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A Rudimentary Framework Of The Emergence Of Naturally-Occurring Mentorships

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Community Psychology Doctoral Program

Dissertation Notification of Completion

Doctoral Candidate Aaron Stewart Baker

Title of Dissertation A RUDIMENTARY FRAMEWORK OF THE
EMERGENCE OF NATURALLY-OCCURRING
MENTORSHIPS

Dissertation Chair Dr. Tiffeny R. Jiménez

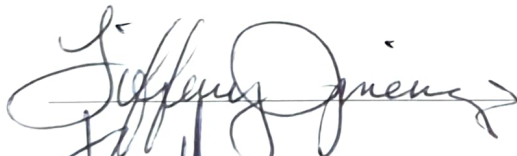


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Date of Final Defense May 9, 2023

The above named candidate has satisfactorily completed a dissertation as required for attaining the Doctor of Philosophy degree in the Community Psychology Doctoral Program.

Signature

Date

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NATIONAL LOUIS UNIVERSITY
A RUDIMENTARY FRAMEWORK OF THE EMERGENCE OF
NATURALLY-OCCURRING MENTORSHIPS

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY DOCTORAL PROGRAM
IN THE COLLEGE OF PSYCHOLOGY AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

BY

AARON STEWART BAKER

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Chicago, Illinois

June 2023

Dedication

To Corazón for setting me on the path that led me here. Would I have had my journey any other way? Perhaps; I'm not sure though. But I know with absolute certainty that I could not be here today without you.

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It is overwhelming to think about all the people who have helped me throughout my life, and I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge their contributions. First, I want to express my deepest gratitude to my advisor and committee chair Dr. Tiffeny Jiménez for accompanying me on my journey into community psychology as a methodologist. I also want to thank Dr. Jiménez and the other members of my committee Drs. Ericka Mingo and Judah Viola for asking critical questions, providing feedback, and offering me support every step of the way. Major thanks to Lily and the Inter team for their willingness to collaborate with me on this project.

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Lastly, I would like to recognize all the mentors that I have had—Jake, Mr. Kelley[†], Matt M., Theresa, Dr. Islam, Dr. G. Thornsberry, Dr. J. Thornsberry, Amanda, Ashley, Mishelle, Kristie, Tracy, and Michael, among others—as well as the mentoring programs that I participated in or worked in—Upward Bound Math and Science, Prevention Consultants of Missouri, and SailFuture.

Abstract

Cross-age relationships between youth and adults that develop organically outside the construct of youth programs are examples of natural mentoring relationships. In the United States, research has demonstrated the positive impact of these mentorships. Scholars have begun applying concepts learned from natural mentoring to formal mentoring schema; however, much work is yet to be done in examining how these relationships emerge and the factors that impact their development. Designed in partnership with a private secondary school in rural México, this study aimed to unpack these questions using a grounded theory approach. Current students, alumni, and teachers participated in the study through semi-structured interviews. Data from the interviews were analyzed through open, axial, and selective coding. Critical realism was used as an organizing principle during the selective coding process. Three core categories emerged from the data—factors of readiness, approaches of engagement, and states of alignment. These constructs in conjunction with influences of group-level and community-level factors make up a rudimentary framework for the emergence of natural mentoring relationships.

Table of Contents

| | |
|--------------------------------------------|----|
| List of Tables | iv |
| List of Figures | v |
| Introduction | 3 |
| Significance of Natural Mentoring Research | 6 |
| Current Study | 9 |
| Interpretive Framework | 10 |
| Values, Biases, & Assumptions | 16 |
| Methods | 18 |
| Site Selection | 18 |
| Participants | 19 |
| Procedure | 20 |
| Trustworthiness | 23 |
| Intra-analysis Literature Review | 23 |
| Findings | 24 |
| Factors of Readiness | 24 |
| Approaches of Engagement | 40 |
| States of Alignment | 55 |
| Influence of Group-Level Factors | 62 |
| Influence of Community-Level Factors | 70 |
| Conclusion | 73 |
| Limitations | 74 |
| Implications | 75 |

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| References | 81 |
| Appendix A: Interview Protocol - Current Students & Alumni | 86 |
| Appendix B: Interview Protocol - Teachers | 95 |
| Appendix C: Observation Field Notes Format | 100 |
| Appendix D: Informed Assent for Current Students | 101 |
| Appendix E: Asentimiento informado de los alumnos | 103 |
| Appendix F: Informed Parental Consent | 105 |
| Appendix G: Consentimiento informado de los padres | 107 |
| Appendix H: Informed Consent for Alumni | 109 |
| Appendix I: Consentimiento informado para exalumnos | 110 |
| Appendix J: Informed Consent for Teachers | 112 |
| Appendix K: Consentimiento informado para maestros | 114 |
| Appendix L: Theoretical framework | 116 |

List of Tables

| | | |
|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1. | Frequency of each readiness subcategory and codes by participant category | 25 |
| 2. | Engagement approach by dimension and frequency by participant category | 42 |
| 3. | Frequency of each alignment category and codes by participant category | 56 |
| 4. | Frequency of each factor or influence by participant category | 63 |
| 5. | Frequency of community-level influence by participant category | 70 |

List of Figures

| | | |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1. | A conceptualization of the depth realism model | 11 |
| 2. | Diagram of factors influencing readiness to natural mentoring relationships | 25 |
| 3. | A conceptualization of natural mentorships within a depth realism model | 39 |
| 4. | Diagram of dimensions of engagement approach | 42 |
| 5. | A second depth realism model of natural mentorships | 55 |
| 6. | Diagram of factors influencing alignment between readiness and engagement | 56 |
| 7. | A third iteration of a depth realism model of natural mentorships | 62 |
| 8. | Diagram of group-level factors influence on natural mentorships | 63 |
| 9. | Diagram of community-level factors influence on natural mentorships | 70 |
| 10. | The final iteration of a depth realism model of natural mentorships | 76 |

A Rudimentary Framework of the Emergence of Naturally-Occurring Mentorships

Mentoring has been widely accepted to be an effective prevention and intervention strategy to address a variety of youth development outcomes. These relationships are generally classified as informal or formal (Karcher et al. 2006). Generally, formal mentoring relationships occur within the context of youth development programs, and these programs or the relationships fostered within them tend to vary in location, structure, goals, practices, and dosage. The literature on formal youth mentoring has become quite extensive with studies examining the effect of these relationships, including investigating the influence of contextual factors on formal mentoring relationships. Raposa et al. (2016) found youth contextual factors such as baseline environmental stressors and baseline behavioral risks and characteristics of mentors such as confidence in mentoring, attitude towards youth, previous mentoring experience, and mentoring goals were found to influence the mentoring relationship. Similarly, Cavell et al. (2020) found that mentor factors such as attachment tendencies, personality traits, and self-efficacy directly influenced perceptions of the mentorship match. These studies highlight how individual and contextual factors have an influence on formal mentorships throughout the duration of the relationship. Since formal mentoring relationships are created by programs, it is difficult to understand whether individual or contextual factors contribute to the emergence of a mentoring relationship beyond looking at factors programs use in matching mentors and mentees.

Informal mentor relationships differ from formal mentorships in that they form organically outside the structure of a program. Within a youth development context, these mentorships tend to be cross-age relationships youth have with adults from within the

youth's social environment who have a meaningful impact outside the adult's typical social role (Zimmerman et al., 2005). Informal mentor relationships are commonly referred to as natural mentorships as they occur naturally within a particular setting. In the United States, research has examined who serves as natural mentors (Johnson & Gastic, 2015), when these relationships form (Johnson & Gastic, 2015), what functions they serve (Miranda-Chan et al., 2016; Monjaras-Gaytan, Sánchez, & Carter, 2020), relationship quality (Erdem et al., 2016), and impact of having these types of mentorships (Miranda-Chan et al., 2016; Hagler & Rhodes, 2018; Kelley & Lee, 2018). Johnson & Gastic (2015) explored the types of natural mentors that lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) youth tend to recruit, finding that LGB youth were more likely to have female mentors and mentors who were either from their family or school. Another key study is by Miranda-Chan et al. (2016) who found that natural mentors tended to provide either instrumental, socioemotional, cognitive, or identity-centered support. Moreover, the quality of these relationships has been measured using outcomes such as the mentor and protégé perceptions of the relationship quality, levels of engagement within the mentorship, and match length (Erdem et al., 2016; Raposa et al., 2016). Kelley and Lee (2018) found that having a natural mentor during adolescence predicted lower levels of dangerousness but no effect on levels of delinquency (graffiti, property damage, lying, fighting, stealing, using a weapon, and selling drugs, etc.). Dangerousness includes some of the same activities as delinquency but at a level where these activities are considered more dangerous. For example, a minor fistfight (delinquency) versus using a weapon in a fight (dangerousness). Other studies have shown natural mentorships to be associated with positive effects in young adulthood such as greater psychological well-being, higher

levels of satisfaction with romantic relationships, higher number of close friendships, higher civic engagement, higher educational attainment, and lower likelihood to be involved in criminal activity (Hagler & Rhodes, 2018; Miranda-Chan et al., 2016).

While the literature on natural mentoring adequately investigates the function and impact of these relationships, few studies have explored the factors that influence their emergence. Rubin et al. (2018) studied factors that influence the bond between summer camp staff and youth campers, finding that staff's perception of their role, level of experience, availability, and alignment with campers' interests contributed to their ability to form close relationships with the campers. Berardi et al. (2019) investigated the associations among parental attachment, support-seeking strategies, and natural mentoring relationships among first-year college students, finding no direct relationship with parental attachment but a possible mediated relationship with parental attachment through help-seeking behaviors. Hagler et al. (2019) examined the role of prosocial peer engagement and stressors on the development of natural mentoring relationships in school settings, finding an indirect association between prosocial peer engagement and natural mentorships when youth experienced low levels of stress. Gowdy et al. (2022) found that factors such as demographics, family resources, economic distress, neighborhood resources, and trauma influence young people's access to informal mentors. These studies provide insight into possible factors that contribute to the development of natural mentorships, but further investigation is merited to better understand how and why these types of relationships emerge.

Monjaras-Gaytan, Sánchez, and Carter (2020) explored the role that trust and stressors play in the formation of natural mentorships. They found that although trust is

important in sustaining pre-existing mentorships, there was no association with levels of trust and developing new natural mentorships. Additionally, the quantitative study found that an increased amount of stressors in 9th grade predicted the formation of natural mentorships in 10th grade. In another study, Monjaras-Gaytan, Sánchez, Salusky, and Schwartz (2021) found significant associations between ecological factors (years in college, age, student status, help-seeking attitudes, help-seeking avoidance, having an off-campus mentor, quality of relationships with instructors, and sense of belonging) and having a natural mentor at the participants' university. These are two of the few studies that have shown insight into factors that contribute to the emergence of natural mentoring relationships; however, they do not necessarily provide insight as to why that factor or others contribute to this phenomenon, highlighting an opportunity in the literature to explore using qualitative methodologies.

Significance of Natural Mentorship Research

Understanding how mentorship relationships form naturally is significant as a means to help inform efforts to more effectively create formal mentoring relationships similar to how understanding the ways in which human bodies create antibodies (natural) as a result to some foreign objects exposure and applying that knowledge to develop vaccines (artificial) against those foreign objects. In fact, mentoring scholars have begun applying natural mentoring concepts to formal mentoring program schema. Models have been developed to better understand and improve mentoring. Miranda-Chen et al. (2016), building upon the Rhodes model of mentoring meta-functions (socioemotional, cognitive, and identity development), identified specific mentoring strategies used by mentors in support of Rhodes's metafunctions (ie. 'instilling ethics' (strategy) supports 'identity

development' (metafunction)). Hagler (2018) also suggested an iteration to a process model of mentoring, highlighting the ways social and cultural capital lend towards each of Rhodes's metafunctions.

New approaches, such as youth-initiated mentoring, network-engaged mentoring, and intentional mentoring, are being developed and applied as a result of insights from natural mentoring. Youth-initiated mentoring integrates the structure of formal mentoring and the match process from natural mentoring (Schwartz & Rhodes, 2016; Spencer, Tugenberg et al., 2016; Spencer, Gowdy et al., 2019). Youth select adults from within their social environment as possible mentors, and mentoring programs help these adults become mentors through training and ongoing support. Spencer, Tugenberg et al. (2016) and Spencer, Gowdy et al. (2019) investigated the impact of youth-initiated mentoring, finding that because these mentors were already a part of their protégés' lives, most of the mentor relationships began strong, skipping the awkward initial phase of getting to know each other. This model allowed prospective mentors to feel as if they already had made a difference within the protégé's life. Additionally, throughout the program, mentors were more adaptable to various issues occurring within their protégés' lives. Consequently, protégés felt a sense of commitment from the mentors towards them. Schwartz, Kanchewa, et al. (2016) took the concept of youth-initiated mentoring a step further by examining an approach to help enhance emerging adults' ability to recruit and maintain mentoring relationships. Although participants in this study reported understanding social capital better and developing skills and/or confidence in cultivating social capital, the study did not examine whether the participants did, in fact, use the skills learned through the workshop.

Networked-engaged mentoring works within the construct of a formal mentoring program with the goal of equipping protégés with the skills and confidence to connect with other adults within their social environments (Schwartz & Rhodes, 2016); this approach seems to use the formal mentoring framework to encourage the formation of natural mentorships. Austin et al. (2020) looked at different types of mentor profiles in regards to connecting and mediating behaviors. They classified one set of mentors as Close Connectors; these mentors felt closer to their protégés and actively connected them to other adults, community services, resources, experiences, and opportunities to learn skills. Protégés of Close Connectors experienced improvements in relationship quality with their parents, in help-seeking behaviors, and in extracurricular involvement. These findings seem to indicate that network-engaged mentoring has great potential to result in positive youth outcomes. Intentional mentoring is an approach that looks broader within a community than a singular mentoring program with the goal of increasing the number of adults within a community who are willing and able to serve as mentors (Schwartz & Rhodes, 2016).

It is clear that understanding natural mentoring has significant implications on formal mentoring. Not only has the literature begun to explore widely the impact of natural mentoring relationships, but as observed, mentoring scholars are reconsidering formal mentoring as a result of insights into natural mentoring. But beyond a recognition that natural mentorships exist (in opposition to formal mentorships), still little work has been done to understand how and why these relationships develop organically. Stepping back to better understand more deeply natural mentoring relationships can help ensure

that any conclusions drawn from research on natural mentorships and applied to formal mentoring can be done so effectively and ethically.

Moreover, several studies that investigate the impact of natural mentoring base their methods on data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (Add Health; Kelley & Lee, 2018; Miranda-Chan et al., 2016; Johnson & Gastic, 2015; Hagler & Rhodes, 2018). This longitudinal study (Harris et al., 2009) only asks respondents whether an adult, other than parents or stepparents, has made an important positive difference in their life at any time since they were 14 years old but does not inquire as to whether the impact of the relationship with this adult is related or not to their social role within the youth's environment. As such, it is not clear whether these studies refer to natural mentorships as typically operationally defined among the body of work. This highlights one of the challenges with the literature on natural mentorship—the lack of a consistent definition (Zimmerman, et al., 2005). It is also unclear whether adolescents would actually designate the adults identified in the Add Health data as mentors or not.

Current Study

Schwartz and Rhodes (2016) analogized youth-initiated mentoring and network-engaged mentoring to “teach[ing] youth to fish” (p. 155) and intentional mentoring to “stocking the pond” (p. 155). However, there does not seem to be a clear understanding of how the ‘process of fishing’ actually operates. The overarching research purpose is to begin understanding the process by which natural mentoring relationships evolve from typical social relationships by investigating the factors that influence their development. In support of this research purpose, this study aimed to answer the

following research question—what internal and external factors impact the relationship development?

Subquestions focused on understanding how thoughts, feelings, attitudes, or beliefs impacted the connection when youth and adults interacted within these relationships, how everyday situations occurring in their lives impacted the connection, how the connections between them ebbed and flowed through the duration of the relationship, and at what point the connections might persist due to or despite the internal and external factors.

Interpretive Framework

Critical realism is a philosophy of science originally introduced by Roy Bhaskar that integrates the ideas of critical naturalism and transcendental realism (Collier, 1994). Critical naturalism refers to Bhaskar's argument that the ontology of transcendental realism seen within the natural world can also be observed in the social world, albeit with a few modifications. Transcendental realism refers to a depth realism that considers the ways in which our natural (and social) worlds are organized. This perspective relies on transcendental argumentation, which frames inquiries using this structure: 'what must be true in order for 'x' to be possible?'.

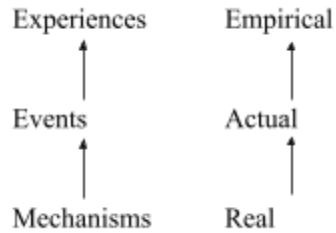
Four main principles govern this realist perspective (Collier, 1994). Objectivity refers to the idea that something can be real despite being known or not. Fallibility refers to the concept that arguments made from a realist paradigm must be always open to refutation by new information. Transphenomenality emphasizes that what exists is not only what can be observed but also their underlying structures. Counter-phenomenality

explains that deep structures may not only explain something but they may also contradict them.

Transcendental realism, as discussed by Bhaskar (according to Collier, 1994), is considered a form of depth realism that organizes reality in three domains—real, actual, and empirical (see Figure 1). The real domain is made up of mechanisms, events, and experiences and flows into the actual domain, which is made up of only events and experiences. The actual domain then flows into the empirical domain, which is made up of only experiences. We, as humans, are truly only able to interact with the empirical domain where we gain knowledge of reality through our experiences. A quick example to distinguish the domains builds off a common thought exercise about a tree falling in the woods. Without complicating the analogy with the added question of sound, we can consider the situation of trees falling in the forest. As humans, we would only know a tree fell in the forest if we watched it happen (experience). Regardless of whether any humans are around, if the conditions are right for a tree to fall, it will fall (event). If we happen upon a tree on its side, we can guess that it fell, but we do not know that explicitly. We think it fell given our understanding of various factors (structures, powers, generative mechanisms, and tendencies) whether consciously or subconsciously. One of those factors that causes a tree to fall when the conditions are right is gravity (mechanism). This analogy is focused on a natural world phenomenon; however, Bhaskar applied the same perspective of depth realism to our human social world due to critical naturalism.

Figure 1.

A conceptualization of the depth realism model



Transcendental inquiries work to explore the mechanisms that contribute to events and experiences of the actual and empirical domains (Collier, 1994). Given the open-system nature of sociological experiences, there may be several mechanisms that presuppose higher-level ones. Bhaskar suggested a vertical explanation model by which there are layers of mechanisms ordered in a particular way that demonstrates rootedness in the lower-level stratum and the emergence of the higher-level stratum. Transcendental realism is considered a form of depth realism, because this vertical explanation can progress through multiple layers, called strata, of mechanisms.

The theory of natural necessity was conceptualized as a transcendental realist theory and centers on four concepts—structures, powers, generative mechanisms, and tendencies (Collier, 1994). Structures refer to the makeup of some thing, including things such as people or society. Powers are the effects of those things' structures that cause events to take place. These powers exist even when they are not operating (unexercised) or when they operate with no effects (unrealized). Generative mechanisms are the processes whereby the power of a structure is exercised and realized and causes an event. Since our human social world is an open system, there may be multiple generative mechanisms at play at any given moment. As such, outcomes of those mechanisms can be codetermined by this multiplicity. Therefore, the explanations of the effects of these structures, powers, and generative mechanisms can only be considered tendencies.

Bhaskar does caution against falling trap to the epistemic fallacy of reducing statements about being to those about knowledge (eg. asking how we know about a thing instead of asking what sort of thing it is).

Bhaskar (as cited in Collier, 1994) also discussed the ideas of sense and reference. Reference is a particular object, and sense is the meaning and definition of that object. For example, the number 2 (object) can be referred to as the only even prime number (sense A) or the positive square root of 4 (sense B). The issue of incommensurability comes into play when considering these concepts. Incommensurability refers to when there is a common reference but conflicting sensemaking. Conversely, there may be times when there may appear to be conflicting senses, but actually those senses do not refer to the same reference. In these cases, there is no incommensurability.

Critical realism as a philosophy of science has begun to be dissected by scholars in the social science space including community psychology (see Jimenez et al., 2022; Malherbe et al., 2021). Other social science researchers have been exploring the applicability of critical realism to grounded theory methodology (see Kempster & Parry, 2011; Bunt, 2018; Hoddy, 2019). Kempster and Parry argued that critical realism was an appropriate philosophy of science for the field of leadership and that grounded theory was an appropriate methodology for understanding the complexities of the phenomenon of leadership. Oliver (2012) and Bunt (2018) both explored critical realism within the field of social work, applying a retroductive analysis process. Hoddy (2019) and Malherbe et al. (2021) also applied retroduction to social science research. Retroductive analysis is an abductive analysis with a particular question of interest in mind; abductive analysis is a process that considers all possible explanations, devising and testing a

hypothesis for each of these explanations, and exploring the most plausible one. In retroductive analysis, the question of interest is the transcendental argument of “what must be true for “x” to be possible?” Retroduction has been applied to early stages of the grounded theory analysis process (ie. open and axial coding).

Considerations of the phenomenon of mentoring continue to become more intriguing through a critical realism interpretive framework. In essence, the overarching research purpose for these studies can be restated using a transcendental argument structure—what must be true for natural mentoring relationships to be possible? When considering this question through the depth realism structure of critical realism, natural mentorships would be considered events within the actual domain. As such, the transcendental argument aims to uncover the mechanisms that underlie these relationships. Given mentoring relationships exist within the open-system of the psychosocioecological domain, there may be multiple mechanisms at play directly resulting in natural mentorships. On the other hand, there may be deeper mechanisms that directly result in other mechanisms that then directly result in natural mentoring relationships. As noted, critical realism has been applied to qualitative methodologies through retroductive analysis. This method is generally applied early on in the analysis process. Within a grounded theory approach, retroductive analysis has been utilized during the open and axial coding phases. Although some researchers have used retroduction as an analysis method, it does seem to be too akin to hypothesis testing, which seems antithetical to the inductive nature of grounded theory. This represents a gap in the literature.

Much, if not most, of the current discourse on mentoring tends to be centered in the context of the Global North, a term that refers to the dominant cultural perspectives grounded in more of a Eurocentric epistemological frame (see de Sousa Santos & Meneses, 2020; de Sousa Santos, 2016; de Sousa Santos, 2007). Global South refers to not necessarily a southern geography but rather to an epistemological and ontological distinction for those born into a struggle against the dominance of the Old World, the West, or the Global North. Often, regions and countries ascribed to the Global South are peripheral and semiperipheral ones previously referred to as the Third World.

Ponce Ceballos et al. (2018) remarked on the phenomenon of mentoring within higher education in México, recommending the use of a mentoring approach as opposed to a tutoring approach for university faculty with their students. In their review of the literature on mentoring, most of the points of reference to mentoring experiences were grounded in Global North contexts (United States, Spain). More recently, researchers in Latin America have been exploring youth mentoring. Arroyo Neyra et al. (2021) studied the effects of peer mentoring on the development of social skills and indirect memory in Chile. Rosero Ojeda (2021) examined whether mentoring strategies influenced academic performance at a school in Ecuador. Even with these studies, there seems to be more to investigate as to whether the mentoring phenomenon exists within these contexts. Within the transparadigm framework of critical realism, it is possible that the phenomenon of mentorship may be a more universal concept contextualized within local realities, so that the vocabulary, mindset, and understanding of what mentorship is is distinct among settings; however, it is also possible that these types of relationships may not exist in the Global South as currently conceptualized and that observations of these types of

relationship may be indicative of other phenomena not yet elucidated from within these Global South settings.

Values, Biases, & Assumptions

My interest in natural mentoring stemmed from an initial interest in the novel ways community programs apply mentoring activities in order to promote positive youth development. I have served as a mentor in both my personal and professional domains and have seen several different approaches and strategies to formal mentoring programs in order to enhance the mentorship experience. As I began looking into the literature about formal mentoring best practices, I became more exposed to the concept of natural mentoring. When reflecting on my childhood, I identify several individuals who had served as my natural mentors.

Although I was born in a Global South setting, I was adopted and raised in a Global North place. Subsequently, most of my experiences with mentoring has been within a Global North context, specifically within the United States. My interest in conducting cross-cultural research is directly related to my childhood experiences as a transracial adoptee raised apart from my Global South origin. My development as a queer man of color within a predominantly White religious heteronormative environment has helped me develop a practice of reflexivity and an appreciation for diversity and social justice. As such, although I am not of Mexican descent, I bring these values into the research work. Recognizing that there may be biases and assumptions that influence my work within this cultural context, I worked diligently to exercise reflexivity throughout the study.

A major assumption that has been questioned throughout this research process is that the idea that mentoring and mentorship are universal. As I began designing this study, in collaboration with the school, I assumed that mentoring, as I had conceptualized it, likely existed within this cultural context. I learned through the research process that although there is a term for mentoring in Spanish (*mentoría*) it is not commonly used at least in the region of México where the study took place. As a result of reviewing the literature and findings from this study, I have been shifting from a perspective that conceptualizes mentoring as a prevention and intervention tool to a perspective that considers mentoring as a form of evidence of a healthy social ecology. Within this perspective, observing positive effective mentoring signals a healthy community, but it does not mean that mentoring is a requirement to be a healthy community.

Lastly, my training as a researcher started within the field of biochemistry as an undergraduate student. Although it was not explicitly ever discussed, it is clear to me now that the research process I was engaged within was based in a positivist paradigm, which makes sense given biochemistry is a natural science discipline. As a social science scholar, I have actually been more interested and intrigued by qualitative methodologies despite my initial positivist training. As I worked to reflect on this insight, I explored various philosophies of science and interpretive frameworks typical within community psychology. It was clear to me that I did not resonate with a post-positivist approach, but I also realized that a social constructivist approach did not fully resonate with me either. Critical realism seems to be an approach that resonates with me as a scholar. The more I read about this philosophy of science, the more I am certain it aligns with my research

practice. However, this could be indicative of confirmation bias, so it is critical that I caution myself through the research process and practice reflexivity to minimize this bias.

Methods

Applying a critical realist interpretive framework involves focusing on local realities (local ways of knowing and being) that may form based upon a more globally shared reality. To attend to the research question, it is most important to examine deeply the experiences that participants have in regards to naturally-occurring relationships with adults that have implications for mentorships. Thus, a qualitative grounded theory approach as purported by Corbin and Strauss (2015), that honors and prioritizes the voices of participants, was determined to be the most appropriate. The scope of the study's inquiry was limited to understanding youth experiences with adults within the school setting, although they may also experience natural mentorships with non-parental adults other than teachers and in community settings other than the school environment.

Site Selection

The site selected for this study was a private nonresidential school with both *secundaria* (junior high) and *preparatoria* (senior high) programs in rural Mexico. The author had both personal and professional relationships with key school administrators and had worked at the school for one academic year six years prior to the study. It was through this personal relationship that the author was sharing insights gathered through reviewing the literature on natural mentoring and preliminary ideas for a research study to the school's director where the idea to conduct the study at the school was developed. The director took the idea to their staff who agreed that findings from such a study might result in a positive impact within the school and the community. A formal invitation was

extended, and the private junior and senior high school location was selected as the site for this study.

Without the school's interest, eagerness, and invitation, this study could be yet another example of epistemological extractivism (de Sousa Santos, 2020) given that the school is situated in a cultural context different from the author's primary setting. Therefore, the school's interest and eagerness to learn more about natural mentoring was key to being selected as the site for the study. The methods were developed in collaboration and consultation with the school administration including the development of informed consent and assent forms, interview protocols, and participant recruitment materials in both English and Spanish. The study received institutional review board approval and abided by local research ethic regulations. Since the project included both English and Spanish, it was important to find transcription and translation services that could help honor the voice of the community. The school provided a reference to a local service who transcribed the interviews, ensuring the voice of the local community was reflected in the transcriptions.

Participants

Participants were recruited in three categories—current students (7th through 12th grades), alumni (graduates of 12th grade), and current teachers. In summary, 7 current students (out of 90), 7 alumni (out of 49), and 7 teachers (out of 15) voluntarily participated in the study upon providing informed consent or assent; parental or guardian consent was solicited and obtained for any participants under the age of 18. Of the 7 current students, 3 were in secundaria and 4 were in preparatoria. All of the alumni had continued their education and were pursuing *licenciaturas* (undergraduate degrees) or

maestrias (graduate degrees) in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (3), business (2), or social sciences or humanities (2). In total, there were 10 female and 11 male participants at a 3:4 ratio for current students and alumni and a 4:3 ratio for teachers. Of the 21, 17 participants had Mexican citizenship and 4 had citizenship in the United States (US); of those with US citizenship, 3 were current students or alumni and had grown up almost wholly in Mexico. At the time of the study, none of the current students had attended the school during the author's previous employment with the school, though some of the staff and 2 teachers had been working at the school alongside the author.

Procedure

Recruitment. Presentations about the study were held at a 7th- and 8th-grade student assembly, a 9th- through 11th-grade student assembly, and a faculty meeting; at the time of the study, 12th-grade students were not on-site given they had completed their requirements and were awaiting graduation. Presentations were voiced in English with slide text in Spanish. Videos in English and Spanish were produced and distributed to parents and guardians outlining the study. An open invitation to participate, including links to online informed consent and assent forms in English and Spanish, was distributed to students and teachers through email listservs and to parents and guardians through email and group text messages. Invitations were sent directly to alumni via email, text messages, or in-person communication; recruitment for alumni participants followed a snowball technique, leveraging referrals from school administration, current students, and other alumni.

Sampling. Purposive sampling was used in order to diversify the range of cases within each category, and quota sampling was used to ensure an equal number of participants among the three categories. Additionally given the nature of the grounded theory approach which aims to continue collecting data until the point of saturation has been achieved, theoretical sampling was used.

Data collection and analysis. Data were collected primarily through semi-structured interviews which allowed for a level of consistency among participants while also allowing participants to voice concepts that were important to them within the scope of the topic (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). The duration of the interviews ranged from 20 to 56 minutes. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed by a local bilingual transcription and translation service. Transcripts were cleaned and shared back with participants to review and provide recommendations for clarification of their voice and any corrections of transcription errors before being uploaded to Dedoose for analysis. Concurrent with and after data collection, data analysis occurred following the constant comparative method and phases typical to grounded theory—open, axial, and selective coding (Creswell et al., 2007). Open codes were organized by the research questions (mentoring, factors, and process); the factor research question is the focus of this dissertation, and subsequently, factor codes were divided along a socioecological spectrum from intrasystem to macrosystem levels (mentor individual factors, protégé individual factors, mentor-protégé dyadic factors, group-level factors, and community-level factors). Axial and selective coding was conducted on the protégé individual factors open codes initially to pilot the coding technique, and once completed,

these techniques were applied to the remainder of the factors codes. Memos and diagrams were developed to record insights, concepts, and categories that emerged from the data.

Given the strategy for open coding was based on prioritizing participant voices, most open codes use direct language from the excerpts they represent. These open codes for the individual mentor factors, mentor-protégé dyadic factors, group-level factors, and community-level factors required further open coding to evaluate them against each other, to consolidate similar open codes, to hone the wording of the code especially if there were both Spanish and English open codes for the same theme.

After this second wave of open coding, the themes were analyzed using axial coding. Strategies and techniques suggested by Corbin and Strauss (2015) were used during axial coding with the goal of considering and proposing ways in which the open-code themes related to each other. In a sense, axial coding worked to develop the skeleton, or core structure, of a theoretical construct. The axial codes were analyzed with the goal of identifying core categories/constructs for each of the remaining socioecological segments of the phenomenon. Transcendental realist analysis (Collier, 1994) was used in the selective coding process. For example, this analysis asked how the core categories as generative mechanisms relate to the event of natural mentoring relationships. Given the open-system nature of psychosocial phenomena, the relations may not be strictly linear, so it could be possible that various mechanisms identified may be the first level below natural mentoring relationships and other identified mechanisms be in lower levels (second, third, fourth, etc.). In this model, the mechanisms in the lower-level strata presuppose those in the upper-level strata, and those in the upper-level strata are rooted in those in the lower-level strata. In other words, the upper levels emerge

from the lower levels, eventually leading to the emergence of natural mentorships.

Alternatively, there could be multiple mechanisms at the various levels so mechanisms identified could both be on the first stratum, presupposing the event of natural mentoring relationships, and be rooted in other mechanisms on a second stratum.

Trustworthiness

As noted, cleaned transcripts were member checked by participants for clarification of their voice and any corrections of transcription errors before analysis. Additionally, other research activities were implemented to promote trustworthiness (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Once the initial rudimentary theoretical framework was developed with the first core category of readiness, alumni participants were invited to follow-up sessions as a member-checking effort focused on the theoretical concepts. Additionally, the author spent 11 weeks on site in an effort to build rapport with current students and teachers, including naturalistic classroom observations (see Pryce et al., 2019) with each cohort of students. Data from observations did not yield any significant insights relevant to this study and were excluded from analysis.

Intra-analysis Literature Review

This study was designed with a grounded theory methodology. Corbin and Strauss (2015) recommended designing grounded theory studies in ways that promoted an inductive approach, such as minimizing the influence of the literature on the voices and perspectives of the participants. In an attempt to honor the spirit of this approach, the initial literature review was limited to assessing whether a gap in the literature existed that might be addressed by the research questions and did not explore in-depth alternate theories that might explain the phenomena of natural mentoring relationships. In order to

make meaning of any framework that emerges from the data, it was important to conduct an intra-analysis literature review to identify any pre-existing theories that provide parallels or insights into natural mentoring relationships. Specifically, once the core categories were identified through the analysis process, the literature was reviewed to see what, if any, of those core categories pre-exist within the body of knowledge.

Findings

These findings represent a segment of a larger data set with a focus on the factors that influence the emergence and development of natural mentorships. The overall study aims at understanding both the process by which natural mentoring relationships emerge and the factors that contribute to the development of these relationships. Continued analysis of the data collected from this study will be conducted with respect to the emergence and development process for these relationships.

Factors of Readiness

Analysis was conducted in two waves. The first wave served as a pilot in order to hone the coding technique; this set of analysis focussed on the individual protégé factor codes and resulted in the core category of *readiness* emerging from the data collected from 20 of the participants (see Table 1). Adolescents and emerging adults are more likely to allow relationships with adults, including teachers, to evolve to a higher level such as a mentorship if they exist in a higher state of readiness. Another way to consider this concept is to consider the relationship from the perspective of the prospective mentor—it does not matter how effective a teacher’s approach is; no mentoring relationship will develop unless the student feels ready for one. One of the current student participants spoke to this concept directly:

Student: Because at the beginning he was, like, trying to approach me, trying to know about me more. Sometimes he play some jokes, but I didn't feel like connection, and I wasn't really trying to connect.

All categories of participants referred to this state of readiness in ways that seem to indicate varying levels of readiness from low to high. Three factors—inhibitors, promoters, and activators—emerged from the data (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Diagram of factors influencing readiness to natural mentoring relationships

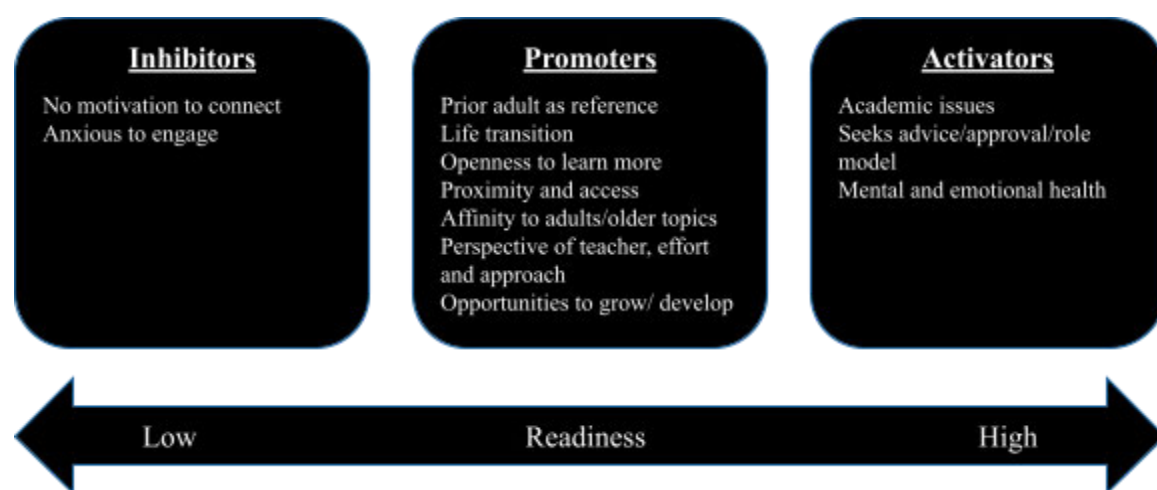


Table 1

Frequency of each readiness subcategory and codes by participant category (n=7 each)

| Subcategories/Codes | Participant Categories | | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| | Students | Alumni | Teachers | Total |
| Inhibiting Factors | 3 | 1 | | 4 |
| Having no motivation to connect | 3 | | | 3 |
| Being anxious to engage | 1 | 1 | | 2 |

| | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Promoting Factors | 5 | 6 | 4 | 15 |
| Having prior experiences with adults as reference points | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| Experiencing life transitions | 1 | 5 | 1 | 7 |
| Being open to learn more | 1 | 3 | 1 | 5 |
| Having proximity and access | 1 | 2 | 2 | 5 |
| Having an affinity to adults or older topics | 3 | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| Cultivating perspectives of teachers, effort, & approach | 3 | 3 | 2 | 8 |
| Having opportunities to grow and develop | 2 | 1 | | 3 |
| Activating Factors | 5 | 6 | 5 | 16 |
| Experiencing academic issues | 3 | 4 | 1 | 8 |
| Seeking advice, approval, or a role model | 3 | 5 | 2 | 10 |
| Experiencing issues related to mental/emotional health | 3 | 5 | 4 | 12 |

Inhibitors. Inhibitors are factors that decrease the level of readiness an adolescent/emerging adult feels with regard to forming natural mentorships. Two inhibitors were demonstrated—*having no motivation to connect* (3 participants) and *being anxious to engage* (2 participants).

Having No Motivation to Connect. The first inhibiting factor of having no motivation to connect was seen among three current student participants.

Student: It's because a lot of the relationships I have with parents or my friends' parents and adults, it's just like, umm, I don't have a lot of connections with adults really, I just act polite with them, and it's not that much interaction between us.

This factor is more fixed in nature in that there is little that can be done actively to change this motivation to connect. Until the adolescents or emerging adults find themselves in a

situation where their beliefs or attitudes around connecting with adults shift, they would be in a low state of readiness to form meaningful natural mentoring relationships.

Subsequently, two of these participants experienced this shift due to activating factors—*academic issues* and *seeks advice/approval/role model*.

Being Anxious to Engage. The second inhibiting factor was related to being anxious to engage with adults/teachers.

Alumni: I was definitely intimidated, because she is this awesome powerful woman, and I didn't really know how I was supposed to approach our friendship and our relationship with her being my professor ... I was very nervous going into it.

This factor is more dynamic in that there seem to be strategies that can be employed to help overcome this inhibitor. When the alumni participant began to view their professor in a different way (related to the promoter *perspective of teacher*), it was then that they were able to be in a higher state of readiness for a potential mentoring relationship.

Promoters. Another set of factors that influences one's state of readiness are promoters, which include *having prior experiences with adults as reference points* (4 participants), *experiencing life transitions* (7 participants), *being open to learn more* (5 participants), *having proximity and access to prospective mentors* (5 participants), *having an affinity to adults or adult topics* (5 participants), *cultivating and maintaining perspectives of their teachers including the teachers effort and approach* (8 participants), and *having opportunities to grow and develop* (3 participants). When these factors were observed in participants' stories about their engagement with teachers and other adults in

their lives, there seemed to be a higher level of readiness for those relationships to deepen into mentorships.

Having Prior Experiences with Adults as Reference Points. One current student, two alumni, and one teacher shared stories that demonstrated how prior experiences, both positive and negative, with adults acted as reference points as to the potential of a mentoring relationship.

Alumni: At the [previous high school] ... [former teacher] was one of my bestest friends, even though he was my teacher, and just like being away from all of that was kind of difficult, and so I think that I was, not consciously but kind of unconsciously, looking for a relationship with someone who was older

Student: No es por ofender a nadie pero personalmente la forma en la que enseña [otra maestra] ... entonces fue como, fue como un contraste aquí y me ayudó como a ver que las clases con [maestra] sí son, de cierta forma, bueno, desde mi punto de vista, mejores, hacia pues, hacia cómo me enseñaban antes.

It is not simply enough to have previous experiences with other adults. Instead, these experiences have to cause youth to conceptualize the experiences as a reference point by which to evaluate future experiences with adults. For example, a negative experience with one supervisor provided a reference point by which an alumni participant evaluated their new supervisor, and when the new supervisor engaged them with a different, more understanding approach, the participant seemed to have an increased state of readiness to engage with them in a mentoring relationship. Interestingly, previous experiences with

adults as reference points was also identified in the study by Berardi et al. (2019) finding no direct relationship between parental attachment and the development of new natural mentorships but a possible mediated relationship through help-seeking behaviors. This could indicate that the extent to which someone has a strong or weak attachment to family authority figures may influence the likelihood of reaching out to potential mentors for help when a perceived need for assistance arises. Youth may be using these prior adults as reference points, which might be creating some level of motivation to engage with others that seem familiar and some level of anxiousness to engage with others less known.

Experiencing Life Transition. Another promoter was experiencing life transitions. These transitions included taking on new roles with new expectations, returning to a sense of normalcy on campus as a result of the pandemic, and moving into the city, to another city, or even to a different country for school. Of course, transitions occur constantly in everyday life. However, these transitions highlight significant changes in the support systems available.

Alumni: Yeah, it was the middle of the pandemic ... that was, like, the first thing we noticed, was like, there's actually no one here that can help us right now. ... just that like feeling of like solitude and you're just kind of alone. It was really my first job as, or my first project, as a doctoral student so there was extra pressure there. So, I mean, yeah, looking back on it there was definitely a lot of added pressure...

Alumni: Porque yo viví en [la ciudad cercana] entre semana y [el pueblo local] en fin de semana. Entonces tenía como que esas dos, eh, vidas. ... pues,

empezaba a sentir ese cambio en el que bueno ya no, mi vida ya no está acá [en el pueblo local] y las personas con las que tengo muchas afinidades se encuentran allá [en la ciudad cercana] y empezaba a encontrar más personas allá también con esas afinidades.

Six of the student participants described situations where they were experiencing significant transitions in their life where the transition seemed to be a factor that increased their state of readiness to engage with a teacher or adult as a mentor. One teacher participant shared a belief of how their role in supporting expats as they transition into the local community promoted the development of a mentoring relationship with those students. These life transitions exemplified ways in which the nature of participants' support systems changed; moreover, these changes seemed to induce some level of stress which influence their readiness for natural mentors. Researchers continue to explore the ways in which stress influences the development or quality of natural mentorships (see Hagler et al., 2019; Monjaras-Gaytan, Sánchez, & Carter, 2020; Raposa et al., 2016). Considering stress in the context of transition may provide a wider contextual basis to understand its influence on the emergence of natural mentoring relationships.

Being Open to Learn More. Students who had an openness to learn more were more receptive to teachers who worked to engage them at a deeper level.

Alumni: Eso me gustó mucho su perspectiva más, eh, plural e intercultural... y dije, creo que esta clase va a ser una muy buena clase y voy a aprender mucho de ella...

This promoting factor is a bit more dynamic and active in that the adolescents or emerging adults proactively determined these adults offered something worth learning, which catalyzed their interest to invest in their relationship. Although this theme centers around learning experiences, the foci of the students' and alumni's examples were centered around learning at a more holistic level versus only at an academic level even if the interest to learn more started from within the classroom. This distinction is important as it highlights the way this promoting factor influences the students' and alumni's readiness for natural mentoring relationships instead of a deeper student-teacher relationship.

Having Proximity and Access. Being in proximity and having access to caring adults was seen to be a promoter also. From these data, students and teachers interacting was not enough to develop deeper relationships; instead being physically present in spaces together was mentioned by several participants as necessary to allow for meaningful connections to develop.

Teacher: When they were online, there were like no conversation or no bond or didn't told me about their day or about they want, about their university thinking and everything. I think when they are here, they want to talk to you. You don't have to look for them. They go with you, they, like umm, and they see and they listen of what you have to say.

Teacher: Sí, veo que me buscan. Sí, veo que en los descansos se van a veces conmigo a platicar ... pero, sí, noto que me busca a veces [un alumno], que me busca a veces [una alumna], me busca a veces [otra alumna] y

como que sí. A veces sí me dicen, “Ay, Miss, me gusta mucho estar en tu salón” o “Ay, Miss, me gusta estar aquí.”

Having proximity and access seems to increase the adolescents’ and emerging adults’ state of readiness to form deeper relationships with teachers/adults. Gowdy et al.’s (2022) finding that contextual and environmental factors influence access to natural mentorships for youth implicate that there may be other antecedent factors to this theme that contribute to promoting readiness.

Having an Affinity to Adults or Adult Topics. Three current students and one alumni identified relating more closely to adults or being more interested in adult topics and the concept of affinity was mentioned by one teacher. For some participants, this affinity seemed to be more aligned with personality or interests whereas others identified influences such as frequent interaction with older siblings or adults in their parent’s workplace as possible reasons.

Alumni: I was used to have old friends when I was just to, umm, practice catchball... so I was used to, I was used to interact with elderly people and I was used to get along with them pretty good.

Student: Like, ever since grade school I've always gotten along better with teachers, it's just something that came more naturally to me. So, I've always been like the type of person that kind of distances themselves from people their age and kind of goes more towards adults

Student: Like, right now my fellow students are worrying of TikTok and social media and dancing and girlfriends and all that stuff, while I'm, you know,

the usual, seeing the politics, news, seeing the economic growth and all that boring stuff.

This affinity to adults and adult topics increases the readiness among these adolescents and emerging adults to engage in mentoring relationships with their teachers.

Cultivating Perspectives of Teachers, Their Effort, and Approach. When participants cultivated a specific perspective about their teacher, whether it was about their effort or approach, then they were more inclined to allow the student-teacher relationship to blossom into a mentorship. This promoting factor was observed in stories from nine participants (4 current students, 3 alumni, and 2 teachers).

Student: I felt like I was doing something right and I liked it and I wanted it, keep getting better at it and keep surprising him with the things that I did at that time. ... Being recognized from a person that has worked on that for a lot years and has a lot of knowledge.

Student: So, he was helping me and I was like, oh, maybe I shouldn't waste his time, you know? It's his birthday, he should be spending time with those he loves and having a good time. So, then he helped me and afterwards I was, I started crying honestly cause it was, you know, nobody really does that.... I was just feeling happy, loved, cared about. That I'm more than just student.

In these excerpts, the students had experiences where they developed active and specific perspectives of their teachers. They developed an appreciation for the approach a teacher took, for the way a teacher made them feel, or for the effort a teacher put into supporting them, which aligns with Kelley's & Lee's (2018) finding that mattering played a

significant role in the degree to which natural mentors positively impacted adolescent behaviors. These cultivated perspectives of their teachers seem to serve as promoting factors for an increased state of readiness to engage in more mentoring-like relationships with those teachers. This may be due to the students developing positive help-seeking attitudes towards their teachers, which Monjaras-Gaytan, Sánchez, Salusky, and Schwartz (2021) found to be positively associated with forming institutional natural mentors but not non-institutional ones.

Having Opportunities to Grow and Develop. Two current students and one alumni provided insight into a more passive scenario that lends to increased readiness.

Student: I was never really good at like, putting out words. I couldn't, I still can't really, speak properly. But I definitely couldn't write. I couldn't relate like *sucesos* together into something.

This excerpt demonstrates a situation where the student recognized a challenge in their writing skills. They shared that their teacher was able to support them in improving these skills. Other participants shared similar examples of gaps in interests, knowledge, or skills that seem to create opportunities to grow and develop. These opportunities when recognized by a caring teacher can help catalyze the development of meaningful relationships. This theme refers to a more passive phenomenon contributing to readiness which makes it distinct from the more active theme of *being open to learn more*.

Although some of the gaps noted may seem centered in the classroom, the participants tended to align the skills to a broader identity perspective. For example, while improving writing skills improves classroom performance, it also helped this student feel as if they grew and developed more holistically and not just academically.

Activators. The last set of factors related to readiness were activators. The primary difference between activators and promoters is that activators cause adolescents and emerging adults to actively seek out a teacher or other adult for additional support whereas promoters only boost their readiness to respond when teachers or other adults engage them. In a sense, the amount of readiness embodied in the activator factors is higher than in the inhibitor or promoter factors. Three main activators emerged—*experiencing academic issues, seeking advice, approval, or a role model*, and *experiencing issues related to mental and emotional health*. These themes align with Berardi et al.'s (2019) proposition that help-seeking behaviors serve as mediating factors for the development of new natural mentoring relationships. Two of these themes focus on stressors that the adolescents and emerging adults are experiencing. Monjaras-Gaytan, Sánchez, & Carter (2020) had found that for every additional unit of stressors the 9th grade students experienced, they were 2.74 times more likely to develop a natural mentoring relationship in 10th grade. This finding seems to corroborate the presence of these two activators—*experiencing academic issues* and *experiencing issues related to mental and emotional health*—within this framework of readiness. This also coincides with what Raposa et al. (2016) found regarding the relationship between stressors and formal mentoring relationships. Increased stress in the youth's environment (Monjaras-Gaytan, Sánchez, & Carter, 2020; Raposa et al., 2016) may be positively related to the category of promoters and activators found in this study in the formation of natural relationships. However, there may be a number of potential mentor factors that influence which relationships will emerge. This seems to be highly individualistic depending on youth perceptions and preferences of people they want to build

relationships with, including how well they believe that person will be able to be helpful (Rubin, 2018).

Experiencing Academic Issues. This is a broad code that included struggling with learning, stressing about homework, worrying about failing a class, and thinking about fields of study. Three students, four alumni, and one teacher provided insight into this activating factor.

Student: So, there have been many times when I've had, I've been so stressed and overwhelmed and all of that cause of school and all of that so I contacted him mainly cause of homework and school related stuff and he was always there for me and took, how do you call it? He spent his time helping me which is meaningful to me and besides that also wishing me happy birthday

Of course, it seems natural for a student to connect with a teacher for academic issues, and it seems that this type of interaction would be aligned with the typical student-teacher relationship. Yet, sometimes these academic issues activate a motivation within the student to engage with their teachers more deeply, trending towards a mentoring-like relationship.

Seeking Advice, Approval, or a Role Model. Ten participants shared insight into situations where they were purposively looking for advice, approval, or role models.

Alumni: She has a lot of the qualities that I would look for in a person. A kind of like a person who I want to look up to and kind of learn things from and not just learn things from in the classroom but learn things about life from.

In these examples, adolescents and emerging adults shared times when their present circumstances activated their motivation to seek out support from their teachers. This activating factor represents a high level of readiness. In relation to the literature, this is consistent with Monjaras-Gaytan, Sánchez, & Carter (2020) which found stress predicted the formation of natural mentoring relationships among ninth grade students.

Experiencing Issues Related to Mental and Emotional Health. The most common activator that emerged from these data related to participants' experiences with their mental and emotional health. These situations included challenges with social skills, depression, self-esteem, *ansiedad*, stress, homesickness, and heartbreak.

Alumni: When I told her for example that I was taking a medical leave or when I talked to her about all the things I was going through.... she wanted to make sure that I was okay on, like, a mental health level and make sure that I was okay personally before she worried about the school aspect of it.

Alumni: Lloré con ella, con todo. Empezó la crisis. Y también me estuvo acompañando en esos procesos de crisis y cambios. ... Pero, sí creo que ya que trascendió a solamente profesora estudiante porque pues el viernes vamos a vernos para plati... le conté que rompí recientemente con mi novio entonces me dijo, ¿quieres que nos tomemos un café para hablar?

These activators caused the adolescent and emerging adults to seek out their teachers and other adults to help provide them with needed support. The presence of these mental and emotional health challenges does not presuppose the creation of a natural mentorship. Instead, these situations create a state of readiness dependent on the response of the teacher/adult. If the situations were approached well, then the likelihood of these

relationships evolving into mentorships is higher than if they were approached poorly. This factor aligns with current perspectives in mentoring literature that mentoring might influence mental and emotional health. Erdem et al. (2016) found that mentoring mediated by positive youth development reduced behavioral and emotional issues as reported separately by adolescents and their parents.

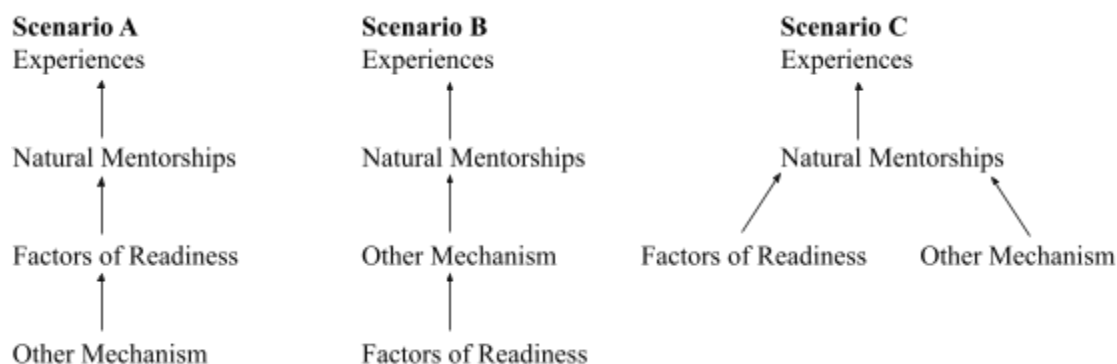
Connection to the Literature. Factors of readiness is a construct of a developing theoretical framework that emerged from data collected by the participants of this study. The review of the literature conducted before data collection did not explore potential theories that might explain the factors that influence the emergence of natural mentoring relationships. As such, there already may be other theories within the body of knowledge on these same factors of readiness. The transtheoretical model (Prochaska & Velicer, 1997) is a theory that conceptualizes the idea of change in six stages. This theory is often centered within disciplines working to promote changes of behavior by an individual like psychotherapy, public health, and health promotion, among others. The first stage in the transtheoretical model is precontemplation which describes a state where individuals do not intend to make changes. The next stage is contemplation where individuals are becoming more ready to make change, leading to the third stage of preparation. This stage is when individuals are ready to make a change. These three stages seem to align with the factors of readiness—inhibitors aligned with the precontemplation stage, promoters with the contemplation stage, and activators with the preparation stage. Precontemplation seems to describe a neutral state where individuals have no motivation to change whereas some of the inhibitors may serve to reduce students' state of readiness for a natural mentor. Similar to contemplation where individuals have become more

motivated for change due to increased benefits to change and decreased costs, promoters seem to add to a student's state of readiness. Lastly, preparation represents willingness to change which is similar to activators which represent themes where students are actively seeking natural mentors.

Application of Critical Realism. A major finding of the first round of analysis was the construct of factors of readiness. If the construct of 'factors of readiness' is considered a mechanism in the real domain, understanding its relationship to the event of 'natural mentoring relationships' is critical. Natural mentorships might emerge directly as a result of factors of readiness which are rooted in a subsequent, deeper mechanism (see Figure 3 Scenario A). Alternatively, factors of readiness may be a mechanism deeper within the realist structure that presupposes another mechanism(s) that presuppose natural mentoring relationships (see Figure 3 Scenario B). Another scenario could be that factors of readiness and another mechanism exist on the same level, or stratum, of reality and serve as co-determinants of natural mentorships (see Figure 3 Scenario C). This is not an exhaustive list of the ways in which factors of readiness and other mechanisms might relate to the event of natural mentoring relationships, but it lends some insight into how critical realism can be used when elucidating a theoretical framework for how these relationships emerge.

Figure 3

A conceptualization of natural mentorships within a depth realism model



Approaches of Engagement

The second wave of analysis, building off lessons learned from the pilot wave of analysis, focused on the remaining factor codes and resulted in two additional core categories and 2 sets of factors. The first of these core categories was that of *engagement*, which emerged from the data collected from 20 of the participants (see Table 2). Findings demonstrated that although the ways in which non-parental adults engage with adolescents and emerging adults vary, the choice of an engagement approach was instrumental in forming closer connections. Some adults may tend to utilize one approach over another while others may use multiple approaches together or apply different approaches for different situations. One teacher indicated a belief that a mentoring approach was inherent in good teaching:

Teacher: I consider myself a mentor to all the kids. And all teachers, if they're good teachers and not just punching the clock, they have this want and need to mentor the kids.

Employing the best engagement approach can have significant impacts. One alumni spoke about how the way in which his professor engaged him was an inspiration.

Alumni: The homework's very long because we sort of had, like, each question it would take me, like, a page and a half to answer. Just writing, you know?

So, he would read all of it, point out the details. "Hey, this little thing, I mean, it's correct but you should sort of see this other way..." Like, he would just write a whole paragraph after each question. So that's the level of dedication I want to have...

A teacher also spoke to how the approach of a teacher contributes to building relationships with students:

Teacher: Creo que eso es lo que tú como maestro puedes crear o una barrera o puedes como abrir, ¿no? Ese medio para que te busquen. Y no todos los maestros lo hacemos, ¿no?

This is not to say that the teacher's engagement approach is the singular causal factor to the development of natural mentoring relationships. However, even if a student is at a high state of readiness for a natural mentorship, a negative engagement approach may cause a barrier to forming a more meaningful relationship.

When looking more closely at this category, it seems the way the themes describe different dimensions of an engagement approach—mode, method, and motivation (see Figure 4). *Mode* refers to the manner in which non-parental adults engage. *Method* is the vehicle of that engagement, and *motivation* is the purpose for engagement. A general formula for considering the distinction between these dimensions is as follows:

Formula: A teacher engages with a student to/out of (motivation) by/as (mode) through (method).

Example: A teacher engages with a student out of concern by caring for them through challenging them to take responsibility.

Another way to conceptualize mode, method, and motivation is that mode is the way of being, method is the way of doing, and motivation is the way of thinking as a potential mentor.

Figure 4

Diagram of dimensions of engagement approach



Table 2

Engagement approach by dimension and frequency by participant category (n=7 each)

| Codes | Factor Dimension | | | Participant Categories | | | |
|-----------------|------------------|--------|------------|------------------------|--------|----------|-----------|
| | Mode | Method | Motivation | Students | Alumni | Teachers | Total |
| Acompañar | x | x | | | 2 | | 2 |
| Care | x | x | x | 4 | 6 | 6 | 16 |
| Careful | x | | | | 1 | 6 | 8 |
| Casual/Friendly | x | | | 4 | 3 | | 7 |
| Challenging | | x | | 1 | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| Concern | | | x | | | 2 | 2 |
| Developmental | | x | x | 3 | 5 | 2 | 10 |
| Empathetic | x | x | | 3 | | 2 | 5 |
| Moral | | | x | | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Parental | x | | | | | 1 | 1 |
| Reciprocal | x | | | 1 | | | 1 |

Acompañar. Two alumni shared examples of professors who utilized an approach of *acompañamiento* or accompaniment. The first example is a relatively quick demonstration of accompaniment where the teacher offered to walk them from class to the bus stop as a means to help interrupt the students' breakdown and calm them down. This is an example where *acompañamiento* aligns with the method dimension of engagement approach. The second example highlights the mode dimension in that this professor's style in engaging students was through being a *compañera*, not just a *profesora*.

Alumni: The first time that I went in her office I was, like, having a full on breakdown. ... She was like, "Just calm down. It's fine. You're going to do fine"... and she was like, "Do you want me to walk with you to the parking lot or are you walking to the bus?" And she walked me to the bus, and the whole little trip that we took which wasn't more than two minutes. ... She was just asking me questions about myself ... to sort of get my mind distracted from things and that was a very impersonal, yeah, like, impersonal kind of way to comfort me.

Alumni: Desde la primera clase que tuve con ella hubo una conexión muy bonita. ... y desde entonces me ha acompañado. Volví a tomar dos clases con ella, fuimos a un viaje juntas ... Nos invitaba a manifestaciones, movilizaciones o a exposiciones... por acompañarnos más allá de estar en clase y acompañarnos no solamente presencial sino también en lo que buscamos o las luchas podría decirlo, como, las luchas.

Care. Care was the most frequent theme among engagement approaches and seemed to fall into all three dimensions—mode, method, and motivation.

Student: It's one of those times I was stressed and I just couldn't figure out what was wrong with my homework. I knew there was a mistake and I sent him a picture and he texted me, he replied and I didn't realize it was his birthday. So he said "Oh, it's your teacher helping you on his birthday." And I was like, "Oh, I'm sorry." And I wished him a happy birthday and all of that but even despite the fact that he was ... on vacation and his birthday, he called me and he took his time to explain what was wrong and how I could improve and all of that and it was so meaningful to me.

Teacher: A veces, cuando me están platicando, me preocupo por ellos. A veces ... me preocupa pues que de veras estén sufriendo ansiedad. No sé hasta qué punto es realmente que sí están sintiendo o que ellos mismos están actuando porque, eh, como que es una dinámica de ese grupo de que, "Ay, ¿qué vas a hacer hoy?", "Ay, me voy a matar al ratito." O "Ay, es que ya no quiero vivir." ... Me da tristeza.

Teacher: Well, I feel very responsible for her, in general. Like, I think I have assumed like a personal responsibility for her. Like, not only in the school but in general. And again, like, it's not only her, it's like all my students I think like once I have create a bond with them I feel responsible for they succeeding in the society

Alumni: She has been very supportive of and of everything I've been going through and has found ways for me to make sure that I'm still part of the [specific program], even though I had off a couple of quarters and she always reaches out to me just to see how I'm doing, even though I'm not technically on campus anymore or anything, but it's just kind of nice to have someone who isn't exactly related to you but still definitely cares about you and checks in and just makes sure that everything is going alright.

Alumni: I think when, with my mom's passing and I obviously, cause I had to go into work, I was going to go into work the next day, I told him, "Hey, can I have some, you know, I need to go to Boston to be with some family for a bit." Umm, and you know, he said, "You can take the whole semester off, that's fine."

Alumni: And that day I went in and she was like, "We're not going to have class today. We're going to talk about our feelings and we're going to open up. Because it was a very traumatizing experience for everyone and I want everyone to know that it's a safe space and anything that happens, you're not going to be on your own." And she played this one song that up to today is one of my favorite songs, but it was a song that basically goes on about like loving Mexico and how we are standing on the ground that the ones who came before us built for us.

Careful. This approach was observed as both a mode of engagement. Two teachers recognized the challenging positionality of their positions, especially when

counseling students on personal issues, and they used a mode of carefulness when considering what advice to give.

Alumni: He's very, well there's a little thing that I think is cool. He's married to another teacher, ... and I never knew that until recently. ... But he was kind of discrete with that, so I think that's more professional, right? ... I want to be as discrete with my personal life when I teach, right? Because it can be problematic to share your personal life with your students.

Teacher: I was relaxed kind of feeling maybe responsible for doing the right thing and giving the right answers and not screwing things up. So, that's like. I was relaxed, I was happy. But I was also feeling like concerned for what I was telling her and not messing up things so I was feeling responsible.

Teacher: I basically was just there, listening... I was really really careful not to say anything like to kind of drive her some way or another way. So, at the end of the day the only thing she needed was someone to kind of listen to her.

Teacher: "Stop, no. No. No. Stay away for him, it's bad for you"... But again... I also don't want to get in trouble. Like, that's always also like a problem, 'cause as I told you, I don't want to impose my self values on them. I don't know, like, there's also a cultural gap for me. Like, I don't fully understand what things they consider correct or what things they consider like appropriate or not and how what they're raising the child and I don't want to get in trouble. I don't want to like break this trust relationship. I rather like listen and when something that is really concerning happens, ... then I

will step on, but before I only try to like listen and like, I throw some like *indirectas*.

Casual/Friendly. This engagement approach is generally seen in the mode dimension, the manner in which an adult or teacher engages with an adolescent/emerging adult or student. Whether it's being conversational or having fun together, this approach seems to help reduce any power dynamics or hierarchies that could occur as a result of the teaching role.

Student: I remember me and my classmates, the field, like playing football or something and [the teacher] playing with us.... Because, like, in my other school, teachers should be on one side and the classmates playing and... like, when I came here, it was different.

Student: He played a lot of soccer with us. That was like the routine, always in recess he would come down and organize the soccer team and all that stuff. So, he would be like, he wouldn't be like the main organizer, mainly we just organize it ourselves. But, he would be there supervising everything and if there was something like a fight between two kids that did a disagreement, he would be the one to break it up.

Alumni: Because she supported me, like, as a professor but also as a friend. So, that was really nice and that's something that I kind of noticed in that one on one session because before I was definitely intimidated because she is this awesome powerful woman and I didn't really know how I was supposed to approach our friendship and our relationship with her being my professor but also at one of the retreats I saw how some of the other cohorts were

acting with her and it was completely, like, definitely more friendly than ever thought I would see someone act with a professor. Like not in a bad way.

Alumni: I mean, it's definitely still, you know, a professional relationship, right? Like I wouldn't go drinking with him necessarily. Umm, but I definitely, you know, we, he tells me all, you know, every time I see him he tells me about how his daughter is doing, how his wife is doing, so I think it's actually, you know, bordering on that, you know, friendship sort of thing.

Challenging. This theme refers to an engagement approach method where a teacher is open to engaging in a little conflict with a potential mentee. For example, one student recalled a teacher who would be open to debating topics which allowed the students to think critically and develop an opinion on something while also having to defend and argue their position. Sometimes this included teaching techniques that created situations where students had to confront and consider their values and perspectives. This approach should be employed strategically as it is not always appreciated by the students. One student discussed how a professor who they had been feeling a strong connection to abruptly and aggressively took a challenging approach that almost made them feel like they were treating them differently, in a negative way, from their peers. In the end, the alumni's relationship with this professor continued towards a more mentoring-like relationship, but the incident almost caused the relationship development to be disrupted.

Student: And he was one of my favorite teachers ever, he he. Because in his classes he would always give us something to talk about instead of just following everything that was in the textbook. So we would debate, we would have

conversations, and he would take a really big interest in us actually understanding the concept of what we were doing. Umm, so I think that he helped me a lot to find a way to be able to speak my opinion about something. ... I would always challenge him, like, as a teacher, as well as he would challenge me as a student.

Alumni: Like halfway through the semester, I think, she just came in one day and randomly started asking questions and, you know, if you didn't get a question right you were kind of in trouble, and she asked me something and I didn't give a full answer like I just said half of what I had to say. And she sort of like very aggressively told me like, "You should know this and you should have studied it for this and you should have blah, blah, blah." And I remember that some of my classmates, like some people didn't actually get the answer right or they did just like me, they gave half of the answer and she wasn't as hard on them for getting it wrong.

Teacher: I tend to I think I come across as a really rough person at the beginning, especially as a teacher so normally when they come straight from elementary school, they tend to be like, "Are you mad all the time?" They think that I'm mad or that I'm really really strict and they don't quite like that or they feel like lost and then as they get older they kind of go like, "Oh, Ok." So, they start to like understanding, like, the structure and the drill in my class and we start communicating better. ... at some point, I'm not sure what point, but we start to develop of this kind of trust and then

it's not only about the class. They come to talk to me about things and stuff but that only happens with my older kids.

Teacher: Y a lo mejor algo así de que se abrió pero sigue sintiendo como que la voy a juzgar o, pero no, siempre le he dicho de, “No, pues, fue tu decisión, fue tus cosas. Está tu mamá. Yo te apoyo. No está bien lo que hiciste pero, hasta ahí. Arréglalo y ya.”

Teacher: I don't know why, but I always make students cry. But this is not because I want, because I ask them to class in front of me, especially teachers, I was working for future teachers, so, I told them, “You know what, you have to give a presentation, you have to give a talk about the weather but you need to pass step in front and talk to us”. ... It was impossible for them, ... because they didn't know how to speak English, because they were afraid to be there... The things is that, when I have to be harsh with them, I mean, I cannot help you, I mean, you have to learn in that way and that's the way they learn. Just by being honest with them and by being strict with them and respect them.

Concern. This engagement approach falls under motivation. Some teachers became concerned about a student, instigating their decision to approach the student. This is an example of how concern served as the motivation for engagement.

Teacher: Una vez sí me tocó con [a student] que no había comido, y le pregunté, “¿Por qué no...?” Y sé, me platicaba que se iba a ir a entrenar futbol, ¿no? Y yo como mamá me preocupo, ¿no? “¿Ya comiste?”. “No, no he comido. Tengo hambre.” Entonces, pues le saqué una barrita que yo traía de

granola y se la di. Y me dijo, “Ay, Miss. Entonces sí me quieres. Porque me diste la barrita.”

Teacher: Entonces, creo que hay que ser muy conscientes de que están viviendo algo difícil y tenemos que, así como lo ven de grande ellos, nosotros entenderlo así para ayudarles. Porque sí, es una etapa difícil. Siempre ha sido una etapa difícil. Y ahora, yo creo, que es peor, con todo lo que tienen a su alcance.

Developmental. Examples of the developmental engagement approach seem to fit the method and motivation dimensions. It may seem obvious that teachers have the goal or motivation to help their students develop. Being developmental was observed when teachers created opportunities to grow and develop for their students.

Student: He always like trying to push me to get better. He saw that in me and start to make me realize of the person I was getting into. He try to push me ... to be the best of my own.

Alumni: He shows me music, hey listen to this because you're going to like it and you might learn, you tell me if you want to learn these kind of beats and whatever and also we talk a lot about what can I do to make money out of drumming, cause it's a very tough career.

Alumni: And like for example, at the end of the semester, she gave each and every one of us a coffee bean and she gave us like a whole speech that we are that coffee bean, you know? That we are that little like diamond in the rock sort of thing but that eventually when you grind us, when we put

water in us we become something rich. Something that everyone likes. We become something greater, you know? Than just a coffee bean.

Alunni: I mean, again, you know he's taught me how to use 90% of the machines on campus. He's, uh, given me countless resources not just for like, I used to, for bibliographies, for writing papers, I would just have seven thousand tabs open and hope I remember which one is which. So, he's like, "No, use Mendeley, use this and that and the other thing." And it makes it a lot easier. Umm, he reads my paper, you know, he has the final say on what I should or shouldn't say and umm, I've heard stories of other professors who are like, "Oh, this isn't great. Redo it." But like, my professor, my boss will be all like, "This sentence could probably be rewritten other ways, try something like this, don't use this word, or don't say this or just try to include this." So it's a lot more specific and a lot more helpful.

Empathetic. This theme seems most aligned to the mode and method dimensions of engagement approach. The distinction between the dimensions is that the mode is the intention behind the manner in which the teacher or adult attempts to engage with the student or adolescent/emerging adult whereas the method is when the students or adolescent/emerging adults felt heard, seen, or empathized with.

Student: He's more like ok if you have something to tell me tell me and were going to fix it together, if it's not the thing to fix it then I'm just going to understand you. He have give me some tips about not only life, even the school or relationships

Student: He always related a lot with us and, like, was, demonstrated a lot of empathy from our position of students. And I guess that makes a good teacher, not a good teacher but, well it makes it more, a more comfortable relationship when you are very, like they are not afraid to talk with you, they know about you, you know about them, sometimes you go off the topic you are seeing in class just to relax a little bit.

Teacher: During one of the evaluations she was doing an oral presentation.... She was just crying and she did it great but she was presenting crying and crying ... so I was, like, be calm, just do it and just keep doing it ... so, after that moment maybe she think of me ... like “hey he didn't get fun, he didn't get angry, he didn't stop, he was being nice with me. Maybe he's not a bad person.”

Moral. The moral approach generally refers to a goal that some adults/teachers have for the prospective mentees where they hope to instill shift values and perspectives.

Alumni: Entonces, eso me gustó mucho su perspectiva más, eh, plural e intercultural.

Teacher: It's not only about like making sure that they will have good grades but that they are also going to become like better human beings and in my particular case I feel that that's like, super important because it's not only like a set of values but they way that they understand the world. Like, they are able to see the world through different perspectives and I think they are developing like critical thinking.

Parental. This approach refers to a style in which teachers take on more of a guardian type manner when engaging students (mode dimension).

Teacher: Y yo como mamá me preocupo... “¿Ya comiste?”. “No, no he comido. Tengo hambre.”

Reciprocal. This theme also refers to an approach within the mode dimension where the method of engagement is used bidirectionally, meaning the teacher is open for the student to engage them as they are engaging the student.

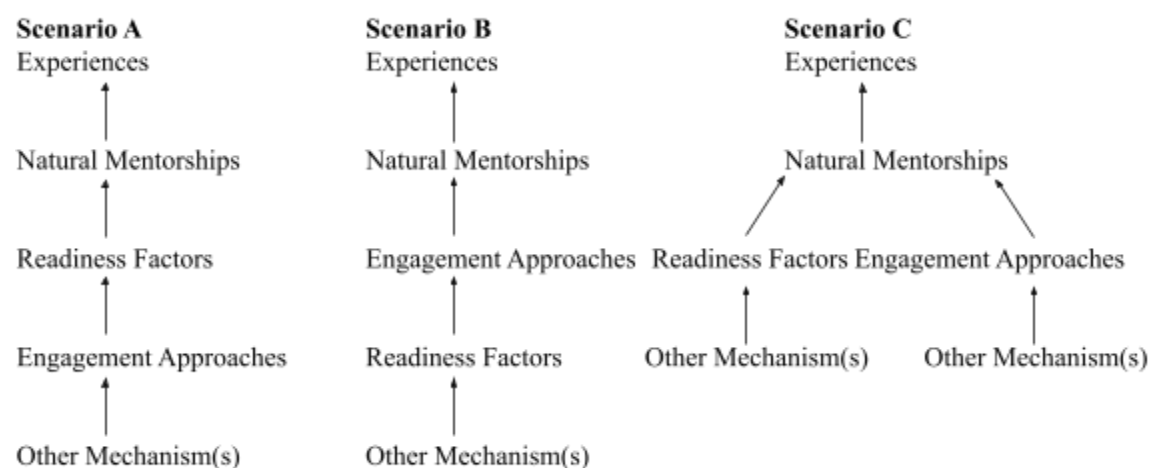
Student: I would always challenge him, like as a teacher, as well as he would challenge me as a student. So like, we would like, playfully argue a lot.... Yeah, so, I think that I had such a good relationship with him because we were able to challenge each other as people in general. Because I helped him become a better teacher and he helped me become a better student.

Application of Critical Realism. The core category of engagement approaches adds to the building theoretical framework of the emergence of natural mentoring relationships. If the construct of ‘engagement approaches’ is considered a mechanism in the real domain, understanding its relationship to both the construct of ‘factors of readiness’ and the event of ‘natural mentoring relationships’ is necessary. Engagement approaches might presuppose factors of readiness, which, in turn, presuppose natural mentoring relationships (see Figure 5 Scenario A). Alternatively, engagement approaches might be rooted in factors of readiness and then, subsequently, presuppose natural mentoring relationships directly (see Figure 5 Scenario B). Another scenario could be that both factors of readiness and engagement approaches exist on the same stratum of reality, serving as co-determinants of natural mentorships (see Figure 5 Scenario C).

Again, this is not an exhaustive list of the ways in which these two core categories might relate to natural mentorships. Nonetheless, using critical realism as an organizing principle in the selective coding process helps unearth a possible framework for the emergence of natural mentoring relationships.

Figure 5

A second depth realism model of natural mentorships



States of Alignment

The core category of *alignment* also emerged during the second wave of analysis from the data collected from 15 participants (see Table 3). Two states of alignment seem to be instrumental to the emergence of natural mentoring relationships—alignment between engagement approach and readiness and alignment of identity and experiences. When alignment occurs, the dynamics in the relationship shift creating an opportunity for a natural mentorship to develop. One student recalled an experience she had where the engagement approach matched her readiness which resulted in their sustained conversation:

Student: I think it's kind of both cause we start talking about one thing and then he asks and then I talk about myself. It's kind of like, my type of conversations.

Figure 6

Diagram of factors influencing alignment between readiness and engagement

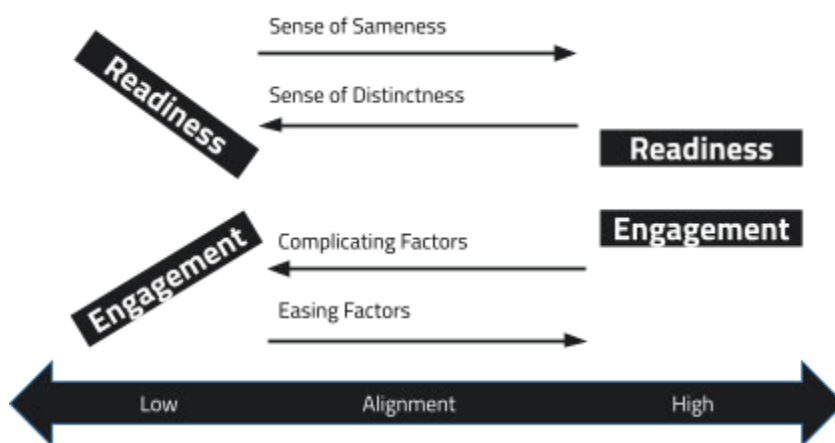


Table 3

Frequency of each alignment category and codes by participant category (n=7 each)

| Subcategories/Codes | Participant Categories | | | |
|------------------------------------------|------------------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| | Students | Alumni | Teachers | Total |
| Approach and Readiness Alignment | 2 | 1 | 6 | 9 |
| Easing Factors | 2 | 1 | 3 | 6 |
| Complicating Factors | | | 4 | 4 |
| Identity and Experience Alignment | 3 | 4 | 5 | 12 |
| Sense of Sameness | 3 | 4 | 3 | 10 |
| Sense of Distinctness | 2 | | 3 | 5 |

Approach and Readiness Alignment. Alignment between a teacher's approach and a student's readiness seems to be affected by factors who ease or complicate the alignment. This affects the responsiveness that occurs within the dyadic relationship between the student and teacher and influences whether that relationship may elevate to something more akin to a mentorship.

Easing Factors. These factors are ones that help promote alignment between the potential mentor's approach and potential mentee's readiness. These include teachers having previous challenging experiences with students, having their own mentors who serve as a reference point for their own behavior, seeming both young and professorial, identifying themselves as a mentor, or seeming highly competent in their content area. Examples of these factors seemed to increase the chance of alignment between approach and readiness, increasing the likelihood of the emergence of a natural mentoring relationship.

Teacher: I don't know if I'm doing this because I happen to have a mentor and it's something that you learn and you try to replicate.

Student: Umm, pues es que desde que llegó, no se presentó tal como un profesor, se presentó más como, es que la verdad también está como joven, entonces yo creo que igual y por eso, o sea.

Teacher: I think today, yes. I consider myself a mentor to all the kids. And all teachers, if they're good teachers and not just punching the clock, they have this want and need to mentor the kids.

Student: Well, there is something that in the whole time that I've been in school, I haven't had any [specific subject area] teachers who are native English

speakers, I mean he's not an American but he's Canadian, umm, so I think just the fact that someone that is a native English speaker and who comprehends a little bit more about the language, it helped me learn more about the language myself.

Complicating Factors. Opposite of easing factors are ones that complicate alignment. These factors include students having a sense of distrust when not having a prior relationship with a teacher, students perceiving a teacher has a limited ability with English, teachers transitioning to a new environment, teachers replacing a popular teacher, and teachers having to navigate their role as a parent of a student at the school, a parent but not of a student at the school, or as a friend of a parent of a student at the school.

Teacher: En esa edad, adolescente, no. Cuando están chiquitos, en primaria, tú eres el maestro y eres, eres wow, eres lo máximo, y secundaria no. Secundaria es como, ¡y tú quién eres? ¿Tú por qué me vas a enseñar? ¿Y tú por...? Ya cuestionan. Que está bien, no está mal. Pero sí, sí se necesita una relación ellos.

Teacher: I was just moved here. Everything was new for me, but I always, yes it was something different, it was everything new for me, new school, new rules.

Identity and Experience Alignment. In addition to the alignment between readiness and engagement approach, there seems to be a key aspect of alignment between the identities and experiences of the prospective mentors and mentees. Having a higher

sense of sameness seems to positively influence the formation of mentorships whereas a higher sense of distinctness negatively influences mentorship formation.

Sense of Sameness. The theme of sameness emerged from 10 of the participants. Examples of sameness referred to having an affinity for students or adults, and being close in age, having similar interests, careers, perspectives, and values. This theme also refers to feeling as if students and adults have had similar struggles in life.

Teacher: Creo que mucho depende del carácter y qué afinidad tengas con los alumnos para que puedas ser un mentor o no seas un mentor. Ok, entonces yo pienso que los alumnos, eso que sientan afinidad quiere decir que sienten que tú los puedes ayudar o los puedes apoyar o los puedes como guiar en los problemas que pudieran tener pero siempre van a buscar a una persona que piense a lo mejor un poquito como ellos.

Alumni: I think the reason, part of the reason I think that he's so understanding is that he just became a professor, I think he's 29. So, he's, you know, closer to my age than to the other professor's age.

Student: I guess that the main part I would say that coming from another place and adapting here was the most, the reason that I was very friendly with this teacher, because he was very friendly, he talked about the same topics that I liked.

Alumni: But I think that she knew that I needed the support and so she kind of, I'm not sure if, kind of stepped up and, like, tried to be that support or if she... like, we definitely laughed and had a good time so, umm, we're interested in a couple of similar things, so we talked about stuff that wasn't really

anything school related... we were talking and we actually both lost our fathers around the same age and she grew up on a farm, actually, and so she has like this love for all these animals that I do and, so we talk things as friends but also she gives me advice.

Teacher: I could definitely relate to what she was going through. I do remember having, it was more kind of a thing of the past. I do remember being that age and having problems at home and not having, and I had siblings as well, I had sisters... like I vividly remember kind of connecting with her cause I could relate to what she was going through.

Sense of Distinctness. When there is a sense of difference or distinction in regards to identity and experiences between students and teachers, distance seems to develop which decreases the chances of the relationship elevating to a mentorship. Examples of distinctness expressed by participants included gaps in age, in ways of being such as teenagers vs adults, and in privilege. Additionally, if one's identity was more grounded in one's role as a student or as a teacher, then there seemed to be an increased sense of distinctness.

Teacher: Yo soy de los maestros más grandes y sí veo a veces que la brecha que tengo con los alumnos es mucha. Mucha la diferencia de edad. La manera como ven ellos las cosas a la manera como la veo yo, es diferente.

Teacher: In general, yes. But, it's again like the cultural things, right? Like, *la sequía* has affect me directly 'cause I was like a month without water and she's very wasteful and I like, again, like it's hard for me because I want to

teach my students. That's my role, right? Like, we are not seeing the world in the same way and this difference came from privilege.

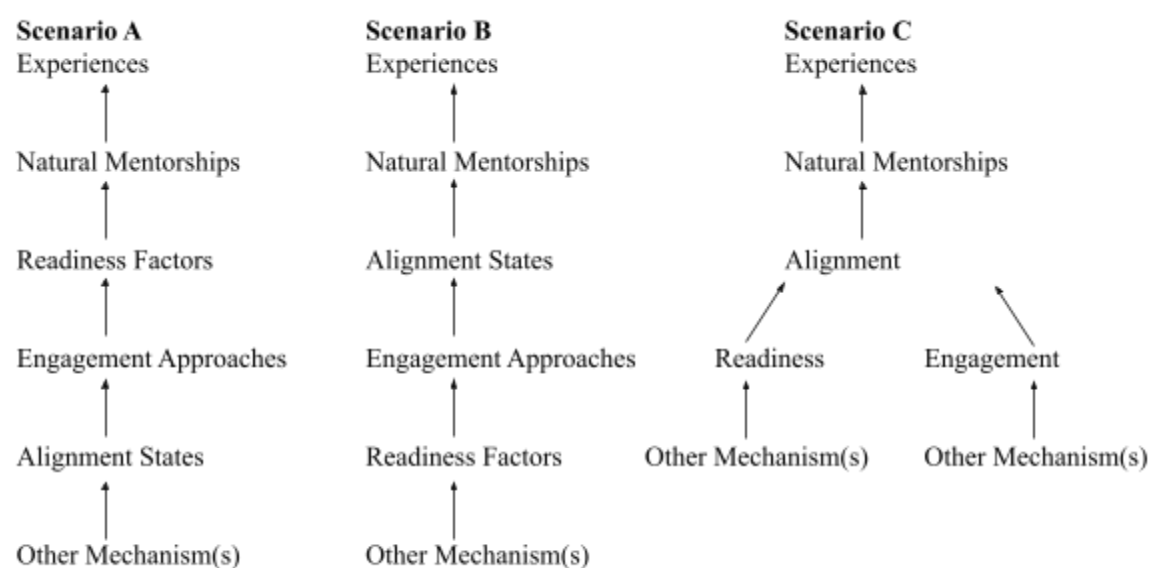
Student: Like, the first time I met him that was my thoughts, and at half time more like mid of the year it was more like, not a friend but, like we weren't friends but it was like, "Oh, you want to come?", "Oh, yes." It was a very friendly person that was like my thoughts of him. I thought that he was very, like is that kind of person that when they are happy they are very good. They are charismatic, they are very comfortable people to be around. But then, when they get mad, that they usually do in classrooms, when they get mad it's a very bad position to be on. So, like, it generated this feeling that we were, that we had out limits. Like, we weren't friends, we were, that stuff. But, we still were friendly with each other, so that also helped a lot in the student-teacher relationship.

Application of Critical Realism. The core category of states of alignment continues to add to the emergence of natural mentorships theoretical framework. If the construct of 'alignment states' is considered a mechanism in the real domain, understanding its relationship to the constructs of 'readiness' and 'engagement' is key to further understanding of the event of 'natural mentorships'. Alignment might be the deepest underlying mechanism in relationship to natural mentoring where both readiness and engagement are rooted in alignment (see Figure 7 Scenario A). Alternatively, alignment might be the mechanism most proximal to natural mentoring and rooted in readiness or engagement in some sequence (see Figure 7 Scenario B). Instead of readiness and engagement relating to alignment sequentially, it is possible that they exist

on the same stratum of reality, serving as co-determinants of alignment which then presupposes natural mentoring (see Figure 7 Scenario C). When asking what must exist in order for alignment to exist, it seems plausible that Scenario C provides a possible answer to this question. Both readiness and engagement are necessary in order for alignment to exist, but they are not necessarily necessary for each other to exist. Further, given that mentoring relationships exist within the social world, there still may be other mechanisms that influence readiness, engagement, alignment, and natural mentorships.

Figure 7

A third iteration of a depth realism model of natural mentorships



Influence of Group-Level Factors

When analyzing the data from the microsystem level by looking at the influence of factors that stem from group-level memberships, four factors emerge—blocking, permitting, sheltering, and underlying (see Figure 8). The influence these factors have on the adolescents/emerging adults or adults or their relationship can be direct or indirect.

Although these factors were observed in 16 participants (see Table 4), the themes did not rise to the level of a core category during analysis.

Figure 8

Diagram of group-level factors influence on natural mentorships

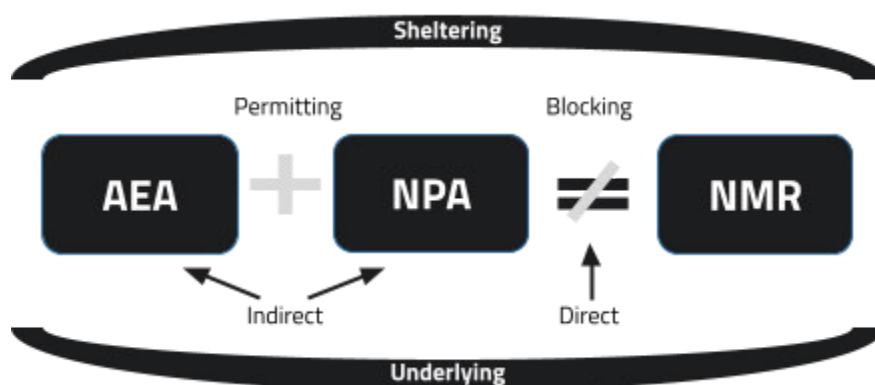


Table 1

Frequency of each factor or influence by participant category (n=7 each)

| Subcategories/Codes | Participant Categories | | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| | Students | Alumni | Teachers | Total |
| Factors | 3 | 4 | 3 | 10 |
| Permitting Factors | 1 | 2 | | 3 |
| Blocking Factors | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| Sheltering Factors | | 1 | | 1 |
| Underlying Factors | 1 | 2 | 2 | 5 |
| Influence | 5 | 2 | 4 | 11 |
| Direct | 4 | | 4 | 8 |
| Indirect | 3 | 2 | 2 | 7 |

Factors. Four types of factors were identified. These themes do not rise to the level of core category as they are represented by limited data.

Permitting Factors. Some factors stemming from group-level memberships seemed to help permit the development of natural mentoring relationships. A couple of examples include how friendships helped lead to connections with a non-parental adult. On the other hand, the loss of a former friend group as an alumni moved to another city helped create a circumstance where a social vacuum existed, permitting the openness for a natural mentorship.

Student: Basically I think my friend, that if he wasn't in that exact moment in that exact position maybe he would not be friend right now and I wouldn't even know her [friend's mother].

Alumni: When I moved there I essentially lost touch with all of my friends from High School. Not because I didn't like them or because I don't like them until today but we just had very different things in mind when we moved on from High School ... So, I kind of just broke up with that whole thing that I knew from my whole life, you know?

Alumni: Y en ese punto de la carrera ya no estaba tan conectada con [el pueblo]. Con las personas. Sí con el lugar, pero no con las personas porque ya varias habían pues empezado también sus carreras y estaban a mitad de carrera con otras relaciones. Entonces ya no frecuentaba mucho a muchas personas de aquí. Solamente a ciertas personas.

Blocking Factors. Opposite of permitting factors, blocking ones put up barriers for the development of natural mentoring relationships. Two main examples of these observed in the data were the impact of family responsibilities and the impact of feeling as if one did not belong in the community.

Teacher: And I don't know what happened at that time, she said that she works in her mom's store so she was working, and that is true, I remember that many times she had to come online and she was at the store and suddenly people, "How much is this?" and "What are you going to do? Do you want to receive this product?" Then she was just talking to them and talking to me [during class] and it was really frustrating for her.

Alumni: And so, being in a new cohort, I kind of wonder how that will affect my relationship with her because I don't want...my cohort is just starting out compared to me knowing her for like we said, several months.

Student: At the beginning I was kind of uncomfortable at the school cause most of the students were women so I was not in my place. Kind of and the other guys were more close to, you know, to what they know like, eh, he's a new guy maybe probably is not like us or kind of different, um, all that was just from the beginning

Sheltering Factors. An interest factor was observed in one participant that seemed to shelter the dyadic connection from being affected by other outside influences. This theme was related to how the family connection between the alumni and the teacher prevented other contextual factors from influencing their relationship.

Alumni: En general, pues como lo veo siempre y aparte es el esposo de mi hermana, uh, no es como de que me llegaran afectar.

Underlying Factors. Underlying factors refer to those factors that exist within this socioecological level but are not necessarily directly impacting the emergence of natural mentoring relationships. These include a generational perception of mental health, having

a bad roommate in a new living environment, and transitioning into an extremely different place with others in a similar experience causing new peer relationships to develop. Other underlying factors regarding a student's peer group related to peer presence on social media as well as popular peer interests.

Alumni: And it's a different kind of bond that you have from that because it's a more vulnerable thing. I don't know if it makes sense or not but starting to create all those new connections with all these people that were sort of under the same kind of stress as me and we were just trying to get by. Yeah, it was like that contrast of having lost what I knew my whole life and then regaining something but that something was immediately very, like a very vulnerable connection. Like we met each other at very vulnerable points of each other's lives because school was tough and we were all in the same boat of not knowing what the hell was going on.

Student: I was always the odd kid of the class. Not odd, like strange or anything that, I stood out because I was very timid and very introvert. But I was taller than most kids so it was like a strange relationship, like the tall big kid being afraid of something or, I guess that. I have always liked strange topics like history and politics and economics so from a little age, I like that, I liked it, I didn't know a bunch about it but I liked it. So, I guess that affected my relationship with my friends. Like, I was always part of the group, they included me and everything. But, topics related, like we never talked about the topics that I liked, Most of the middle ground was soccer or LEGO or all that stuff, or Star Wars.

Influence. The group-level factors can either influence the development of natural mentoring relationships directly or indirectly.

Direct. Direct influence is when a factor is the proximal cause for the development of a natural mentoring relationship. One example includes having a family member at school which helped stimulate connection with other teachers, resulting in more mentoring-like relationships. Other examples relate to issues with family, at home, or with friends.

Teacher: I have worked with some of them, the ones that they have trouble at home, and yes, there has been this connection with them and everything that we worked with them, what I worked with them, it's really good, it turns out to be a really good with [inaud] they have improved the grades, that's for instance. And their communication skills.

Student: I, in middle school in general, I wasn't like a really happy person... And, I had gone through some like family issues and stuff so just being able to have someone to relate to and just be able to relate to things with, made definitely my school life a lot more pleasant. And also because with people my age, I tend to be very intense so it's hard for me to like keep deep relationships with people. So, that's kind of unfortunate but I was glad that I had a superior that I could relate to.

Teacher: I think she was kind of having some problems within the family and she didn't really know what to do and I think she was experience some stress in, or, you know some, I wouldn't call it depression but she was not managing things well because of the stress she didn't have clear whether

or not she could be useful at home. ... And she came to me and she was like, "What should I do?"

Student: In my house or personally it's kind of a bipolar situation cause my relationship with my mom is bipolar. Not her. Like, the relation. So, like, one day we're mad and the other it's fine, the other we're happy. So, around that time I was really stressed about school and family and everything around me. So, after all that went through just like seeing that somebody else cared about me, it, well, that, yeah. And in school, I do good at school.

Student: Talking about topics that more interested me or I was more familiar to that also helped me to not break my friendships because like if I started talking to them, to the other kids about that, they would be like, "Uh, that dude is strange, let's just not play with him." So, instead I talked of soccer or LEGO or Star Wars with them, that I also liked, and I talked of all the other stuff, more serious stuff with them.

Indirect. Factors with indirect influence seem to influence either the adolescent/emerging adult or the non-parental adult. They may influence the teacher's engagement approach or the student's state of readiness. The immediate effect of these factors is a mediating factor or factors that ultimately then impact the development of a mentoring relationship. Examples include family loss, family health issues, and negative peer dynamics. Another set of examples relate to the setting in which these relationships are taking place like the school or workplace.

Alumni: I think when, with my mom's passing and I obviously, cause I had to go into work, I was going to go into work the next day, I told him, "Hey, can I have some, you know, I need to go to Boston to be with some family for a bit." Umm, and you know, he said, "You can take the whole semester off, that's fine." So, I think that definitely made me like alright, you know, this is, this is a good place, so, for sure.

Alumni: Umm, well one of the big things for me was that my dad had just died that year. Umm, and so, it was, you know, and it still is really tough, but that was definitely one of the main things that made me quit school for a while.

Student: Only the environment that we have at class, you know, cause I was mean with everyone and they were mean at everyone else. So, because of it we got a lot troubles and we got split into groups more smaller like three people were talking about anything else and the others were like in each group. It was kind of, sorry, and totally were like, I think, nine groups in a big group of 42 people. So I think it was the first problem that we got. Even we get against some persons, as a group. Like we get against the principal at that time cause he was mean but really mean even he was focused on our group for some reason.

Teacher: Because maybe what they want is somebody who gives them companionship. Most of the time they are in here at school and it's like the second place, they feel lit like a home here. They feel you like a part of them, I mean, they're families. Well, some of them. And it is not about just teaching knowledge, that's what I have learned through these years that I

have worked with different types of kids. They don't want them to be treated as a number or just as another simple person that is learning something. They want to be treated as humans.

Influence of Community-Level Factors

The data were analyzed at the macrosystem level by looking at the influence of factors that stem from the community or culture level. These community-level factors seemed to influence the development of natural mentorships either directly or indirectly (see Figure 9), observed in 9 participants (see Table 5). Similar to the influence of group-level factors, these community-level themes did not rise to the level of a core category during analysis.

Figure 9

Diagram of community-level factors influence on natural mentorships



Note. AEA: Adolescent/Emerging Adult; NPA: Non-Parental Adult; NMR: Natural Mentoring Relationship

Table 5

Frequency of community-level influence by participant category (n=7 each)

| Subcategories/Codes | Participant Categories | | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| | Students | Alumni | Teachers | Total |
| Influence | 1 | 3 | 5 | 9 |

| | | | | |
|----------|---|---|---|---|
| Direct | 1 | 3 | 4 | 8 |
| Indirect | | 1 | 2 | 3 |

Influence. Similar to group-level factors, community-level factors were seen to have either direct or indirect influence on the development of natural mentorships. Given the limited amount of information shared by participants in relation to community-level phenomena, these themes do not rise to the level of a core category at this time. Instead they represent factors/constructs that influence other aspects of the framework.

Direct. Direct influences include community trauma, environmental privilege, life in the pandemic, remote instruction, and influence of culture. Direct influence occurs in a manner that influences alignment enabling or preventing the shift to a natural mentoring relationship from the pre-existing student-teacher (or other type of) relationship.

Alumni: And that day I went in and she was like, "We're not going to have class today. We're going to talk about our feelings and we're going to open up." Because it was a very traumatizing experience for everyone and I want everyone to know that it's a safe space and anything that happens, you're not going to be on your own, you know? And she played this one song that up to today is one of my favorite songs, but it was a song that basically goes on about like loving Mexico and how we are standing on the ground that the ones who came before us built for us, you know?

Teacher: In general, yes. But, it's again like the cultural things, right? Like, *la sequía* has affect me directly 'cause I was like a month without water and she's very wasteful and I like, again, like it's hard for me because I want to teach my students. That's my role, right? That's my, that's the reason that I

am a teacher. I want to teach them. ... It's very hard to find a way to tell this things in a way that is not going to take us, "You are trying to impose us your political agenda." It's like, it's not a political agenda, it's the truth I have been without water for two months and you are literally like wasting water.

Alumni: I wasn't really sure what my plans were when I came here. I wasn't sure if I wanted to start the quarter online, I wasn't sure if I wanted to go back at all. Maybe I was going to look for another university here. Maybe, you know, I wasn't really sure, and just [female professor] and the way that she just wants me to be involved in the [university college] so much and, like, how... I mean in the U.S. I feel people are definitely more judgmental than they are at least, here...

Alumni: Well, I mean well yeah it was the middle of the pandemic so, we had to reserve time in the lab and what usually happens when there's no pandemic is that there's a bunch of people in the lab, so if something gets stuck, the technician is there so he can help you immediately. So that was like the first thing we noticed, was like, there's actually no one here that can help us right now. We have to make an appointment, we have to plan everything. Wearing masks didn't help. Umm, umm, well yeah, just that like feeling of like solitude and you're just kind of alone.

Teacher: When they were here. When they were online, there were like no conversation or no bond or didn't told me about their day or about they

want, about their university thinking and everything. I think when they are here, they want to talk to you. You don't have to look for them.

Indirect. Indirect influences include political culture shock, student culture of giving teacher's respect, and transcultural differences. Indirect influence occurs in a manner that influences an adolescent/emerging adult's state of readiness or a non-parental adult's engagement approach.

Alumni: Because I was distanced from it before. I mean, I lived here my whole life. I mean, yes, we kind of know what's going on in the U.S. and see the news and everything but it's not as relevant as when you're actually there. And so, definitely, my ideas about politics are just kind of like, "Oh my god," at that moment.

Teacher: It's so easy with Mexican kids and I don't know if they're this way with all of their teachers but I think because I'm *gringo*, there's a natural, a really high level of respect and maybe it's the case with all the teachers.

Teacher: I really wanted to tell her like, "Stop, no. No. No. Stay away from him". But again, it's a, I also don't want to get in trouble. Like, that's always also like a problem, 'cause as I told you, I don't want to impose my self values on them. I don't know, like, there's also a cultural gap for me. Like, I don't fully understand what things they consider correct or what things they consider like appropriate or not and how what they're raising the child

Conclusion

Overall, these findings bring the field a little closer to understanding how the process of 'fishing' (see Schwartz & Rhodes, 2016) operates. In the analogy, youth are

the fishers and the process of fishing is the emergence of natural mentoring relationships. These findings indicate that there are factors that inhibit, promote, or activate fishers' readiness for fishing. Additionally, there are approaches that position fish (prospective mentors) in a way to promote engagement with fishers. When there is alignment in readiness and engagement, there is an increased likelihood that successful fishing will occur. Further, this process is influenced by different group-level and community-level factors, either influencing the fisher or fish directly or the process of fishing itself. This study is one of the first steps to understanding the process by which natural mentorships develop and to constructing a theoretical framework that represents this process. Further work in this area is warranted, especially given the positive effects of having natural mentors (see Hagler & Rhodes, 2018; Kelley & Lee, 2018; Miranda-Chan et al., 2016).

Limitations

This study, of course, has several limitations. First, given the active question aligned with the interpretive framework of critical realism as to whether the phenomenon of natural mentoring is a universal experience part of a shared reality or a concept localized to Global North contexts, a qualitative methodology that allows a framework to emerge from the perspectives of participants such as grounded theory was the most appropriate. In order to best apply the principles of grounded theory methodology, the review of the literature was limited to understand the state of research on natural mentoring relationships. It did not include considering how other models or frameworks could be applied to this phenomenon. This was intentional to reduce the likelihood that pre-existing notions of applicable theories would bias the research process (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

Second, though qualitative approaches allow for the voice of participants to be prioritized, they also pose limitations given the breadth of data collected from a limited number of participants. Additionally, the research site was at a private school, and although private *secundarias* and *preparatorias* are very common in México, this does pose a limitation. As such, findings from this study may not necessarily be transferable to other settings.

Another limitation relates to data collection. The emergent approach of the study lends to a more open and broad interview protocol, allowing participants to share what is meaningful to them while minimizing any imprinting by the researcher. On the other hand, these methods only collect the data that participants share, meaning there may be other examples or experiences that the participants have that are related to the study but were not revealed or unearthed. As a result, there may be other codes, themes, and categories that have not been explored that would change the way the framework has emerged. In fact, one alumni participant remarked when participating in member-checking to review the findings that there may be more inhibiting and activating factors than were identified in these findings; likely this is true as the findings are limited by the questions asked and the stories shared.

Implications

These findings confirm that although the concept of mentorship is not as common for this community in México as it is in the broader United States, meaningful interpersonal relationships are developing between adolescents and non-parental adults in their communities, including with teachers. This does not necessarily signal that these meaningful relationships are equivalent or akin to what are typically conceptualized as

mentorships. We should be careful to not over impose assumptions about traditional notions of mentoring on these emerging relationships to allow for an understanding of the unique nature of the relationships in general.

These results contribute to an overall theoretical framework of how natural mentoring relationships emerge and develop. The findings from this study seem to indicate the existence of factors of readiness factors, engagement approaches, and states of alignment that all contribute to an adolescent's or emerging adult's state of readiness to engage in a more mentor-like relationship with an adult in their social environment. Using critical realism as an organizing principle through the selective coding analysis, the current best arrangement of how these constructs relate to each other is where alignment states are most proximally underlying natural mentorships (see Figure 8). Both readiness factors and engagement approaches presuppose alignment states, though there may be other mechanisms that also presuppose alignment states, readiness factors, or engagement approaches.

Figure 10

The final iteration of a depth realism model of natural mentorships



Increased understanding into a state of readiness for these types of relationships can provide teachers and school administrators some insight into why interactions with students occur as they do. During a review session with school administrators, a process that mixed aspects of member checking and peer debriefing (Creswell & Miller, 2000), one of the staff members shared an appreciation for considering the framework of readiness. They noted that it is common in México for teachers to attribute a student's lack of engagement with them as a direct reflection of their quality as a teacher. In some situations, a student's apathy may be due to the teacher's approach, but in many cases, it is likely more complex and due to several other factors. The school and its teachers could use the framework of the factors of readiness to attempt to minimize any experiences that might decrease their students' state of readiness. That being said, these findings do not necessarily give insight into how to create circumstances to increase readiness for natural mentoring relationships. Nonetheless, formal mentoring engaged in cross-age mentoring, especially those applying youth-initiated (see Schwartz & Rhodes, 2016; Spencer et al., 2016; Spencer et al., 2019) and network-engaged mentoring approaches (see Schwartz & Rhodes, 2016), can incorporate these insights so as to understand some of the complex reasons why some mentee-mentor matches are more successful than others. Additionally, mentoring programs can work to understand broadly the ways in which the populations they serve conceptualize their non-parental interpersonal relationships with adults. In doing so, programs may realize that traditional metrics for evaluating the success of a mentoring program may need to be altered given how the youth in their community perceive the impact of a meaningful interpersonal relationship with non-parental adults.

In relation to the idea of ‘teaching youth to fish’ and ‘stocking the pond’ (see Schwartz & Rhodes, 2016), there seem to be fairly clear indications that youth can be trusted to enact their own sense of agency in choosing to build relationships or not. Perhaps this signals a need to focus on ‘stocking the pond’ as in the capacity of potential mentors especially in considering how potential mentors position themselves as potential supports or resources within any particular setting, building upon insights gained from formal and informal mentoring studies examining the mentor experience (see Cavell et al., 2020; Miranda-Chan et al., 2016; Raposa et al., 2016; Rubin et al., 2018).

From a critical realist perspective (Jimenez et al., 2023), the juxtaposition of the infrequent use of the term *mentoría* and the observations of natural mentoring relationships from the participants seems to indicate that there may be a shared reality in regards to the phenomenon of mentoring that is conceptualized distinctly across settings as a result of local events and experiences. The observation about the term *mentoría* resonates with a principle of critical realism (Collier, 1994) related to sensemaking of reference objects and lends to the emergence of another research purpose to understand in what ways, if at all, the differing terms (mentoring, *mentoría*, *acompañamiento*, *tutoría*) represent different senses of the same object or distinct objects entirely. If mentoring is an object of a shared reality, then this would align with the work other mentoring scholars are doing in Latin America (see Arroyo Neyra et al., 2021; Ponce Ceballos et al., 2018; Rosero Ojeda, 2021). If not, it can have deep implications. For example, if the concept of mentoring is truly a concept localized only to Global North contexts, then the movement to expand mentoring to Global South contexts could be problematic or the effort to incorporate people of cultures from the Global South that live in the Global North (i.e.

first-generation Latinx/Latine people in the US) into existing mentoring programs could be ineffective and contribute to marginalizing these populations. These are just examples of the implications that could exist if mentoring is found to be a concept localized to Global North settings and applied to Global South contexts. Although the insights from this study seem to imply that mentoring may be a shared reality albeit conceptualized distinctly across settings as a result of local events and experiences, it would be premature to assert this proposition, especially given this study is with a single sample of participants in rural México.

Lastly, this study holds implications for cross-cultural research methodologies. Member checking and external review activities were essential to evaluate the validity of any findings (Creswell & Miller, 2000). To do this, rapport with the participants, relationships with the school leadership, and continued reflection by the first author were critical. Feedback from the school leadership as external reviewers as well as alumni who participated in conceptual member checking indicates the theoretical framework represented participants' local experiences with minimal to no imprinting of United States-centric conceptualizations of mentorship. Considerations of research positionality and exercising reflexivity throughout a cross-cultural research project are critical.

The literature exploring the ways critical realism can apply to community psychology and grounded theory methodology has mostly focused on early stages of data analysis using the prescribed analytical process of retroduction (see Oliver, 2012; Bunt, 2018). The process of retroduction parallels hypothesis-testing, which seems to be contradictory to the tenets of grounded theory. A gap exists in the literature as to other ways in which critical realism can support grounded theory methodology. This lends to

another research purpose to understand what ways other than retroduction, if any, critical realism can be applied to methods designed using a grounded theory methodology.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol - Current Students & Alumni

Instructions: This interview protocol will be used for both current students and alumni. Prompts will be framed from the perspective of interviewing a current student and should be adapted as appropriate when interviewing alumni. For example, if the prompt reads “I’m curious if there are any teachers at your school that have had a meaningful impact on your development...”, then the prompt should be adapted for alumni (eg. “I’m curious if there **were** any teachers at your school that **had** a meaningful impact on your development”).

| Component | Prompt |
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| Introducing the interview | <p>Thank you for agreeing to do this interview with me. As I had shared before, my goal is to learn about adults, other than your parents [or guardians (if applicable)], in your life who have had a significant impact on you.</p> <p>I have some questions to help guide us; however, I am really interested in learning from you, so if you have something you want to share, please do so, even if it may not seem to relate directly to a question.</p> <p>Gracias por aceptar participar en esta entrevista conmigo. Como te he compartido antes, mi meta es aprender sobre los adultos, a parte de tus padres [o tutores (si aplica)], en tu vida quien ha tenido un impacto significativo en ti.</p> <p>Tengo algunas preguntas para guiarnos; sin embargo, estoy muy interesado en aprender de ti, por lo tanto si tienes algo que quieras compartir, hazlo, incluso si no parece estar relacionado directamente con una pregunta.</p> |

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| Reflecting on an influential adult | <p>To get started, I am curious to learn about adults in your life, other than your parents or guardians, that have made an important positive difference in your life. Take a moment to think about one of them.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tell me about them. How did you meet? How often did you interact? <p>Para empezar, estoy curioso por aprender sobre los adultos en tu vida, aparte de tus padres [o tutores (si aplica)], que han hecho una diferencia importante en tu vida. Toma un momento para pensar sobre uno de ellos.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dime sobre él/ella. ¿Cómo se encontraron? ¿Con qué frecuencia interactúan? <p>[Probe and follow-up for further understanding]</p> |
| Reflecting on internal factors influencing interaction | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What's one of your favorite memories of them from the last few years? Set the scene for me. 2. Thinking back on this memory, what were some of the thoughts running through your brain when you were in the moment of this memory? What about some of the feelings? How did those thoughts or feelings impact this memory? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ¿Cuál es uno de tus recuerdos favoritos con él/ella en los últimos años? Describe detalladamente el momento. 2. Pensando en este recuerdo, ¿cuáles eran algunos de los pensamientos pasando por tu mente? ¿Cuáles eran algunos de los sentimientos? ¿Cómo afecta este recuerdo a estos pensamientos o sentimientos? <p>[Probe and follow-up to gain deeper understanding of thoughts and feelings during this interaction]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. When you think about this memory now, how does it make you feel? What thoughts pop up? 3. Cuando piensas sobre este recuerdo, ¿cómo te hace sentir? ¿Qué pensamientos surgen? <p>[Probe and follow-up to gain deeper understanding of thoughts and feelings during this interaction]</p> |

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| Reflecting on external factors influencing interaction | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. During the moment of this memory, can you talk a little about what things were going on in your life... <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. with your friends? 2. with your family? 3. in your neighborhood? 4. at school? 5. within the Ribera? 6. within [estado de México]? 7. nationally? 8. Politically? 2. Looking back, did any of these factors impact your relationship with this person? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Durante el momento de este recuerdo, puedes hablar un poco sobre las cosas pasando en tu vida... <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ¿con tus amigos? 2. ¿con tu familia? 3. ¿en tu vecindario? 4. ¿en la escuela? 5. ¿en la Ribera? 6. ¿en [estado de México]? 7. ¿nacionalmente? 8. ¿políticamente? 2. En retrospectiva (mirando hacia atrás) ¿alguno de estos factores afectaron tu relación con esta persona? <p>[Probe and follow-up to gain deeper understanding of these levels (micro, meso, macro)]</p> |
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| Reflecting on the impact of the relationship | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If I were to interview this person, what do you imagine they might say to me about this memory? 2. What might they say about their relationship with you at that time? 3. What might they say about their relationship with you now? 4. What kind of difference have they made in your life? 5. If you were to categorize this relationship, what words would you use? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Si entrevistara a esta persona, ¿qué imaginas que me diría sobre este recuerdo? 2. ¿Qué dirían sobre tu relación contigo en ese momento? 3. ¿Qué dirían sobre tu relación contigo ahora? 4. ¿Qué diferencia ha hecho en tu vida? 5. Si tuvieras que clasificar esta relación, ¿qué palabras usarías? <p>[Probe and follow-up for further understanding]</p> |
| Transitioning to focus on mentorship | <p>[if term “mentor” is used only] You used the word “mentor” so I want to focus a little on mentorship.</p> <p>Usaste la palabra “mentor” [o “tutor”], entonces quiero enfocarme un poco en el concepto de mentoría.</p> <p>[if term “mentor” is not used] One of the reasons why learning about relationships you have with adults who aren’t your parents (or guardians) is to learn more about mentorship. I want to look deeper a little into this.</p> <p>Una de las razones de aprender sobre las relaciones que tienes con adultos quienes no son tus padres [o tutores] es para aprender más sobre mentoría. Quiero enfocarme en este concepto un poco.</p> |

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| Focusing on relationship dynamics | <p>[if term “mentor” is used only]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why do you consider this person a mentor? 2. What was the defining moment between you and this person where you knew that they were a mentor for you? 3. During the mentorship, did you always feel strongly connected to them? Were there any situations where you felt less connected? If so, what factors contributed to those feelings? 4. What does the term “mentorship” mean to you? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ¿Por qué le consideras a esta persona como un mentor? 2. ¿Cuál fue el momento definitivo entre tú y esta persona cuando te diste cuenta que era un mentor para ti? 3. Durante la mentoría, ¿te sientes fuertemente conectado/a con el/ella? ¿Hubo situaciones en las que te sentiste menos conectado? Si es así ¿qué factores contribuyeron a estos sentimientos? 4. ¿Qué significa para ti el término “mentoría”? <p>[Probe and follow-up for further understanding]</p> <p>[if term “mentor” is not used]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What does the term “mentorship” mean to you? 2. Given this definition, would you consider this person as a mentor? Why or why not? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ¿Qué significa para ti el término “mentoría”? 2. Dada esta definición, ¿consideras a esta persona como un mentor? ¿Por qué? <p>[Probe and follow-up for further understanding]</p> |
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| Transition to relationships with teachers | <p>[Move onto this set of questions if the person identified in section 1 is not a teacher]</p> <p>One of the types of mentors I have learned about are teachers. Teachers who do more than just help us learn the content of the class. I'm curious if there are any teachers at your school that have had a meaningful impact on your development.</p> <p>Uno de los tipos de mentores sobre los que he aprendido son maestros. Los maestros quienes hacen más que solamente ayudarnos aprender el contenido de la clase. Estoy interesado en saber si hay algunos maestros en tu escuela que han tenido un impacto significativo en tu desarrollo.</p> |
| Reflecting on an influential teacher | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When thinking about your teachers, would you say that any of them have had a meaningful impact on you? Why or why not? 2. Thinking of one teacher who has had a meaningful impact on you, who are they? What do they teach? How often have they been your teacher? How long have you known them? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cuando estás pensando sobre tus maestros, ¿dirías que alguno de ellos ha tenido un impacto significativo en ti? ¿Por qué? 2. Pensando en uno de tus maestros quienes han tenido un impacto significativo en ti, ¿quién es? ¿Qué materia enseña? ¿Por cuánto tiempo ha sido tu maestro? ¿Hace cuánto tiempo lo conoces? <p>[Probe and follow-up for further understanding]</p> |

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| Reflecting on internal factors influencing interaction | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What's one of your favorite memories of them from the last few years? Set the scene for me. 2. Thinking back on this memory, what were some of the thoughts running through your brain when you were in the moment of this memory? What about some of the feelings? How did those thoughts or feelings impact this memory? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ¿Cuál es uno de tus recuerdos favoritos con él/ella en los últimos años? Describe detalladamente el momento. 2. Pensando en este recuerdo, ¿cuáles eran algunos de los pensamientos pasando por tu mente? ¿Cuáles eran algunos de los sentimientos? ¿Cómo afecta este recuerdo a estos pensamientos o sentimientos? <p>[Probe and follow-up to gain deeper understanding of thoughts and feelings during this interaction]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. When you think about this memory now, how does it make you feel? what thoughts pop up? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Cuando piensas sobre este recuerdo, ¿cómo te hace sentir? ¿Qué pensamientos surgen? <p>[Probe and follow-up to gain deeper understanding of thoughts and feelings during this interaction]</p> |
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| Reflecting on external factors influencing interaction | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. During the moment of this memory, can you talk a little about what things were going on in your life... <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. with your friends? 2. with your family? 3. in your neighborhood? 4. at school? 5. within the Ribera? 6. within [estado de México]? 7. nationally? 8. Politically? 2. Looking back, did any of these factors impact your relationship with this person? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Durante el momento de este recuerdo, puedes hablar un poco sobre las cosas pasando en tu vida... <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ¿con tus amigos? 2. ¿con tu familia? 3. ¿en tu vecindario? 4. ¿en la escuela? 5. ¿en la Ribera? 6. ¿en [estado de México]? 7. ¿nacionalmente? 8. ¿politicamente? 2. En retrospectiva (mirando hacia atrás) ¿alguno de estos factores afectaron tu relación con esta persona? <p>[Probe and follow-up to gain deeper understanding of these levels (micro, meso, macro)]</p> |
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| Reflecting on the impact of the relationship | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If I were to interview this person, what do you imagine they might say to me about this memory? 2. What might they say about their relationship with you at that time? 3. What might they say about their relationship with you now? 4. What kind of difference have they made in your life? 5. If you were to categorize this relationship, what words would you use? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Si entrevistara a esta persona, ¿qué imaginas que me diría sobre este recuerdo? 2. ¿Qué dirían sobre tu relación contigo en ese momento? 3. ¿Qué dirían sobre tu relación contigo ahora? 4. ¿Qué diferencia ha hecho en tu vida? 5. Si tuvieras que clasificar esta relación, ¿qué palabras usarías? <p>[Probe and follow-up for further understanding]</p> |
| Concluding interview | <p>Thank you for taking this time to talk with me. I really appreciate it.</p> <p>Do you have any questions, or would you like to say anything else?</p> <p>Is there anything we have not touched upon that you believe is important for myself and others to know?</p> <p>Gracias para tomar este tiempo de hablar conmigo. Te lo agradezco mucho.</p> <p>¿Tienes algunas preguntas, o te gustaría decir algo más?</p> <p>¿Hay algo que no hayamos discutido y que piensas es importante que yo y los demás lo sepamos?</p> |

Appendix B: Interview Protocol - Teachers

Instructions: This interview protocol will be used for teachers who have been identified as mentors.

| Component | Prompt |
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| Introducing the interview | <p>Thank you for agreeing to do this interview with me. As I had shared before, my goal is to learn about non-parental adults who have had a significant impact on the lives of adolescents.</p> <p>I have some questions to help guide us; however, I am really interested in learning from you, so if you have something you want to share, please do so, even if it may not seem to relate directly to a question.</p> <p>Gracias por aceptar participar en esta entrevista conmigo. Como te he compartido antes, mi meta es aprender sobre los adultos que no son los padres o tutores, quienes han tenido un impacto significativo en las vidas de los jóvenes.</p> <p>Tengo algunas preguntas para guiarnos; sin embargo, estoy muy interesado en aprender de ti, por lo tanto si tienes algo que quieras compartir, hazlo, incluso si no parece estar relacionado directamente con una pregunta.</p> |
| Focusing on mentorship | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What does the term “mentorship” mean to you? 2. How does mentorship converge or diverge from your role as an educator? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ¿Qué significa para ti el término “mentoría”? 2. ¿Cómo converge o diverge la mentoría en tu papel como maestro? <p>[Probe and follow-up for further understanding]</p> |

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| Reflecting on influence as a teacher | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When thinking about any of your current or former students (at IIOP), do you think any of them would consider you a mentor? Why or why not? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Al pensar en alguno de sus alumnos actuales o anteriores (en IIOP), ¿crees que alguno de ellos te consideraría un mentor? ¿Por qué? <p>[Probe and follow-up for further understanding]</p> <p>[if “yes”]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Think of one of those students. Why do you consider this person a mentee? 2. Share with me a story that exemplifies that mentoring relationship. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Al pensar en uno de tus alumnos. ¿Por qué consideras a esta persona como un aprendiz? 2. Comparte conmigo una historia que ejemplifica la relación de mentoría. <p>[Probe and follow-up for further understanding]</p> |
| Reflecting on internal factors influencing interaction | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Thinking back on this story, what were some of the thoughts you had in the moment of this memory? What about some of the feelings? How did those thoughts or feelings impact this memory? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pensando en esta historia, ¿cuáles eran algunos de los pensamientos que tuviste en el momento de este recuerdo? ¿Cuáles eran algunos de los sentimientos? ¿Cómo afecta este recuerdo a estos pensamientos o sentimientos? <p>[Probe and follow-up to gain deeper understanding of thoughts and feelings during this interaction, possibly ask how this story makes them feel or think now]</p> |

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| <p>Reflecting on external factors influencing interaction</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. During the moment of this memory, can you talk a little about what things were going on in your life... <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. with your friends? 2. with your family? 3. in your neighborhood? 4. at school? 5. within the Ribera? 6. within [estado de México]? 7. nationally? 8. Politically? 2. Looking back, did any of these factors impact your relationship with this person? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Durante el momento de este recuerdo, puedes hablar un poco sobre las cosas pasando en tu vida... <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ¿con tus amigos? 2. ¿con tu familia? 3. ¿en tu vecindario? 4. ¿en la escuela? 5. ¿en la Ribera? 6. ¿en [estado de México]? 7. ¿nacionalmente? 8. ¿politicamente? 2. En retrospectiva (mirando hacia atrás) ¿alguno de estos factores afectaron tu relación con esta persona? <p>[Probe and follow-up to gain deeper understanding of these levels (micro, meso, macro)]</p> |
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| Focusing on relationship dynamics | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What was the defining moment between you and this student where you knew that you were a mentor for them? 2. During the mentorship, did you always feel strongly connected to them? Were there any situations where you felt less connected? If so, what factors contributed to those feelings? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ¿Cuál fue el momento definitivo entre tú y este alumno cuando te diste cuenta que te convertiste en un mentor para él/ella? 2. Durante la mentoría, ¿te sientes fuertemente conectado/a con el/ella? ¿Hubo situaciones en las que te sentiste menos conectado? Si es así ¿qué factores contribuyeron a estos sentimientos? <p>[Probe and follow-up for further understanding]</p> |
| Reflecting on the impact of the relationship | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If I were to interview this student, what do you imagine they might say to me about this memory? 2. What might the student say about their relationship with you at that time? 3. What might the student say about their relationship with you now? 4. What kind of difference have they made in your life? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Si entrevistara a este alumno/a, ¿qué imaginas que me diría sobre este recuerdo? 2. ¿Qué diría el alumno/a sobre tu relación contigo en ese momento? 3. ¿Qué diría el alumno/a sobre tu relación contigo ahora? 4. ¿Qué diferencia ha hecho en tu vida? <p>[Probe and follow-up for further understanding]</p> |

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| Concluding interview | <p>Thank you for taking this time to talk with me. I really appreciate it.</p> <p>Do you have any questions, or would you like to say anything else?</p> <p>Is there anything we have not touched upon that you believe is important for myself and others to know?</p> <p>Gracias para tomar este tiempo de hablar conmigo. Te lo agradezco mucho.</p> <p>¿Tienes algunas preguntas, o te gustaría decir algo más?</p> <p>¿Hay algo que no hayamos discutido y que piensas es importante que yo y los demás lo sepamos?</p> |
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Appendix C. Observation Field Notes Format

Instructions: This observation protocol will be used for observations in various settings within the school environment.

| General Notes | |
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| Use this block to describe general notes about this specific observation. | |
| Descriptive Notes | Reflective Notes |
| Use this column to describe the setting and activities that occur during the observation period | Use this column to denote reflections on what is going on in the setting; be sure to align the reflections with the respective description |

Appendix D. Informed Assent for Current Students

Hi, my name is Aaron S. Baker, and I am a PhD student at National Louis University, located in Chicago, Illinois, United States. I could really use your help with my study which is titled “A Grounded Theory Study of the Emergence and Dynamics of Naturally Occurring Mentorships”. Basically, I want to understand how youth and adults naturally form meaningful relationships outside of formal programs. With this study, I’m going to focus on what is happening at school.

I’ll be at the [school name] from May 3, 2021 to July 2, 2021. During this time, you may see me around the school. If you decide to help me, I will schedule a time to ask you some questions. This may take 45 to 60 minutes. If you allow me, I will record the interview to make sure I am able to translate and transcribe your responses well. I may need to schedule additional interviews to clarify anything. Also, you may also see me observing classes, the auditorium, offices, the library, the lobby, or recreational spaces, taking notes.

It is your choice whether you want to participate or not. There are no anticipated risks or benefits from participating in the study, no greater than that encountered in daily life. Any notes from your answers to my questions or my observations will be used with other notes from other students. When I am taking notes, I will not use your name; instead, I will use a nickname to ensure your privacy. When I tell other people about my research, I will not use your name or any specific information about you, so no one can tell who I am talking about. You will be asked about meaningful relationships with adults; be assured that any specific answers you provide will be confidential and no one, including your parents/guardian or the [school name], will be aware of your responses.

All information gathered in the study will remain confidential. Only my advisor and I will have access to my notes, although I may use a third-party service for transcription and translation. You will have a chance to review the translated transcription to ensure it represents your voice appropriately. The information I collect will be kept secure in a password-protected personal laptop. I will retain the raw data for up to 4 years at which point the raw data will be deleted. The results from the study will be available to participants upon request. Also, the results may be published, reported at conferences, and/or employed to inform educational practices at the [school name].

Your parents/guardian will need to also say it’s okay for you to help me with this study; I have shared with them a similar form to complete. If they say it is okay for you to help, then you can choose to help or not help. If you do not want to help, that is okay. If you start helping but change your mind later, you can stop at any time. In either case, no one at the school will know if you decide not to participate or if you withdraw during the study, and there will be no consequences if you decide not to participate or withdraw from the study at any time. If during the questions, you feel sad or want to talk to someone further, you will be able to talk with the school psychologist.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me. My U.S. phone number is [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]. I may not have a local phone number, so email is probably best at [REDACTED]

If you have any concerns or questions before or during participation that has not been addressed by me, you may contact my Graduate Advisor Dr. Tiffeny Jimenez (tiffeny.jimenez@nl.edu) or the co-chairs of NLU's Institutional Research Board Dr. Shaunti Knauth (shaunti.knauth@nl.edu; 312/ 261-3526) or Dr. Christopher Rector (crector@nl.edu; 312/621-9650). The co-chairs are located at National Louis University, 122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL.

By signing, you agree to participate in the study even though you know you don't have to.

Participant Printed Name

Participant Signature

Date

Researcher Printed Name

Researcher Signature

Date

Appendix E. Asentimiento informado de los alumnos

Hola, soy Aaron S. Baker y estoy estudiando un programa de doctorado en la Universidad Nacional Louis en Chicago, Illinois, Estados Unidos. Necesito tu ayuda para mi investigación que se llama “Un estudio teórico fundamentado del surgimiento y la dinámica de las relaciones significativas entre los jóvenes y adultos que ocurren naturalmente”. Básicamente, quiero entender cómo los jóvenes y adultos forman relaciones significativas fuera de programas formales de mentoría. Con este estudio, me estoy enfocando en lo que está pasando en el ambiente escolar.

Voy a estar en el [nombre de escuela] desde el 3 de mayo de 2021 hasta el 2 de julio de 2021. Durante este tiempo, es posible que me veas alrededor de la escuela. Si decides ayudarme con el estudio, nos reuniremos para hacerte algunas preguntas. Las reuniones serán de 45 a 60 minutos. Si me permites, grabaré el audio de la entrevista para asegurarme de poder traducir y transcribir tus respuestas correctamente. Es posible que necesitemos entrevistas adicionales para aclarar algunos puntos. También, es posible que me veas observando y tomando notas de tus clases, el auditorio, las oficinas, la biblioteca, la recepción, o espacios recreativos.

Es tu elección si quieres participar o no. No hay riesgos o beneficios anticipados, no mayores de los que se encuentran en la vida diaria. Cualquiera de las notas de tus respuestas a mis preguntas o mis observaciones serán usadas con otras notas de otros participantes. En mis notas, no voy a usar tu nombre; en lugar de tu nombre, voy a usar un apodo para asegurar tu privacidad. Cuando hable sobre mi investigación, no voy a usar tu nombre o cualquiera de los datos específicos sobre ti para asegurar que nadie puede saber de quién estoy hablando. Voy a preguntarte sobre la mentoría y tu percepción de la ayuda que recibes de los adultos; ten la seguridad que tus respuestas serán confidenciales y nadie, ni tus padres ni el [nombre de escuela], sabrá de tus respuestas.

Toda la información recopilada en el estudio será confidencial. Solo mi directora de tesis y yo tendremos acceso a mis notas, aunque podré utilizar un servicio profesional de terceros para la transcripción y traducción. Tendrás la oportunidad de revisar la transcripción traducida para asegurar que representa tu voz adecuadamente. La información recopilada estará asegurada en una computadora portátil protegida con contraseña. Conservaré los datos brutos hasta por 4 años, después de ese tiempo los eliminaré. Los resultados del estudio estarán disponibles a los participantes bajo su petición. También, los resultados pueden ser publicados, compartidos en conferencias, y/o usados para informar las prácticas educativas del [nombre de escuela].

Tus padres necesitan dar su permiso para que puedas ayudarme con el estudio. Ya he compartido un formulario similar con ellos, que necesitan llenar. Si ellos dan su permiso, puedes elegir si quieres ayudarme o no. Si no quieres ayudarme, estará bien. Si empiezas ayudando pero cambias de opinión más adelante, puedes dejar de participar en cualquier momento. En ambos casos, nadie en la escuela va a saber si decides no participar o retirarte durante el estudio, y no hay ninguna consecuencia si decides no participar o

quitar del estudio en algún tiempo. Si durante la entrevista, te sientes mal o quieres hablar con alguien más, puedes hablar con la psicóloga del [nombre de escuela].

Si tienes algunas preguntas, puedes contactarme. Mi número móvil de los Estados Unidos es [redacted]. Probablemente, no voy a tener un celular local, entonces el email es mejor: [redacted]. Si tienes inquietudes o preguntas antes o durante tu participación en el estudio que no han sido respondidas por mí, puedes contactar a mi directora de tesis Dra. Tiffeny Jimenez (tiffeny.jimenez@nl.edu) o los coordinadores del Comité de Ética de Investigaciones de la Universidad Nacional Louis, Dra. Shaunti Knauth (shaunti.knauth@nl.edu; 312/ 261-3526) or Dr. Christopher Rector (crector@nl.edu; 312/621-9650). Su dirección es 122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, Estados Unidos.

Al firmar, aceptas participar en el estudio aunque sepas que no es necesario.

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------|--------------------------------|-------|
| Nombre y firma de Participante | Fecha | Nombre y firma de investigador | Fecha |
|--------------------------------|-------|--------------------------------|-------|

Appendix F. Informed Parental Consent

My name is Aaron S. Baker and I am a doctoral student at National Louis University. I am asking your child to participate in this study, “A Grounded Theory Study of the Emergence and Dynamics of Naturally Occurring Mentorships”, occurring from May 3, 2021 to July 2, 2021. The purpose of this study is to understand how mentoring relationships develop naturally outside of formal mentoring programs within the school environment. This study will help researchers develop a deeper understanding of naturally occurring mentorship in order to improve the effectiveness of formal mentorship programs.

By signing this form, you consent to your child participating, if they agree to, in this study including:

Individual interviews

- Interviews will last approximately 45-60 minutes; follow-up interviews may be requested.
- Interviews will be recorded, transcribed, and translated; participants may view and have final approval on the content of interview transcripts.
-

Observations

- Observations in classes, the auditorium, offices, the library, the lobby, or recreational spaces will occur occasionally.
- Field notes of the classroom observations will be recorded; participants may view and have final approval on field notes specific to the participants.

Participation is voluntary, and participants can decline to participate or decide to quit at any time without penalty. There are no anticipated risks or benefits, no greater than that encountered in daily life. Should the interview process trigger any trauma, the [school name] school psychologist will be available. Participant identities will in no way be revealed. Pseudonyms will be used during data collection and analysis. Data will be reported anonymously and bear no identifiers that could connect data to individual participants. To ensure confidentiality, I will secure recordings, transcripts, and field notes on a password-protected personal laptop. Only I will have access to data, although I may use a third-party service for transcription and translation. I will retain the raw data for up to 4 years at which point the raw data will be deleted.

The results of this study may be published, reported at conferences, and/or employed to inform educational practices at the [school name]. Upon request, participants may receive summary results from this study and copies of any publications that may occur. Please email me at [REDACTED] to request results from this study.

If you have any concerns or questions before or during participation that has not been addressed by me, you may contact my Graduate Advisor Dr. Tiffeny Jimenez (tiffeny.jimenez@nl.edu) or the co-chairs of NLU’s Institutional Research Board Dr. Shaunti Knauth (shaunti.knauth@nl.edu; 312/ 261-3526) or Dr. Christopher Rector

(crector@nl.edu; 312/621-9650). The cso-chairs are located at National Louis University, 122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL.

Thank you for your consideration.

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------|
| _____ Parent/Guardian Printed Name | _____ Parent/Guardian Signature | _____ Date |
| _____ Parent/Guardian Printed Name | _____ Parent/Guardian Signature | _____ Date |
| _____ Researcher Printed Name | _____ Researcher Signature | _____ Date |

Appendix G. Consentimiento informado de los padres

Mi nombre es Aaron S. Baker y soy un estudiante de doctorado en la Universidad Nacional Louis. Le estoy pidiendo a su hijo que participe en este estudio, "Un estudio teórico fundamentado del surgimiento y la dinámica de las relaciones significativas entre los jóvenes y adultos que ocurren naturalmente", que se llevará a cabo del 3 de mayo de 2021 al 2 de julio de 2021. El propósito de este estudio es entender cómo las relaciones de mentoría se desarrollan naturalmente fuera de los programas formales de mentoría dentro del ambiente escolar. Este estudio ayudará a los investigadores a desarrollar una comprensión más profunda de la mentoría que se produce de forma natural para mejorar la eficacia de los programas formales de mentoría.

Al firmar este formulario, si está de acuerdo, usted da su consentimiento para que su hijo participe, en este estudio, que incluye:

Entrevistas individuales

- Las entrevistas durarán aproximadamente 45-60 minutos; es probable que tengamos algunas sesiones de seguimiento.
- Las entrevistas serán grabadas, transcritas y traducidas; los participantes pueden ver y tener la aprobación final del contenido de las transcripciones de las entrevistas.

Observaciones

- Se realizarán ocasionalmente observaciones en el aula, el auditorio, las oficinas, la biblioteca, la recepción, o espacios recreativos.
- Se registran notas de campo de las observaciones del aula; los participantes pueden ver y obtener la aprobación final de las notas de campo específicas de los participantes.

La participación es voluntaria y existirá la opción de no participar o decidir dejar de participar en cualquier momento sin ninguna consecuencia. No hay riesgos o beneficios anticipados, no mayores de los que se encuentran en la vida diaria. Si el proceso de la entrevista desencadena algún malestar, la psicóloga de la escuela del [nombre de escuela] estará disponible. Las identidades de los participantes no se revelarán de ninguna manera. Se utilizarán seudónimos durante la recopilación y el análisis de datos. Los datos se informarán de forma anónima y no llevarán identificadores que puedan conectar los datos con participantes individuales. Para garantizar la confidencialidad, guardaré grabaciones, transcripciones y notas de campo en una computadora portátil personal protegida con contraseña. Solo mi directora de tesis y yo tendremos acceso a los datos, aunque podré utilizar un servicio profesional de terceros para la transcripción y traducción. Conservaré los datos brutos hasta por 4 años, después de ese tiempo los eliminaré.

Los resultados de este estudio pueden publicarse, presentarse en conferencias y / o emplearse para informar las prácticas educativas en el [nombre de escuela]. Previa solicitud, los participantes pueden recibir un resumen de los resultados de este estudio y copias de las publicaciones futuras. Envíeme un correo electrónico a [redacted] para solicitar los resultados de este estudio.

Si tiene inquietudes o preguntas antes o durante tu participación en el estudio que no han sido respondidas por mí, puede contactar a mi directora de tesis Dra. Tiffeny Jimenez (tiffeny.jimenez@nl.edu) o las coordinadoras del Comité de Ética de Investigaciones de la Universidad Nacional Louis, Dra. Shaunti Knauth (shaunti.knauth@nl.edu; 312/261-3526) or Dr. Christopher Rector (crector@nl.edu; 312/621-9650). Su dirección es 122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, Estados Unidos.

Gracias por su consideración.

| | | |
|----------------------------------------------|-------|---------------------------------|
| Nombre(s) y firma(s) de los padres o tutores | Fecha | Nombre y firma del investigador |
| Fecha | | |

Appendix H. Informed Consent for Alumni

My name is Aaron S. Baker and I am a doctoral student at National Louis University. I am asking you to participate in this study, “A Grounded Theory Study of the Emergence and Dynamics of Naturally Occurring Mentorships”, occurring from May 3, 2021 to July 2, 2021. The purpose of this study is to understand how mentoring relationships develop naturally outside of formal mentoring programs within the school environment. This study will help researchers develop a deeper understanding of naturally occurring mentorship in order to improve the effectiveness of formal mentorship programs.

By signing this form, you agree to participate in this study which may include:

Individual interviews

- Interviews will last approximately 45-60 minutes; follow-up interviews may be requested.
- Interviews will be recorded, transcribed, and translated; you may view and have final approval on the content of interview transcripts.

Your participation is voluntary, and you can decline to participate or decide to quit at any time without penalty. There are no anticipated risks or benefits, no greater than that encountered in daily life. Should the interview process trigger any trauma, the [school name] school psychologist will be available. Your identity will in no way be revealed. Pseudonyms will be used during data collection and analysis. Data will be reported anonymously and bear no identifiers that could connect the data to you. To ensure confidentiality, I will secure recordings, transcripts, and field notes on a password-protected personal laptop. Only I will have access to data, although I may use a third-party service for transcription and translation. I will retain the raw data for up to 4 years at which point the raw data will be deleted.

The results of this study may be published, reported at conferences, and/or employed to inform educational practices at the [school name]. Upon request, you may receive summary results from this study and copies of any publications that may occur. Please email me at [REDACTED] to request results from this study.

If you have any concerns or questions before or during participation that has not been addressed by me, you may contact my Graduate Advisor Dr. Tiffeny Jimenez (tiffeny.jimenez@nl.edu) or the co-chairs of NLU’s Institutional Research Board Dr. Shaunti Knauth (shaunti.knauth@nl.edu; 312/ 261-3526) or Dr. Christopher Rector (crector@nl.edu; 312/621-9650). The co-chairs are located at National Louis University, 122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL.

Thank you for your consideration.

Participant Printed Name

Participant Signature

Date

Researcher Printed Name

Researcher Signature

Date

Appendix I. Consentimiento informado para exalumnos

Mi nombre es Aaron S. Baker y soy un estudiante de doctorado en la Universidad Nacional Louis. Te pido que participes en este estudio, "Un estudio teórico fundamentado del surgimiento y la dinámica de las relaciones significativas entre los jóvenes y adultos que ocurren naturalmente", que se llevará a cabo del 3 de mayo de 2021 al 2 de julio de 2021. El propósito de este estudio es entender cómo se desarrollan las relaciones de mentoría naturalmente fuera de los programas formales de mentoría dentro del ambiente escolar. Este estudio ayudará a los investigadores a desarrollar una comprensión más profunda de la mentoría que se produce de forma natural para mejorar la eficacia de los programas formales de mentoría.

Al firmar este formulario, aceptas participar en este estudio que puede incluir:

Entrevistas individuales

- Las entrevistas durarán aproximadamente entre 45 y 60 minutos; se pueden solicitar entrevistas de seguimiento.
- Las entrevistas serán grabadas, transcritas y traducidas; puedes ver y otorgar la aprobación final del contenido de las transcripciones de las entrevistas.

Tu participación es voluntaria, y puedes no participar o decidir a dejar de participar en cualquier momento sin ninguna consecuencia académica. No hay riesgos o beneficios anticipados, no mayores de los que se encuentran en la vida diaria. Si el proceso de la entrevista desencadena algún malestar, la psicóloga de la escuela del [nombre de escuela] estará disponible. Tu identidad no se revelará de ninguna manera. Se utilizarán seudónimos durante la recopilación y el análisis de datos. Los datos se informarán de forma anónima y no llevarán identificadores que puedan conectar los datos con participantes individuales. Para garantizar la confidencialidad, guardaré grabaciones, transcripciones y notas de campo en una computadora portátil personal protegida con contraseña. Solo mi directora de tesis y yo tendremos acceso a los datos, aunque podré utilizar un servicio profesional de terceros para la transcripción y traducción. Conservaré los datos brutos hasta por 4 años, después de ese tiempo los eliminaré.

Los resultados de este estudio pueden publicarse, presentarse en conferencias y / o emplearse para informar las prácticas educativas en el [nombre de escuela]. Previa solicitud, puedes recibir un resumen de los resultados de este estudio y copias de las publicaciones futuras. Envíame un correo electrónico a [redacted] para solicitar los resultados de este estudio.

Si tienes inquietudes o preguntas antes o durante tu participación en el estudio que no han sido respondidas por mí, puede contactar a mi directora de tesis Dra. Tiffeny Jimenez (tiffeny.jimenez@nl.edu) o las coordinadoras del Comité de Ética de Investigaciones de la Universidad Nacional Louis, Dra. Shaunti Knauth (shaunti.knauth@nl.edu; 312/261-3526) or Dr. Christopher Rector (crector@nl.edu; 312/621-9650). Su dirección es 122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, Estados Unidos.

Gracias por su consideración.

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|-------|---------------------------------|-------|
| Nombre y firma del participante | Fecha | Nombre y firma del investigador | Fecha |
|---------------------------------|-------|---------------------------------|-------|

Appendix J. Informed Consent for Teachers

My name is Aaron S. Baker and I am a doctoral student at National Louis University. I am asking you to participate in this study, “A Grounded Theory Study of the Emergence and Dynamics of Naturally Occurring Mentorships”, occurring from May 3, 2021 to July 2, 2021. The purpose of this study is to understand how mentoring relationships develop naturally outside of formal mentoring programs within the school environment. This study will help researchers develop a deeper understanding of naturally occurring mentorship in order to improve the effectiveness of formal mentorship programs.

By signing this form, you agree to participate in this study which may include:

Individual interviews

- Interviews will last approximately 45-60 minutes; follow-up interviews may be requested.
- Interviews will be recorded, transcribed, and translated; you may view and have final approval on the content of interview transcripts.

Observations

- Observations in classes, the auditorium, offices, the library, the lobby, or recreational spaces will occur occasionally.
- Field notes of the classroom observations will be recorded; you may view and have final approval on field notes specific to you.

Your participation is voluntary, and you can decline to participate or decide to quit at any time without penalty. There are no anticipated risks or benefits, no greater than that encountered in daily life. Should the interview process trigger any trauma, I will work with the [school name] staff to make a referral to local counseling services. Your identity will in no way be revealed. Pseudonyms will be used during data collection and analysis. Data will be reported anonymously and bear no identifiers that could connect the data to you. To ensure confidentiality, I will secure recordings, transcripts, and field notes on a password-protected personal laptop. Only I will have access to data, although I may use a third-party service for transcription and translation. I will retain the raw data for up to 4 years at which point the raw data will be deleted.

The results of this study may be published, reported at conferences, and/or employed to inform educational practices at the [school name]. Upon request, you may receive summary results from this study and copies of any publications that may occur. Please email me at [REDACTED] to request results from this study.

If you have any concerns or questions before or during participation that has not been addressed by me, you may contact my Graduate Advisor Dr. Tiffeny Jimenez (tiffeny.jimenez@nl.edu) or the co-chairs of NLU’s Institutional Research Board Dr. Shaunti Knauth (shaunti.knauth@nl.edu; 312/ 261-3526) or Dr. Christopher Rector (crector@nl.edu; 312/621-9650). The co-chairs are located at National Louis University, 122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL.

Thank you for your consideration.

Participant Printed Name

Participant Signature

Date

Researcher Printed Name

Researcher Signature

Date

Appendix K. Consentimiento informado para maestros

Mi nombre es Aaron S. Baker y soy un estudiante de doctorado en la Universidad Nacional Louis. Le estoy pidiendo a su hijo que participe en este estudio, "Un estudio teórico fundamentado del surgimiento y la dinámica de las relaciones significativas entre los jóvenes y adultos que ocurren naturalmente", que se llevará a cabo del 3 de mayo de 2021 al 2 de julio de 2021. El propósito de este estudio es entender cómo las relaciones de mentoría se desarrollan naturalmente fuera de los programas formales de mentoría dentro del ambiente escolar. Este estudio ayudará a los investigadores a desarrollar una comprensión más profunda de la mentoría que se produce de forma natural para mejorar la eficacia de los programas formales de mentoría.

Al firmar este formulario, si está de acuerdo, usted da su consentimiento para que su hijo participe, en este estudio, que incluye:

Entrevistas individuales

- Las entrevistas durarán aproximadamente entre 45 y 60 minutos; es probable que tengamos algunas sesiones de seguimiento.
- Las entrevistas serán grabadas, transcritas y traducidas; los participantes pueden ver y tener la aprobación final del contenido de las transcripciones de las entrevistas.

Observaciones

- Se realizarán ocasionalmente observaciones en el aula, el auditorio, las oficinas, la biblioteca, la recepción, o espacios recreativos.
- Se registran notas de campo de las observaciones del aula; los participantes pueden ver y obtener la aprobación final de las notas de campo específicas de los participantes.

La participación es voluntaria y existirá la opción de no participar o decidir dejar de participar en cualquier momento sin ninguna consecuencia. No hay riesgos o beneficios anticipados, no mayores de los que se encuentran en la vida diaria. Si el proceso de la entrevista desencadena algún malestar, trabajaré con el personal del [nombre de escuela] para hacer una remisión a servicios de asesoramiento psicológico. Las identidades de los participantes no se revelarán de ninguna manera. Se utilizarán seudónimos durante la recopilación y el análisis de datos. Los datos se informarán de forma anónima y no llevarán identificadores que puedan conectar los datos con participantes individuales. Para garantizar la confidencialidad, guardaré grabaciones, transcripciones y notas de campo en una computadora portátil personal protegida con contraseña. Solo mi directora de tesis y yo tendremos acceso a los datos, aunque podré utilizar un servicio profesional de terceros para la transcripción y traducción. Conservaré los datos brutos hasta por 4 años, después de ese tiempo los eliminaré.

Los resultados de este estudio pueden publicarse, presentarse en conferencias y/o emplearse para informar las prácticas educativas en el [nombre de escuela]. Previa solicitud, los participantes pueden recibir un resumen de los resultados de este estudio y

copias de las publicaciones futuras. Envíeme un correo electrónico a [REDACTED] para solicitar los resultados de este estudio.

Si tiene inquietudes o preguntas antes o durante tu participación en el estudio que no han sido respondidas por mí, puede contactar a mi directora de tesis Dra. Tiffeny Jimenez (tiffeny.jimenez@nl.edu) o las coordinadoras del Comité de Ética de Investigaciones de la Universidad Nacional Louis, Dra. Shaunti Knauth (shaunti.knauth@nl.edu; 312/261-3526) or Dr. Christopher Rector (crector@nl.edu; 312/621-9650). Su dirección es 122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, Estados Unidos.

Gracias por su consideración.

Nombre y firma del participante
Fecha

Fecha

Nombre y firma del investigador

Appendix L. Theoretical framework on the emergence of natural mentoring relationships

I. When adults engage adolescents/emerging adults in a manner that might lead to a natural mentorship, adolescents/emerging adults must be at a certain state of readiness

A. Readiness factor (7A, 7E, 6M)

1. INHIBITORS TO CONNECTING (3A, 1E)
 - a) Having no motivation to connect (3A)
 - b) Being anxious to engage (1A, 1E)
2. PROMOTERS TO CONNECTING (5A, 6E, 4M)
 - a) Having prior adult as reference point (1A, 2E, 1M)
 - b) Experiencing life transitions (1A, 5E, 1M)
 - c) Being open to learn more (1A, 3E, 1M)
 - d) Having proximity and access (1A, 2E, 2M)
 - e) Having an affinity to adults or older topics (3A, 1E, 1M)
 - f) Cultivating a perspective of teacher, effort and approach (3A, 3E, 2M)
 - g) Having opportunities to grow/develop (2A, 1E)
3. ACTIVATORS TO CONNECTING (5A, 6E, 5M)
 - a) Experiencing academic issues (3A, 4E, 1M)
 - b) Seeking advice/approval/role model (3A, 5E, 2M)
 - c) Experiencing issues related to mental and emotional health (3A, 5E, 4M)

II. When adults engage adolescents/emerging adults, the engagement style tends to fall into a specific approach or a combination of approaches which promotes openness or creates a barrier to connecting.

A. Engagement approach

1. MODE DIMENSION
 - a) Acompañar
 - b) Care
 - c) Careful
 - d) Casual/friendly
 - e) Empathetic
 - f) Formal
 - g) Parental
 - h) Reciprocal
2. METHOD DIMENSION
 - a) Acompañar
 - b) Care
 - c) Challenging
 - d) Development
 - e) Empathetic
3. MOTIVATION DIMENSION
 - a) Care
 - b) Concern
 - c) Development

d) Moral

III. *When adults and adolescents/emerging adults engage with each other, there must be alignment.*

A. Alignment state

1. ALIGNMENT BETWEEN APPROACH AND READINESS

a) Complicating factors

b) Easing factors

2. ALIGNMENT OF IDENTITY AND EXPERIENCES

a) Sense of sameness

b) Sense of distinctness

IV. *When adults and adolescents/emerging adults engage with each other, there are influences stemming from their group-level memberships that impact themselves and their connection.*

A. Influence of group-level memberships

1. FACTORS

a) Blocking Factors

b) Permitting Factors

c) Sheltering Factors

d) Underlying Factors

2. INFLUENCE

a) Direct Influence

b) Indirect Influence

V. *When adults and adolescents/emerging adults engage with each other, there are influences stemming from their overarching community that impact themselves and their connection.*

A. Influence of community and culture

1. INFLUENCE

a) Direct Influence

b) Indirect Influence