the relationship and have the impact that you may need.

Value of Mentoring. He describes mentoring and coaching as an escape from the challenges of life. He admits later on in the interview though that he hasn't given much thought on why he coaches or gets as involved as he has done. He does see however that mentoring provides him with an opportunity to feel good about making a contribution to youth who need it and to enjoy their company since he loves kids. He mentions, "they keep you young."

The value of the relationship to youth is a difficult question to answer for him. Youth have come back and tell him that things he has done for them have helped them make it to the next level. The value of mentoring though for youth sinks in as they get older. He doesn't think that in the present they appreciate in the same way the coach might intend. They value in the moment, being a part of a team, having an adult in their life who is not necessarily telling them what to do.

He does feel though that if youth are not mentored, if they are not taught the right skills, then they can go through life unable to deal with challenges later on. Mentoring to him then creates an opportunity to teach youth skills early in their lives that will help them later on.

Benefits & Challenges of Mentoring. He never thought about benefits for himself. He thinks it may fulfil a spiritual need (longing) for him or a spiritual calling. He doesn't believe that the benefits are monetary especially since he is coaching for free. He doesn't look for any benefits. He has a good time with the youth. He feels good doing it. He thinks he is making a contribution in the lives of those who need it; providing them with mentorship and male role models.

The athletes have someone who is paying attention to them and with whom they can spend time; someone who lets them be who they are. They are on a team. They get to have fun. They get to express themselves; camaraderie.

He sometimes has arguments with his wife about the amount of money he spends on the players and the game. Another challenge is that your time is no longer your own. He describes it as an “accepted unwanted burden”. He describes situations where players make demands to improve their skills in the sport or may want to talk about a personal issue or challenge. He also cites that parents can be challenging if they 'spoil' children since as a coach you are now contradicting their influence. He describes going against their influence as tough since it is a conflict of values.

In the case of the athletes he says that the challenges for them may come later down if they are not mentored. If they never learn proper skills such as handling conflict and not always having your way. He says that in terms of the context in which they coach it could mean getting hurt physically if you cannot manage your temper. You could grow up to be a quitter or turn to substance abuse to be able to manage your problems.

Factors influencing effectiveness. Vibes he gives off. He is easy to talk to; he loves working with kids. The time you spend with youth is important in terms of the impact that you may have. As a teacher he thinks that he may have a greater impact on his students because of the time spent with them. He says that in cases where he also coaches an athlete he is able to gain greater 'control' since he can ensure they have good grades in order to play. For him academics comes first. Let youth know that you are interested in them beyond the sport. Kids will try to please you if they are able to relax around you and you can create a family type atmosphere.

Coach Gary

Mentoring Context. Coach Gary coaches in a middle school that is located in one of the more depressed communities of Detroit. He coaches from the 1st grade to the 8th grade and while currently he only coaches basketball, he began his work as a coach in baseball. He describes many of the kids as coming from broken homes, rough neighborhoods where kids fend for themselves and parents may be involved either in the sale or consumption of drugs. Many of the buildings and neighborhoods around the schools are burnt and abandoned. As such he says that the environment is one in which kids often do not have a high self-esteem and kids are often very defensive, because they are used to being attacked.

Profile of Coach. Coach Gary is a 55-year-old coach who coaches basketball in a middle school in inner city Detroit. He is not married and has 4 kids. He is also employed at the school as the head of security and the head of the custodial department. In addition to those duties, Coach Gary is the pastor at his church. He has been coaching youth for the past 20 years. Currently he coaches basketball at a number of different grade levels. He says that he started coaching basketball as an opportunity to give the kids something to do that they enjoyed. He says he didn't know much about the sport when he began and recalls losing his first game 100 points to 6 points. He says that it is the joy the kids had after losing that got him hooked. They were so thrilled at having had an opportunity to play, that he says he realized the joy that sport held for them and promised to keep coaching. Currently he coaches three different age groups each season 1st grade through 8th grade.

He believes that participation in sports does a lot for kids' self-esteem and their feelings of worth and it gives them something positive in which to be involved. He sees

sport as a great context to get kids to open up and share about some of the challenges they may be experiencing at home. His philosophy of coaching is very much about having kids make mistakes and supporting them as they learn. He says he did not know the game when he started coaching and said to the kids that they had an opportunity to learn together with him. He believes that children learn from the context in which they find themselves and thus coaching is an opportunity to surround them with some of the positive role models and influences that they may not be receiving in other areas of their lives.

Extent/Nature of Mentoring. Coach Gary says that he mentors in all aspects of his life and that his philosophy does not change much across contexts. Whether he is mentoring in church, at school or while coaching, he believes in teaching a child the right way and then supporting them as necessary to help them achieve their true potential. He feels that for many of the youth he encounters, their backgrounds and context at home place them at a huge disadvantage since they do not get to see or experience much that is positive or encouraging. He says that this translates to them being very frustrated in the school and very defensive towards others. Most of their experiences with adults he says are negative and so why should they assume that a new experience with him would be any different. His role as a coach and a mentor then is to get kids to open up and trust him. By doing that he gives himself a chance to impact their lives in a meaningful way. It is interesting that he puts the onus to build a relationship with kids on himself and not on them. He says that after working in the school for a number of years he started a mentoring group to try to make a positive influence in the lives of kids at the school.

He says that many youth do not have the experiences and role models to help them make informed decisions in their lives. They are caught doing things that limit their potential because they are not exposed to more. He tries to expose them and guide them toward what is right. He has no formal training in mentoring but does it based on the lessons he has learned in his own life. He says that having become an adult he can look back on his life and identify where his mistakes were and see the error of his ways. Many kids today, especially when they come from ‘broken’ households do not have a person checking in and sharing these types of stories and experiences with them. This makes them defensive when receiving good advice and suggestions, rather than being receptive to it. The mentor’s role is to help the child heal and to simultaneously provide them with the structure and discipline the need to be successful.

Value of Mentoring. Coach Gary mentors because he sees the value that mentoring can have on the lives of youth. He says that he was mentored as a child and credits the experiences he had with those coaches to helping him become the person he is today. He says that he learned that he needed to give back what was given to him. He says he was directed back to the “straight and narrow” because of mentors and he hopes to do the same for some of these kids who he says are limited by only the environment in which they grew up. In these types of contexts Coach Gary says that those who complain about youth while doing nothing to assist them are not helping. What are needed are persons who are willing to take action. Coaching and mentoring became his way of trying to give back.

Benefits & Challenges of Mentoring. The benefit of mentoring for Coach Gary ultimately is the impact that it has on the children who are participating. He gives several

examples of kids who were badly behaved and aggressive who transformed into productive members of their teams and the school community as a whole due to the guidance and instruction they received from him. Mentoring allows kids to pursue their dreams, but most importantly for Coach Gary, it allows them to believe in themselves and their potential. In a sense the mentor takes the place of the parent, providing the child with a lot of social support that will allow them to be more motivated and confident.

Parents can sometimes be a challenge he says because in many instances they do not provide the child with the type of support that is necessary for them. Children need to know that they are loved and cared for and when caregivers do not show up to support them in games and other activities that are important for them this undermines the kid's sense of worth. He also says that sometimes the parent's values may not be consistent with those you hold as a coach and that that can be a source of frustration.

Additionally, he says that for the past 24 years he has been one of the few persons trying to mentor kids in his program. Many times it's just him with 30 kids. He says that it is difficult to treat with all the kids in the way you would like since time is limited, but you do the best you can. Finally he says, not all kids want to be mentored. Not all of them open up and submit themselves to your tutelage and instruction. He says that this too can be frustrating because you have to approach every kid the same until they show you otherwise. This means opening yourself up to a lot of frustration and potential disappointment.

Factors influencing effectiveness. A big factor for Coach Gary is knowledge and understanding of how kids think and operate. A good mentor he says will see hope where others see none because of their ability to read a kid and a situation. He describes being

able to understand where a child might be emotionally because of their circumstance but not let that cloud your ability to impact them positively. The ability to get a kid to open up is also critical. In the case of Coach Gary he suggests that the power of observation, patience and perseverance are all skills that work in tandem. He says that he greets all the kids at school, one by one, every morning. He does not let their non-response deter him. Overtime he says they eventually open up and then he says he is able to build on that start to become closer to them.

Building a relationship with the youth you mentor is integral. Coach Gary alludes to making sure he learns kids' names and also the value that that brings to their trust of you when they realize that you can call and address them by name. They realize then that you are invested in them and what they are doing. Though he does not say it explicitly a big part of Coach Gary's beliefs is that kids know when you care about them and will trust you when they see it being displayed.

Coach Danielle

Mentoring Context. Mentoring in this program is very structured. It is a 12-week program. At the start of the program the players fill out a registration form in which they list interests and areas they would like to explore. These help shape and guide the program designed for that year's group. This program is a group effort that has some very clear activities and roles. There is a formal literacy segment that takes place before practice on a Saturday. I attended one session in which resume writing was being taught. There is also a feedback session in which topics of relevance are taught/discussed. It is an organic program in that everyone plays a different role. The type of sport played varies throughout the year. The group remains in touch transitions across sports. One challenge

for players then is learning about new sports and skills. Visitors are asked to address the group about anything they think the group might benefit from.

Profile of Coach. Coach Danielle is a 43-year-old woman who works 9-5 as an administrative assistant to the CEO of a Real Estate Agency. She is married and has four children. Two step kids with her current husband and two adult children. The conversation led us to chat about her family and family structure. The fact that her mom had her at 17, she had a child when she was 17 and she felt that she wanted to teach youth about the consequences of their actions early on. She described how her family dynamic led her to “raise” her younger siblings and become “responsible” perhaps way before she should have been. She felt that this quality has been with her for her whole life and mentoring is simply an extension of that responsibility. She does the coaching and mentoring at this program voluntarily. She joined this team/group two to three years ago to become a mentor to the athletes in the program and her role gradually evolved into that of assistant coach. That evolution took place as she attended IMPACT training (Detroit PAL’s coaches training) and as she interacted more with the boys and the team. She seems less involved as a coach save by name.

Extent of Mentoring. Coach Danielle seems to be less interested in coaching and more about mentoring. She has a lot of mentoring experience from the church where she does a lot with the homeless and those in need. She seems particularly interested in providing access to resources and skills (respect, discipline, decision making, goal setting, anger-management).

She believes that the sporting context provides coaches with a platform to reach the youth since they willingly place themselves in that context and are willing to listen.

This she says allows the coach the opportunity to discuss things that he/she may believe are relevant to the lives of youth. Mentoring for her is about providing youth with guidance, skill, and tools. It is about listening, holding them accountable and helping them make good decisions; decisions which they own and about which they can feel proud.

Value of Mentoring. In particular, she seems concerned that the decision-making skills of this age group cause them to limit their options for careers later on in life. What disturbs her about this especially is her view that they do not recognize what they are doing. Her main motivation for mentoring, then, seems to be alerting them to the possibilities that may exist for them and allowing them to see what potential action steps they can take to get there. She sees her role as “bridging” the gap that might exist in their minds and the reality of the situation as she can best ascertain.

Benefits & Challenges of Mentoring. She identifies a lack of involvement of parents as one of the challenges of mentoring. Coach Danielle would like to see more involvement from parents in the lives of the children in the program. There is a mandatory session at the beginning that parents attend but apart from that she says parents are largely absent. This she suggests leaves a void between what the coaches are doing and what may be taking place at home. Closer collaboration and communication with parents allow the “mentor” to have a better sense of the child and what might be taking place in their lives.

Another challenge she identifies is that athletes do not always get the lessons being taught. Many are there only to play the game or to go on the field trips that the group organizes. This leads them to implement regulations that govern the conditions

under which athletes play or go on trips. Still, not all athletes understand the lessons they are trying to teach and may feel it is ‘just talk’.

Factors influencing effectiveness. She was never mentored as a child but has developed a mentoring relationship in adulthood. That person helps her to figure out the decisions and challenges she has in her own life. It is an ongoing relationship that she learns from and helps guide her own approach to her athletes. She maintains that relationships are important in mentoring, but it is important to establish boundaries that can keep a level of independence from the mentee.

Coach Christy

Mentoring Context. Coach Christy coaches volleyball both within the High School context as well as in the AAU circuit (club) or context. She has been coaching in both contexts over the past 10 years. Specifically, she has coached at this school for the past 6 years. She makes a distinction between her coaching and her role in the high school versus the club context. She says that socioeconomic status is different across those contexts and relatedly the involvement that parents have with the teams and sports is different. Parental involvement is typically lacking at the high school level. Parents are always around for the club teams but are not around for the high school team. She also says that the reasons girls play are different between club and high school. The high school players are usually motivated to be on a team or be with friends rather than excelling at the sport. This she believes lends itself to her doing far more mentoring in the High School context since she says, there is a greater need, and less emphasis on skills from the players.

Profile of Coach. Coach Christy is a 43 years old coach who has been coaching volleyball at both the club and high school levels for the past 10 years. She is currently an administrator and lecturer of a Sport Management program at a Detroit College. This job she says along with her Phd. Studies in Sport Coaching has equipped her with some knowledge and skills to be a better coach. She currently holds a Masters degree in Sport Management. She is married, and has two stepchildren. She admits that not having children of her own means that she has not been privy to some of the experiences other mothers have.

She grew up in the suburbs in Virginia and admits that her values and upbringing were very different from the reality of the Detroit High School. As a result, she says her desire to coach a sport she played at college transformed into a desire to help youth, especially young ladies, due to the need she saw for them to have significant adults in their lives.

Youth need adults who have an optimistic outlook for them and do not belittle them or demean them. She therefore sees herself as someone who can be an example for youth, a role model who can educate her girls about topics about which that they need to learn. Someone who supports them and aids in their development. A huge piece of that is educating them since she is formally an educator and she understands the role that education can play in helping these particular girls transcend their financial circumstances.

Extent/Nature of Mentoring. Michele believes she is a mentor because overall she gets involved in the lives of her kids beyond coaching. She gets to know them, understands their family contexts, has them come over and spend time with her and

checks in on their grades. Additionally she tries to teach particular life skills such as leadership and self-discipline. She is particular aware that perspective can potentially be a barrier for youth and how they may view her messages. As such she says she texts them, instead of calling and listens to hip hop music so that she is aware of the types of music and content they are consuming. This, she says, allows them to relate to her better, something that is critical to getting them to buy in to her philosophy. Still she admits that mentoring can be hard since many times youth do not get the messages right away or may need to reflect on them several times before putting them into practice.

She describes mentoring as a process where you provide bits of information and guide the youth until that information makes sense to them and they are able to recognize the value of your words. This process she explains can sometimes take years. Mentors have to be patient and remain optimistic during this process, believing that what they are doing will work. She accepts this as a part of the natural development of teenagers and views the mentor's role as providing them with the information and to allow them to make better choices. In some instances, where parents are not as involved it involves fulfilling the role of a parent, providing tangible things such as food, transportation, shelter, money, and even advice about birth control. In her context she describes relationships where girls tell her information they have not shared with their parents which places her in a difficult position sometimes. Mentoring is also a means to provide youth with a role model. She has all the girls come to her house to see how she lives and tries to explain to them that she is not rich and that all these things are possible for them through education. She is intentional in a lot of what she does.

Value of Mentoring. Many of the girls at the high school where Christy coaches are struggling financially. This she says is associated with lower levels of parental involvement that place the girls at risk. She describes that her mentoring began when she realized that one girl was taking the bus home to a ‘rough’ part of the city. She insisted on taking her home and in the conversation realized how tough the girls’ circumstances were. At that point she said mentoring became a more deliberate activity for her and she began reaching out more to all the girls. There are many things associated with difficult financial circumstances. Coach Christy steps in to fill these needs such as providing food, transportation and a place to stay. She has also pushed some players to get jobs and take up more responsibility because she realizes that it will help them better prepare for life after high school. She sees herself in many ways as a surrogate Mom, blaming herself if girls get pregnant, or do not graduate. She also says that many youth do not develop a relationship where they tell their parents everything. There is a need then for another responsible adult who youth think they can speak and share things that are affecting them.

Benefits & Challenges of Mentoring. The biggest benefit Christy identified for youth who are mentored is the fact that they are educated about the ways they can navigate difficult circumstances and go on to be successful. As an educator Christy has a great deal of faith that education, specifically college, will open up a lot of doors for them. She highlights a couple of her athletes who have gone on to college and started families as examples of success. One challenge she says is the awareness of whether youth are on the pathway to success while you are mentoring them. Mentoring gives youth an opportunity to see what’s possible bearing in mind that Christy has observed

that boys and girls have a different standards of success. Mentoring allows them to see new standards and simultaneously view those standards as attainable. While she does get paid she sees that as a stipend given the amount of time she puts into the sport and the kids.

Christy cites, time as a challenge. She works full time, has a family, and is studying for her Ph.D. She coaches, and is going beyond that to mentor. It can be difficult to juggle all of these things. She also says that the emotional investment can also be a bit of a challenge since a mentor becomes emotionally attached to youth and therefore is affected when youth do not live up to expectations. She describes situations where she blamed herself for girls who became pregnant and wondered what she could have done differently. She admits that she does not draw lines or boundaries and that that potentially could lead to difficult situations. She admits for instance that there are some parents who are not fond of her and sarcastically tell their daughters that she is their Mom. She has also received calls from parents telling her she may have overstepped her boundaries.

Factors influencing effectiveness. Christy stresses being able to relate to youth and them connecting with her as a key ingredient to becoming effective. It is why she says she goes to extreme lengths for them to understand that she is there for them and that they can trust her. She also says that understanding the context of each girl is important since all youth are different.

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