

**SELF-CONCEPT AND THE INFLUENCE OF CROSS-AGE MENTORING
RELATIONSHIPS AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR
DEVELOPMENTAL GUIDANCE CURRICULUM**

By

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study was to investigate involvement in cross-age mentoring programs, the influence participation in these programs has on student's self-concept, and the coinciding need for such programs to exist in developmental guidance programs to promote self-concept as a basic life skill.

This review includes an examination of articles, studies, and existing programs that investigate cross-age mentoring programs and how they affect self-concept. This analysis also explores how such programs might be incorporated into developmental guidance programs to facilitate the growth of self-concept in students. This study looks at various types of cross-age mentoring programs and how they have been implemented in various communities, through national organizations, as well as all levels of education.

Examples of these programs to be evaluated include: General Colin Powells' organization, America's Promise, the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program, a volunteer mentoring program in Pennsylvania, and a school-wide mentoring program in Piute Middle School in California. Studies have shown that involvement in these programs positively impacts students' self-concept. This study also examines the definition and necessity of self-concept or self-esteem as a life skill that can be taught in accordance with the Wisconsin Developmental Guidance Model through curriculum including cross-age mentoring programs. The research of this study deals with the cross-age mentoring program and the "Reading Buddy" program implemented by the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District and the influence involvement in these programs has on self-esteem.

A positive self-concept is not guaranteed by sole involvement in cross-age mentoring programs. Effective interactions at school and from the community are not the only ways to effect self-concept. Issues outside of school are often beyond the reach of the developmental guidance curriculum.

Findings of this research include:

1. Involvement in cross-age mentoring programs plays a role in the development of a positive self-concept in students.
2. Students who are involved in cross-age mentoring programs may exhibit a more positive social- and conflict-self-concept than students not involved.
3. In compliance with the Wisconsin Developmental Guidance Model, cross-age mentoring programs can be incorporated into guidance curriculum to aid in the growth and development of positive self-concept or self-esteem.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1:	
Introduction.....	5-6
What Should Be Gained?.....	6-7
What Can Be Done On A Smaller Level?.....	7-8
How Can This Happen?.....	8-10
Programs That Work.....	10-12
Statement of the Problem.....	12-13
Chapter 2:	
Review of Literature.....	14-20
Chapter 3:	
Methodology.....	21-24
Subjects.....	21
Instruments.....	21-22
Procedures.....	22-23
Unknowns.....	23-24
Limitations.....	24
Chapter 4:	
Results.....	25-27
Rate of Response.....	25
Scale of Measurement.....	25
Descriptive Statistics.....	25-26
Inferential Statistics.....	26-27
Chapter 5:	
Discussion.....	28-31
Recommendations.....	31
Selected Bibliography.....	32-35
Appendix A: Sample of Instrument.....	36-37
Appendix B: Sample Cover Letter and Informed Consent Form.....	38-40

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Introduction

Saving our youth. Preserving our future. Making a difference. Increasing the self-concept of today's children. Powerful statements such as these are what constitute the mission or purpose of various community-based programs constructed to impact the lives of the youth in our country. One program designed to accomplish such tasks is General Colin Powell's organization, America's Promise. General Colin Powell:

“For too many years we have been building jails to hold young people who have failed. They have failed because, to a great extent, we have failed them. We have failed them by not giving them the vision, the resources, and the purpose they need to grow up law-abiding, successful, and contributing members of society. America's Promise wants to point our youth in the right direction by fulfilling five basic promises to our children...Children need caring adults in their lives. They need safe places and constructive things to do in their after-school hours. They need a healthy start in life...They need a marketable skill through effective education, so that they will be self-supporting and contributing members of society when they grow up. Finally, they need a chance to give back through service to others so that they can take pride in knowing that the world needs them and their talents,” (Powell, 1999).

In accordance with this program, dedicated volunteers have enlisted their support to provide a mentoring and nurturing relationship to a child in need of skills, positive role models, and an increase in their self-concept.

Another more advertised program which provides mentoring relationships to children in the hopes that various gains are made in social or communication skills, self-concept, and positive attitudes is the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program. The Big Brothers/Big Sisters program has been established with the hope of aiding our nation's

young through a mentoring relationship and consequently providing them with the inspiration to become a successful individual. This program requires its' volunteers to spend three to four hours each week with their "Little" for at least a year (United Way, 1999). Caseworkers for this program intricately review a potential "Bigs'" values, interests, and needs and match them with a "Little" that shares similar characteristics. The success of this program is known nationwide with the result that each side of the dyad gains in awareness of necessary life skills and more personal characteristics like behavior and self-concept. In fact, one study has shown that boys involved in this program have scored significantly higher than boys not involved in this program, as evaluated by the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale, on the scales of physical appearance, popularity, and reduced anxiety (Turner and Scherman, 1997).

The United States government has also elicited support of volunteer mentoring programs. In April 1997, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, President Clinton challenged the nation with his "Connect America" program (DeMoulin and Sawka, 1998). This program was planned to increase the amount of volunteerism around the country. In compliance with this challenge, one organization, the Telephone Pioneers of America joined a nonprofit organization, Kindergartners Count, Inc., to implement the "I Like Me" program. Through this program and the Telephone Pioneers volunteer mentoring relationships with the children, academic enjoyment and the concept of healthy self-concept growth were established and emphasized.

What should be gained?

A basic, yet universal, intended measure of success, or result, of each described program is improving the self-concept of the parties involved in the mentoring

relationships. In understanding the intentions of these volunteer mentoring relationships, it is crucial to relate the definition of self-concept to the characteristics of each program. Muro and Kottman (1995) cite Battle's 1992 definition of self-concept to be the perception individuals possess of their own worth which includes a composite of their feelings, hopes, thoughts, and perception of who they are, what they have been, and what they might become. The global nature of the term self-concept has also been established to include such characteristics of behavior, intellectual status, school status, anxiety, physical appearance, popularity, parental/home-related self-concept, etc., within an adequate definition of the term. The volunteer mentoring programs discussed each have components necessary to facilitate and develop children's self-concepts in compliance with the suggested definitions of the term.

What can be done on a smaller level?

The described nationwide volunteer mentoring programs have the intention of providing a positive, nurturing relationship to a child in need of interaction to influence various aspects of their lives, and most importantly, increase their self-concept. With these types of programs implemented within the broad community sector, not all children have the access to the benefits each service provides. Despite this limitation, programs, along with their intended benefits, can be implemented within a setting where children of all needs spend a majority of their time. The setting depicted is the educational realm of school. Garrett and Crutchfield (1997) state that today's children are confronted with a burgeoning list of problems and concerns beyond their control and they react to these difficult life circumstances in various ways, at school, including the development of physical complaints, academic difficulties, and extreme acting-out behaviors. Those

responses to difficulties are linked to various characteristics of a negative global or social self-concept. The school's guidance counselor, in accordance with the developmental guidance curriculum around which the guidance program is structured, can conduct the implementation of programs like America's Promise, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, and "Connect America," with the hope that negative reactions to situations and consequential effects on self-concept can be reduced. Such programs can be structured around the premise of cross-age peer mentoring within elementary, middle, and high schools. The benefits to all parties involved can potentially be achieved with construction and implementation similar to the national mentoring programs.

How can this happen?

The Wisconsin Developmental Guidance Model, (WDGM), provides the basis for the general curriculum (and specific components) of a school's guidance program. This model is kindergarten through the twelfth grade in its scope, based on the developmental needs of students, centered around teaching basic functional life skills, preventive in nature. Wilson (1992) states in the WDGM that teaching various components of self-concept as a functional life skill (i.e. global self-concept and more specific situational meanings) falls within various competency categories under the umbrella domain termed Personal/Social. For elementary children, the WDGM suggests that students of that age exhibit respect for individual freedoms and rights of self and others, understand the consequences of their actions for self and others, and understand the influence that physical, emotional, and intellectual behaviors have on one another and the self. The middle school student is anticipated to develop skills to learn to cope with life's pressures, challenges, defeats, and successes, learn to deal with ongoing changes in

personal and academic life, and develop a firmer self and social self-concept or self-image. The competencies expected to be gained by the high school student, according to the WDMG include understanding and appreciating one's own capabilities and those of others, take responsibility for personal decisions, and understand personal relationships and how to establish an independent identity.

In the book, Developmental School Counseling Programs: From Theory to Practice, Paisley and Hubbard (1994) describe competencies and goals of guidance curriculum to include self-concept as well. The general goal for students described by Paisley and Hubbard includes developing self-awareness and self-acceptance. For elementary-age students, the expected competencies are defined to involve describing a personal trait they like about themselves, describe their own appearances and recognize their own bodies as special, recognize that strengths and weaknesses are human characteristics, discuss skills they have, recognize that they are important to themselves and others, and specify personal characteristics they value. Paisley and Hubbard suggest that middle school students be able to analyze their interests, abilities, and aptitudes as components of personal uniqueness and identify their strengths. High school students are predicted to be able to access personal strengths and resources to deal with difficult situations, synthesize a realistic and positive self-concept, and set personal goals for the future based on their abilities, interests, and values.

The competencies put forth by professionals are related to the definitions of self-concept, not only as a functional life skill, but also as a necessary component to the positive development and growth of all children in the school setting. Peer-to-peer mentoring programs, like the nationally recognized cross-age programs, can be

established around the required competencies which are a part of the developmental guidance curriculum designed to facilitate an increase in the self-concept of the mentors and the mentored. Peer-to-peer mentoring groups or relationships have been defined to accomplish these tasks. The Volunteer Center of San Francisco states that peer helping programs began in the early 1970s in response to increased youth guidance needs and that they typically involve some form of interpersonal helping, preparation and training, and ongoing problem-solving and reflection (Volunteer Center of San Francisco, 1999). Peer helping programs like the ones that can be implemented within schools have also been described as having the job of strengthening what friends have to offer, thereby increasing a person's ability to come up with a safe and satisfying solution to various problems they are experiencing (Peer Resources Network, 1999). The Peer Resources Network also states that peer-mentoring programs set up within schools should follow certain components or guidelines. These guidelines include: peers are self-nominated, nominated by teachers, or by members of their peer group, peers are volunteers, the peer volunteers receive need-based, goal-directed, and experiential skill training from a qualified individual, and the peer mentoring relationships are supervised.

Programs that work:

Various examples of such programs already in existence support the need for these types of peer relationships in the schools to increase the self-concept of all students involved. At Piute Middle School in Lancaster, California, the P.A.L. program has been implemented for the past thirteen years (Stanforth and Hall, 1999). This program has been established around the idea that peers assist in developing leadership and positive self-concept characteristics in one another when involved in a one-on-one relationship.

This program also includes a buddy system for new student orientation, role-plays, and the primary focus of providing an opportunity for students to discuss personal problem and exchange confidences with one another. The two valuable aspects of this program fall along the same lines of the developmental guidance competencies that are intended to promote self-concept. These valuable contributions are to promote preventive guidance at early ages and to develop peer-helping skills with the intention of promoting positive self-concepts of all students involved.

The “Be A Star” program has been a part of various guidance curriculum for children ages five to twelve. This program is an after-school peer mentoring approach that provides tutoring, curriculum to improve decision-making skills and social skills, increase unfavorable attitudes, and increase self-concept (Community Mental Health Services, 1999). The “Students Helping Students” program has been set up through various schools to aid in the facilitation of academic and personal needs of students. This program has been set up, through the process of mentoring, so that students gain a wide variety of experiences while simultaneously promoting their own knowledge, skills, and self-concept (Peer Educator Program, 1999).

The anticipated results of nationwide community-based and school age peer mentoring relationships are synonymous with the self-concept definitions and needs of children as well as the competency requirements set forth by such models of developmental guidance curriculum, like the WDGM. The implications for implementation of peer-to-peer mentoring programs within the school setting as part of that guidance curriculum are related to increasing or promoting the self-concepts of all students involved. In this manner, the crucial, needed, and valued competency of

positive self-concept is learned through interactions with peers, developmental needs being met, and as the most basic, functional, yet global, and important of all functional life skills.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to show a positive relationship between involvement in cross-age mentoring programs and measures of self-concept on the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale: Children's Version. In addition, the results of this study were intended to provide information supporting the need for developmental guidance programs to include cross-age mentoring groups as a crucial component of their general curriculum. This inclusion would teach the competencies of self-concept in a sufficient manner to all students served by the guidance program. A total of fifty-eight students from the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District were used as subjects for this study. Twenty-nine students involved in the cross-age mentoring program were studied. These students were involved in the cross-age mentoring program for at least one full school semester before assessment. The students being mentored were enrolled in grades one through five and were administered the Children's Version of the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale. To complete this causal-comparative design, twenty-nine students not involved in the cross-age mentoring program in the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District were also examined and administered the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale: Children's Version to obtain comparative data.

This research was conducted near the end of the second semester for the 1999-2000 school year (May 2000). Participation in this study was confidential and

participants and their parents were informed. The data was collected after receiving parental informed consent for all students under the age of eighteen. Data collection took place at the Southview Elementary School guidance office in the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin, over a two-day period during study hall or silent reading time as approved by the appropriate teachers. The district guidance counselor aided in the testing and scoring process of this Likert-style instrument. Specific relationships examined involved participation in the cross-age mentoring program in regards to total self-concept, conflict self-concept, and social self-concept; as measured by the Tennessee Self-Concept Scales.

For this study, it was hypothesized that involvement in the cross-age mentoring program would be positively related to students' self-concept. In addition, it was important that categories related to the developmental guidance curriculum and aspects of functional life skills be evaluated in terms of that relationship to self-concept as well. Conclusions were hypothesized that students involved in the cross-age mentoring program would have higher conflict and social self-concepts than students not involved in the program; again as measured by the Tennessee Self-Concept Scales.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Literature

A review of the literature available on increasing self-esteem through cross-age mentoring programs was conducted. Medical, legal, and educational viewpoints were included and various school- and community-based programs throughout the United States were evaluated. Developmental guidance programs that include cross-age mentoring programs as a part of their general curriculum to aid in teaching self-esteem were also examined.

The Nemours Foundation, Inc. is a nonprofit organization devoted to children's health. It is the largest physician practice delivering subspecialty pediatric care in the United States. This foundation operates the Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children serving the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and Wilmington, Delaware areas and publish the journal *KidsHealth for Parents* (1995-2001). This journal promotes that a child's healthy self-esteem is their armor against the challenges of the world and kids who feel good about themselves seem to have an easier time handling conflicts and resisting negative pressures. *KidsHealth for Parents* (1995-2001) also states, in contrast, for children who have low self-esteem, challenges can become major sources of anxiety and frustration, in particular, have a difficult time finding solutions to problems. They may also become depressed, passive, and withdrawn when plagued by self-critical beliefs such as, "I can't do anything right," or "I'm no good." The journal encourages parents to allow their children and help them to become involved in constructive activities and experiences within the school system and larger community environment. Such involvement would

include participation in activities that encourage cooperation rather than competition. This concept would aid in fostering a positive self-esteem. A mentoring program in which an older child helps a younger student learn to read through spending time together with the purpose of reaching a goal, no matter how small, can work well to influence the healthy self-esteem of both parties (*KidsHealth for Parents*, 1995-2001).

John Vasconcellos, Democratic Senator from California, on February 27, 1997, proclaimed the day to be a “Self-Esteem Celebration” as he introduced two legislative bills to influence the self-esteem of American youth. His announcement came in honor of the seventh anniversary of the release of “Toward a State of Esteem,” the report of the California Task Force on Self-Esteem and Personal and Social Responsibility (*Research, News, and Opinions From the Senate Democrats*, 1997). The celebration was co-hosted by the Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs and its director, Dr. Andrew Mecca. Senator Vasconcellos and Dr. Mecca created the legislation that established the self-esteem task force in the State of California. Their report, “Toward a State of Esteem,” became the most popular publication in state history as more than 68,000 copies were issued and circulated. The bill, SB 916, was introduced to make sure that foster care providers in the mentoring role capacity are trained in the importance of self-esteem. Senator Vasconcellos (1997): “Without preventive efforts, many at-risk children in foster care will end up dependent on public assistance, unable to make a productive place for themselves in society, or become a danger to the public, contributing to the violence on the streets. Foster parents are uniquely situated to impact these at-risk youth who need a sense of self-worth and positive self-esteem...” The second of Senator Vasconcellos’ bills, SB 917, expands on the mentoring program, Human Corps, created in 1988 by

Vasconcellos. This bill would require the University of California system, California State Universities, and students attending institutions that are members of the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities, to provide an average of thirty hours of community service in a mentoring capacity each academic year (*Research, News, and Opinions from The Senate Democrats*, 1997). Again, Senator Vasconcellos: “The Human Corps connects our young people to their community, instilling in them the importance of volunteerism and a sense of community, preparing them for a lifetime of community involvement. It nurtures self-esteem in our young people and makes them available to help grow self-esteem in at-risk children.”

The mention of “mentoring programs” in published suggestions from medical and legal professionals can be expanded and clearly defined to encompass many aspects, including self-esteem. The Gaston, North Carolina school district (2001) promotes that mentoring is a supportive-type relationship between a school-aged child and an adult mentor where the mentor offers support, guidance, and assistance as a role model or friend. The purpose of such a mentoring relationship also suggests that the students will identify with his/her mentor and, as a result, will gradually become able to do for themselves what their mentor has done for and with him/her. The mentoring program established within the Gaston school district is an extension of the Business Education Partnership where businesses, retired individuals, and civic groups become involved one-on-one with identified students. Self-esteem, attitudes, and attendance are said to improve and students are more motivated to stay in school (Gaston School District, 2001). An annual evaluation of this program conducted in 2000, shows that as a result of mentoring, students develop more positive attitudes about school and self-esteem

increases, thus providing the basis for marked improvement in grades, conduct, conflict resolution, and attendance.

The Office of Research at a New York High School defines mentoring as a sustained relationship between a youth and an adult (Bergtraum, 2001). A well-structured mentoring relationship is said to be one in which an adult provides help, support, and guidance in times of personal and social stress and decision making. Bergtraum (2001) suggests that mentoring can help increase a student's self-esteem through an independent evaluation of the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program locally affiliated with the school district. A survey was given to the parents of the children involved as well as the adult mentor volunteers. Results indicated: 85% of the respondents reported an increase in mentee self-esteem, 63% reported an increase in school grades, 56% said that relationship with families improved (respectful interactions and conflict resolution), 69% reported peer relationships to be better, 66% reported more positive mentee relationships with teachers, and 86% said youth in the program experienced increased exposure to cultural and educational services.

A 1999 article published by the *Harvard University Gazette* entitled "Girls Steer Toward Self-Esteem" examines the relationship between female students and adult mentor in a unique program called Project Athena. This mentoring program links seventh grade girls from the Longfellow, Connecticut School with Harvard Graduate School of Education students enrolled in the Psychology for Girls and Women class and is in association with a Wellesley-based private, nonprofit organization called the Center for Ventures in Girls' Education. The aim of this program is boost the girls' self-confidence, self-esteem, and help them think broadly when considering their personal

lifetime goals. JoAnn Stemmerman is the director for the Center for Ventures in Girls' Education: "Adolescence is a time of crisis. While they're entering this period, we are giving them an adult to talk to who can reflect back the girls' best qualities. This program is a relational mentoring program. We really focus on fostering the best qualities of each girl, and we try to keep her connected to her true self," (Powell, 1999). Project Athena developed out of research done in the 1980's by Ann Rogers to examine courage and self-esteem in young girls. In her study, Rogers defined courage as the everyday courage present in children who can laugh and sing and dance in public without feeling self-conscious. Powell (1999) states that Rogers observed that as girls grow through adolescence, much of that courage is lost; girls tend to withdraw, be less outspoken, and have trouble talking about themselves and their lives. Rogers placed some of the blame on the conflicting messages girls are subject to where on one hand, girls are told by society to be independent and to speak up and on the other, society relays to girls that they should keep their voices moderated, put others first, and not hurt others' feelings. The mentor's aim in Project Athena is to help the girl work through some of those contradictory messages and increase her self-esteem while encouraging her to look at and appreciate her positive qualities. Margarita Otero-Alvarez, Principal of the Longfellow School states, "The raising of self-esteem in these girls is incredible!"

A school-based cross-age mentoring program designed to influence positive self-esteem in youth stems from the Los Angeles Team Mentoring, Inc. plan and takes place at Sligo Middle School. Peters & Ho (2001) state that youth need mentors to help them grow up and foster their realizations of their own dignity and worth. There is agreement among experts that younger adolescents from desperate circumstances tend to stay in

school, avoid risky behaviors, and develop the resiliency needed to grow into self-sufficient individuals when they are associated with committed, consistent caring adult mentors (Peters & Ho, 2001). Sligo Middle School's approach to mentoring is team-based. Students are able to connect with more than one mentor, thus improving the potential impact three to four times over more traditional one-on-one mentoring. The mentees learn about differing leadership styles, discover the value of working together, and understand how to address and resolve conflict in appropriate ways. The Sligo Team Mentoring Program has an agenda where the focus begins primarily with conflict resolution, peer pressure, and self-esteem. Mentors are instructed on how to address the following topics of conflict resolution, peer pressure, and self-esteem: ways to keep communication open, what to do when feeling misunderstood, clarifying issues of conflict, effective ways to resolve conflict, mediation, making time for oneself, setting realistic goals, taking pride in oneself, and tips on what to do if experiencing pressure to use alcohol or other drugs, have sex, steal/shoplift, be truant, or engage in an activity that would upset parental figures (Peters & Ho, 2001).

In 1994, the United States Department of Education and the National Center for Research in Vocational Education (NCRVE) Office of Student Services (OSS), recognized six exemplary guidance and counseling programs (Maddy-Bernstein, 1996). One of these six exemplary guidance programs was that of the School District of Flambeau located in Tony, Wisconsin. The Flambeau Community Education Program and the Flambeau Career Guidance and Counseling Program work in a cooperative arrangement based on partnerships established over time. Teachers and students work with community members who act as mentors and offer community-based learning

opportunities. Maddy-Bernstein (1996) states that the activities the teachers, students, and mentors engage in focus on personal development and community leadership training. The mentors and students practice real-life problem-solving dealing with anger management, peer pressures, drug and alcohol refusal skills, and self-esteem.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Subjects: The subjects for this study were selected by the school guidance counselor as being involved, for at least one semester, or not involved at all, with the cross-age mentoring program implemented by Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District. The subjects were part of the general Southview Elementary School population in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin and were enrolled in grades first through fifth. All subjects were given informed consent from their parent or guardian to participate in this study. Twenty-nine subjects were involved in the cross-age mentoring program and twenty-nine subjects were not involved in the cross-age mentoring program. A total of fifty-eight students were assessed as subjects for this study.

Instruments: The measure of evaluation used for this study was the Tennessee Self-Concept Scales (TSCS): Children's Version (grades 3 through 8). Refer to Appendix A for instrument. The Thirteenth Mental Measurements Yearbook (1998) states the purpose of this instrument to be that it has been designed as a multidimensional assessment of self-concept. The content of the TSCS scales holds fifteen types of scores: self-criticism, faking good, inconsistent responding, total self-concept, conflict, physical self-concept, moral self-concept, personal self-concept, personal self-concept, family self-concept, social self-concept, academic work, identity, satisfaction, and behavior (Impara and Plake, 1998). The response format for this instrument is a five-point Likert scale. Responses for each item take the form of 1=always false, 2=mostly false, 3=partly

false and partly true, 4=mostly true, and 5= always true. This questionnaire takes approximately 10 to 20 minutes to complete. Impara and Plake (1998) state that the reliability (general internal consistency) for this instrument ranges from .73 to .93. Test-retest reliability for each version range from .47 to .83. Concerning validity, correlations between the TSCS total self-concept score and the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale have been determined to range from .51 to .80 (Impara and Plake, 1998). In addition, correlations with the Coppersmith Self-Esteem Inventory have been established to range from .64 to .75. These numbers indicate strong support for the validity of this instrument.

Procedures: On May 10, 2000, one hundred students were identified as participating or not participating in the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District's cross-age mentoring program by the Southview Elementary School guidance counselor. Data was collected following obtaining informed consent from the parents or guardians of the identified students to be evaluated. Refer to Appendix B for a sample copy of the cover letter and a sample copy of the informed consent form, each distributed to the parents or guardians. This consent was continuously obtained until two days before the evaluation took place, on May 25, 2000, during scheduled small group times. The TSCS was administered to the students in grades one through five on May 25, 2000. Testing took place during teacher-approved study hall or silent reading time. During each evaluation period, students were seated at tables within the guidance counseling office. On each occasion, students were read aloud the cover letter statement that was sent to their parent or guardian as they followed along with the copy in front of them. Students were then

given a writing instrument to complete the questionnaire. There was no time limit placed on the subjects. When the subjects completed the items on the instrument they were reminded that their participation was confidential. The subjects were thanked for their time and informed that following the scoring of the TSCS, approximately two weeks, they could discuss their results with their guidance counselor. The TSCS scales were then scored by computer and the researcher and the guidance counselor evaluated and discussed the results for the total self-concept scores, conflict self-concept scores, and social self-concept scores as well as their relationships to cross-age mentoring program involvement. The three variables examined were those judged to be the most consistent with the components of the Wisconsin Developmental Guidance Model curriculum concerning self-concept development.

Unknowns: Gaining informed parental consent from all the parents or guardians of the prospective subjects could be a problem for adequate sample size. This would also effect (reduce) the rate of response. Access to clients can also be limited by who or how the guidance counselor selects the subjects. With the design of this study being causal-comparative, extraneous variables would be difficult to control. The subjects may be exposed to abuse, alcoholism, gender confusions, etc., that may be affecting their self-concept, separate from their involvement in the cross-age mentoring program. Subjects may also fall prey to the concept of social desirability. If the subjects are completing the TSCS while their peers are in the room with them, they may respond according to the perceptions they believe those peers have of them. Subjects may lie on the instrument items, or chose the expected answers. With the implementation of the inconsistent

responding scale of the TSCS versions, this unknown would be reduced and considered when making test interpretations. The unknowns identified may pose a threat to the internal as well as external validity of this study (self-concept variables were not adequately measured and results could not be generalized to the greater school population).

Limitations: The results of this study were found to be useful to school guidance counselors by illustrating the need for cross-age mentoring programs as a part of their general guidance curriculum. These results were used to facilitate, develop, and nurture positive self-concepts among students. The findings of this study represent the importance of cross-age mentoring programs to influence positive self-concepts of students of various ages.

CHAPTER 4

Results

Rate of Response: For the desired fifty-eight student subjects, forty-one students were available for assessment on May 25-26, 2000. The total rate of response was 70.6%. Twenty students in grades one through five involved in the cross-age mentoring program were assessed. That rate of response was 69.0%. Twenty-one students in grades one through five participated in the assessment for a 72.4% rate of response.

Scale of Measurement: The variables assessed by the Tennessee Self-Concept Scales were done so by a Likert scale. This data was in numerical form from 1 (always false) to 5 (always true). For example, the statements on the TSCS looked like: “I don’t always tell the truth,” “I get along well with other people,” and “I’m as smart as I want to be.” The subjects read these statements and responded by filling in the circle with the numerical value given by the Likert scale that corresponded with their level of agreement.

Descriptive Statistics: Three primary variables were assessed by the researcher: the total self-concept score, the conflict self-concept score, and the social self-concept score. Two main groups were examined: those involved in the cross-age mentoring program and those not involved. The results for each group on each variable were calculated in terms of the mean score. A mean score was calculated for total self-concept scale results for both the involved and not involved group. The mean score of the involved group for the

total self-concept scale was 254.6471. The mean score for the not mentored group for the total self-concept scale was determined to be 241.3571. A mean score was calculated for conflict self-concept results for each group: involved- 4.2941 and not involved-20.0714. Finally, a mean score was calculated for the social self-concept results for each group. The mean score of the involved group for the social self-concept scale was 51.1765 and the mean score of the not involved group for the social self-concept scale was 48.7143.

Inferential Statistics: It was hypothesized that cross-age mentoring program involvement is positively related to total self-concept. For this hypothesis, two groups were compared using numerical data (i.e. the mean score of that variable). Thus, a t-Test was utilized to examine that relationship. The t-Test for equality of means result was computed as .177. This result is not statistically significant, as it is not less than or equal to .05. It is concluded from this data that involvement in a cross-age mentoring program is not positively related to total self-concept as measured on the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale: Children's Version. A second hypothesis was that involvement in the cross-age program would be positively related to conflict self-concept. Again, a t-Test was implemented to examine that relationship for significance. The result of the t-Test for equality of means examining this relationship computed .036. This result is less than or equal to .05 and therefore shows statistical significance. Thus, it can be concluded that involvement in a cross-age mentoring program is positively related to conflict self-concept as measured by the Children's Version of the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale. Finally, it was hypothesized that cross-age mentoring program involvement would be positively related to social self-concept. A t-Test was also conducted in this case to

examine the statistical significance of that relationship. The t-Test for equality of means result was determined to be .311. This value is not statistically significant, as it is not less than or equal to .05. This data indicates that involvement in a cross-age mentoring program is not positively related to the measured social self-concept on the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale: Children's Version.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

Discussion

The results of this study were found to be useful to school guidance counselors in terms of implementing a cross-age mentoring program as a part of their guidance curriculum to aid in the teaching of self-esteem among youth in accordance with the Wisconsin Developmental Guidance Model (WDGM) as well as other standards for the guidance counseling profession. This chapter will examine the implications of the tested hypotheses and evaluate the components and design of a possible cross-age mentoring program that could be used in a school setting to meet the WDGM and other criteria of promoting life skills such as self-esteem, working in groups, and conflict resolution. Specific relevant findings pertaining to this study center on the competency of self-esteem and conflict resolution. It was determined by this study that involvement in a cross-age mentoring program showed statistical significance to have a positive influence on self-esteem in conflict-type situations.

The Wisconsin Developmental Guidance Model includes three main domains that umbrella the competencies guidance counselors are recommended to teach students: career/vocational, educational/learning, and personal/social. Self-esteem and conflict resolution may be linked to cross-age mentoring programs while covering various competencies of the WDGM domains pertaining to career/vocational and personal/social aspects.. The study indicated that there is a positive relationship of having self-esteem when faced with conflict and involvement in a cross-age mentoring program. The

WDGM (Wilson, 1992) states that competencies included under the career/vocational domain for elementary-age students are understanding strengths, abilities, and how to learn most effectively and understanding the process of setting meaningful school goals. Student involvement in a cross-age mentoring program would provide the groundwork for guidance counselors to teach these concepts to them. If mentoring relationships allow self-esteem to become evident in terms of helping students realize their potentials, personally and when setting goals, then that self-esteem would also prevail in situations of potential conflict resolution. The cross-age mentoring program examined in this study consisted of consistent, positive, and encouraging relationships between the mentor and the mentee.

The WDGM states that the life skills of exhibiting conflict resolution skills with adults and peers, learning to communicate with peers and adults, exhibiting a positive attitude towards oneself and understanding and respecting the differences among people's cultures, lifestyles, attitudes, and abilities all fall under the umbrella of the personal/social domain. As seen in previous research studies, cross-age mentoring programs can facilitate these characteristics in students. Likewise, this study shows that involvement in cross-age mentoring programs is positively related to conflict-self-esteem which encompasses the very competencies suggested by the personal/social domain of the WDGM.

The Secretary's Commission of Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS competencies) identifies other recommended areas a guidance counselor should include in their developmental program. The second SCANS competency deals with interpersonal skills or how well someone works with others (SCANS, 1992).

Incorporating a cross-age mentoring program into a developmental guidance curriculum would help teach those skills through the positive relationship such involvement has with a student's conflict-self-esteem. More specifically, those SCANS competencies include participating as a member of a team, exercising leadership-communicating ideas to justify a position and responsibly challenging existing procedures and policies, and negotiates-works towards agreements involving an exchange of resources and resolves divergent interests.

Conflict-self-esteem also encompasses the aspects of the ninth SCANS competency of personal qualities. Again, cross-age mentoring programs in this study were found to have a positive relationship on conflict-self-esteem. Competencies included here are individual responsibility, self-esteem and self-management, sociability, and integrity (SCANS, 1992). It is suggested by SCANS that developmental guidance programs include methods to incorporate these competencies into their curriculum and cross-age mentoring programs could aid in that process.

National Standards for School Counselors have also been put forth by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) via their ASCA School Counseling Standards (ASCA, 1998). ASCA (1998) states that the purpose of a counseling program in a school setting is to promote and enhance the learning process within three broad areas: academic development, career development, and personal/social development. Cross-age mentoring programs would be an asset in a guidance counselor's curriculum for teaching the areas of ASCA's personal/social development standards. These standards describe objectives for students to learn that are related to conflict-self-esteem as measured in this study. Standard A of the ASCA personal/social development

standards states, “Students will acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others,” (1998). More specifically, students will develop a positive attitude toward self as a worthy and unique person, distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behaviors, understand the need for self control and how to practice it when conflict arises, demonstrate cooperative behavior in groups, and identify personal strengths and assets (ASCA, 1998). As this study shows, involvement in a cross-age mentoring program would have a positive relationship on these aspects of conflict-self-esteem (i.e. making appropriate decisions when faced with conflict and maintaining a sense of worth when questioned).

Recommendations

Adding a cross-age mentoring program to a developmental guidance curriculum is potentially a very time- and effort-consuming process. However, once implemented and delivered, it can aid a guidance counselor in the task of teaching a positive self-esteem to students. In particular, as this study shows, a cross-age mentor program could have a positive relationship on a student’s conflict-self-esteem. Guidance counselors would then have the opportunity to match at-risk students with a cross-age mentor if it was determined that the student lacked the skills of or had a negative affect towards appropriate conflict-self-esteem. Conflict-self-esteem may seem only like a personal/social aspect of a guidance curriculum, but it can also extend beyond that scope and encompass various aspects of career and educational aspects of a guidance curriculum.

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Appendix A

**Tennessee Self-Concept Scale: Children's Version
Sample Questionnaire**

Child Form
TSCS:2
AutoScore™ Form
 W. H. Fitts, Ph. D. and W. L. Warren, Ph. D.
 Published by
wps WESTERN PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES
Publishers and Distributors

- 1 = Always False
 2 = Mostly False
 3 = Partly False and Partly True
 4 = Mostly True
 5 = Always True
- 1 2 3 4 5 1. I like the way I look.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 2. I have a happy family.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 3. I don't sleep well.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 4. It's hard for me to do what's right.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 5. I know as much as the other children in my class.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 6. I'm happy with who I am.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 7. I don't feel as well as I should.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 8. It's hard for me to be around other people.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 9. I don't do well in school, even when I try.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 10. I really care about my family.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 11. I'm as nice as I should be.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 12. I don't feel happy when I'm with other people.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 13. It's hard for someone to be my friend.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 14. My family doesn't trust me.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 15. My teacher thinks I am smart.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 16. I get along well with other people.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 17. I hate myself.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 18. I'm not the person I would like to be.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 19. I am an honest person.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 20. I feel good most of the time.

- Continue unless you have been instructed to stop at Item 20.**
- 1 2 3 4 5 21. My body is healthy.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 22. I am a decent sort of person.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 23. I'm a cheerful person.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 24. I'm not important at all.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 25. My family will always help me.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 26. I am a friendly person.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 27. Boys like me.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 28. I don't always tell the truth.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 29. I get angry sometimes.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 30. I have lots of aches and pains.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 31. I am a sick person.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 32. Math is hard.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 33. I have a lot of self-control.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 34. I'm not a nice person.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 35. I am not loved by my family.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 36. Girls like me.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 37. I'm mad at the whole world.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 38. Once in a while I think of things too bad to talk about.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 39. Sometimes when I am not feeling well, I get cranky.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 40. I don't want to change the way I look.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 41. I'd like to change some part of my body.

continue on back

- 1 = Always False
 2 = Mostly False
 3 = Partly False and Partly True
 4 = Mostly True
 5 = Always True
- 1 2 3 4 5 42. I think I do the right thing most of the time.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 43. I understand what I read.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 44. I wish I could be more trustworthy.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 45. I know my family as well as I should.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 46. I'm as friendly as I want to be.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 47. I do not like everyone I know.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 48. Sometimes I laugh at a dirty joke.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 49. I shouldn't tell so many lies.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 50. I'm as smart as I want to be.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 51. I should love my family more.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 52. I'm not as smart as the other children in my class.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 53. It's easy for me to do a good job on my homework.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 54. I am a bad person.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 55. I should get along better with other people.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 56. Sometimes I feel like swearing.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 57. I take good care of my body.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 58. I'm often clumsy.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 59. I sometimes do very bad things.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 60. I do things without thinking about them first.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 61. I try to be fair with my friends and family.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 62. I do what my parents want me to do, even when I don't agree with them.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 63. I don't forgive other people easily.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 64. I'm not good at sports and games.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 65. I sometimes cheat.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 66. I solve my problems very easily.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 67. I fight with my family.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 68. I don't act the way my family thinks I should.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 69. Most people are good.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 70. I find it hard to talk with people I don't know.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 71. Sometimes I put off until tomorrow what I ought to do today.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 72. I know the answers to questions the teacher asks.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 73. I do what's right most of the time.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 74. I'm happy with the way I treat other people.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 75. I'll never be as smart as other people.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 76. I like to do math.

Appendix B

Cover Letter and Sample Informed Consent Form Distributed to Parents or Guardians of Potential Subjects

Dear Parent or Guardian,

May 10, 2000

My name is Jenny Kramschuster. I am a practicum student in the guidance department at Southview Elementary School in Chippewa Falls. In compliance with the master's degree requirements for the K-12 School Guidance and Counseling program, at UW-Stout, I am required to write a thesis paper. My area of interest is the self-concept of today's students, and how we, as parents, educators, and community members can provide services to facilitate their development of a positive self-concept. The services I am examining are the cross-age mentoring program and the "Reading Buddy" program at Southview Elementary and the implication involvement in these programs has on self-concept.

Your child has been randomly selected to participate in this investigation. I will not have prior knowledge regarding their involvement in either of the above mentioned programs. I am asking your permission to allow your child to participate. Your child's participation involves completing a brief questionnaire for approximately 20 minutes on Thursday, May 25. The school guidance counselor and I will supervise the administration of the questionnaire. Your child will turn in their responses for computerized scoring. Following scoring, I will send a brief, informational summary to you regarding the results. If it is noted that there are any areas of concern, they can be discussed with me, the school counselor or outside referral sources when deemed appropriate by the school counselor.

There are **NO RISKS** involved in this investigation for your child. **Even though we know who participated in this study, the responses are kept strictly CONFIDENTIAL, with the exception of the information we will send home to you!** Your child has the freedom to withdraw from participation at any time. Please read the attached consent form and respond accordingly. Please have your child return the signed form to the office by **Tuesday, May 23**. Your child's participation will emphasize the need for the positive benefits these programs offer.

If you have any questions or concerns, you may contact any of the following:

Dr. Ted Knous
Chair, UW-Stout Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
in Research
11 HH, UW-Stout
Menomonie, WI 54751
(715) 232-1126

Prof. Rod Crist
Academic Professor and Thesis Research Advisor
UW-Stout
Menomonie, WI 54751
(715) 232-1343 or cristro@uwstout.edu

Jenny Kramschuster
School Guidance Counseling Master's Candidate
(715) 568-5431 or kramsjenny@yahoo.com

Thank you very much for your time.

Sincerely,

Jenny Kramschuster
K-12 School Guidance Counseling Master's Candidate

I, _____,
Do _____ do not _____ (check one), agree to allow my child,
_____, to participate in this study about self-
concept.

Parent/Guardian
Signature _____
Date _____

Child's
Signature _____
Date _____