

Educator Perceptions and Experiences of Social Emotional Learning in the Upper School Mentorship Block At Currey Ingram Academy

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Executive Summary

During the 2018-2019 school year, Currey Ingram Academy Upper School implemented a program called RULER, or **R**ecognizing emotions in others, **U**nderstanding emotions, **L**abeling emotions, **E**xpressing emotions, and **R**egulating emotions. The first year of implementation was with faculty only and the first full year of implementation for students was the 2019-20. Developed by Yale University scientists and purported to improve emotional intelligence, the program lists the five key skills above as important in building emotional intelligence in students. Additionally, there are benefits for educators and administrators. The creators of RULER believe when implemented correctly and consistently, there is a marked improvement in leader and teacher effectiveness and retention, less anxiety and stress and more quality relationship building (Hagelskamp, 2013), (Martinez, 2016).

The upper school administrators and teachers worked collaboratively to develop a plan for implementation of RULER, specifically tailored for the high school students. The plan included assigning mentor teachers for small groups of students and developing a block schedule to accommodate the instructional time necessary for the new curriculum. Mentor teachers were asked to use RULER and were given freedom in how they taught, adjusted, and assessed the lessons. Research suggests that a social emotional learning curriculum has the potential to positively affect students' academic progress and peer relationships (Brackett, 2016). Social emotional learning programming focuses on developing skills such as recognizing emotions of self and others, regulating one's own emotions, respecting others, resolving conflicts peacefully and communicating effectively (Dymnicki, 2013). Findings from the current literature on social emotional learning programs shows when implemented appropriately in K-12 school systems, there are significant positive effects for students and educators (Durlak et al, 2011).

The purpose of this research study was to examine the phenomenon of mentorship as well as how the RULER curriculum is utilized within the mentorship block at Currey Ingram Academy. I sought to understand how the implementation of a specific block of time devoted to teaching social emotional learning to upper students in grades 9-12 contributes to a positive relationship between teachers and students as well as the views the teachers have about the mentoring experience.

Key Findings

Research Question 1. How does the mentoring block contribute to building teacher-student relationships and social emotional learning?

Finding 1.1: Trusting Teacher-Student Partnerships Are Built Through Individualized Care and Support

Finding 1.2: Social-Emotional Learning Is Accomplished Through Guidance in Planning, Self-Advocacy, and Emotion Regulation

Research Question 2. What are the perceptions and experiences of teachers surrounding the mentorship block?

Finding 2.1 Relationship-Building Allows Teachers to Assess Students' Individual Support Needs

Finding 2.2 The Flexibility of the RULER Curriculum Allows Teachers to Meet Students' Individual Support Needs

Research Question 3. What opportunities and challenges exist with the implementation of the mentoring block?

Finding 3.1: The Opportunity to Address Teachers' Challenges in Structuring the Mentoring Block

Finding 3.2: The Opportunity to Address the Challenge of Strain on Teachers through Adjustments to Mentoring Group Composition

Recommendations

1) **Training in Mentoring.** Mentor training is important to the success of any mentoring program (MENTOR, 2015). In addressing the need for mentor training that is not solely focused on a SEL program, an initial workshop should be conducted with all mentor teachers. The workshop could be presented in two or more afternoon sessions so that the instructional time is not sacrificed, possibly on Wednesdays when students are dismissed early. The selection of presenters of workshops is important to the overall success of the training. It may be prudent to solicit an expert from Vanderbilt University Peabody College, especially given its close ties and relationships between Vanderbilt and Currey Ingram Academy (CIA). The interactional nature of these workshops, together with opportunities for attendees to contribute to the discussions based on their unique experience could benefit the mentor teachers at CIA. The proposed workshop would serve to enhance the current mentorship block concept by augmenting teachers' mentoring skills and introducing group goal setting in mentoring. This would complement the teaching excellence policy of CIA and fit in with the mission of the school that states their instruction is evidence based for all students.

2) **Restructure Mentorship Block: Mentee Groups** The flexibility needed in structuring mentee groups may pose a challenge since CIA has a small student corps and may have to be grouped based on their developmental stage and needs. Instituting flexibility in the grouping of mentees should also be considered so students can learn to manage their emotions and preferences yet realize that they cannot always change groups without good reason. However, self-advocacy should be encouraged when appropriate. Similarly, students requiring more support during the mentorship block should be encouraged to become less dependent on teacher support. Therefore, teachers should develop instructional competencies such as scaffolding to assist students. Development of instructional competencies can be addressed by Upper School administration selecting appropriate and ongoing professional

development opportunities for teachers. Alternatively, CIA could arrange for an education specialist to provide tailor-made sessions to the faculty on this topic.

3) Restructure Mentorship Block: Schedule. Alternatively, and if feasible, the schedule could be changed to include a class that focuses solely on teaching the RULER curriculum to implement the Social Emotional Learning program. Thus, instead of four thirty- minute sessions per week that a mentor teacher could use the curriculum, there would be a seminar style class for all upper school grade levels devoted to teaching RULER . The upper school already has great flexibility in scheduling, offers multiple elective and explore courses and could likely implement this schedule change with ease. Of note, the upper school currently operates on a block schedule system as well. Evidence in the literature suggests that when implementation integrity is followed, a program can still be successful. In fact, evidence exists that responding or adapting curriculum to fit a specific context is as important as its implementation which is essentially what teachers were already doing with the mentorship block in 2019-2020. Paul LeMahieu (2011) states “What we need is less fidelity of implementation (do exactly what they say to do) and more integrity of implementation (do what matters most and works best while accommodating local needs and circumstances). This idea of integrity in implementation allows for programmatic expression in a manner that remains true to essential empirically warranted ideas while being responsive to varied conditions and contexts.” CIA consistently adapts to the needs of its students and what is best for them as learners, so this recommendation fits their mission.

4) Create a Professional Learning Community. Mentor teachers’ need for ongoing professional development, training and support can be met with instituting a mentorship professional learning community (PLC) which could meet on a regular and ongoing basis (e.g., once a month or every three months). Teachers may find this forum useful to discuss challenges encountered during mentoring blocks and for planning mentoring blocks. In addition, ongoing professional development can be targeted to prevent stagnation and stereotypical approaches to mentoring of students. The mentorship PLC will serve to provide peer support to mentor teachers which will mitigate teacher feelings of isolation regarding their mentoring role. In the 1990s, the National Mentoring Partnership was established (<https://www.mentoring.org/>). The mission of this group, called MENTOR, states "Our mission is to fuel the quantity and quality of mentoring relationships for America's young people and to close the mentoring gap." This group maintains a national database of youth mentoring programs. MENTOR has established a partnership with the University of Massachusetts through which mentoring research is done to further knowledge on mentoring youth. Their publication *The Chronicle of Evidence-Based Mentoring*, provides research findings and serves as a conversational forum for mentors. CIA could participate in MENTOR to further teachers' knowledge of mentorship and receive ongoing development through the e-journal.

Introduction

Organizational Context

Currey Ingram Academy (CIA) is an independent boarding and day school whose mission is to offer unique evidence-based instruction and curriculum that empowers students with learning differences. The school is college preparatory, touts a 100% college acceptance rate and utilizes individualized instruction for every student in the form of Individualized Learning Plans (ILPs). There are approximately three hundred students enrolled at CIA in kindergarten through twelfth grade. Class sizes are small with a teacher-student ratio of 10:1 at the largest. The school is situated on an eighty-three-acre campus in Brentwood, Tennessee, a suburb of Nashville. There are three divisions, lower, middle, and upper school, with forty teachers, that compose CIA. The school receives no governmental funding and relies on tuition, donations, and grants to operate. CIA, formerly the Westminster School of Nashville, has been operating since 1968 (CurreyIngram.org, 2020).

In 2016, CIA upper school leadership began exploring social emotional learning programs, as well as the literature surrounding social emotional learning curriculum, possible methods of implementation, and the evidence from the social emotional learning research. Several frameworks exist for use in the K-12 environment. RULER, or **R**ecognizing emotions in others, **U**nderstanding emotions, **L**abeling emotions, **E**xpressing emotions, and **R**egulating emotions, was identified as one of the programs of interest and a possible fit (Appendix A & B). Developed by Yale University scientists and purported to improve emotional intelligence, the program lists five key skills important in building emotional intelligence in students. Additionally, there are benefits for educators and administrators. The creators of RULER believe when implemented correctly and consistently, there is a marked improvement in leader and teacher effectiveness and retention, less anxiety and stress and more quality relationship building (Hagelskamp, 2013), (Martinez, 2016). Overall, “RULER is an approach to social and emotional learning that teaches emotional intelligence to people of all ages, with the goal of creating a healthier, more equitable, innovative, and compassionate society (Yale RULER Approach Website, 2020). In fact, “There is powerful evidence that social emotional learning, if scaled, could dramatically improve student achievement in schools and a lifetime of outcomes for children that would strengthen education, the economy, and our communities” (Bridgeland, 2013).

In 2017 and 2018, the upper school head, who had researched social emotional learning programs, was trained on site at Yale in the use of the RULER framework. Subsequently, the upper school administrators and leaders were trained in RULER the spring of 2018 at Yale on the program. These individuals returned to CIA as trainers and leaders of the program for other school faculty. The first year of implementation was with faculty only, which for the upper school was in the 2018-19 school year. The first full year of implementation for students was the 2019-20 school year.

The upper school administrators worked collaboratively with division heads to map a plan for implementation of the social emotional learning curriculum, specifically tailored for the high school students. The plan included assigning mentor teachers for small groups of students and developing a block schedule to accommodate the instructional time necessary for the new

curriculum. Mentor teachers were asked to use the RULER curriculum and were given freedom in how they taught, adjusted, and assessed the lessons. Research suggests that social emotional learning curriculum has the potential to positively affect students' academic progress and peer relationships (Brackett, 2016). Social emotional learning programming focuses on developing skills such as recognizing emotions of self and others, regulating one's own emotions, respecting others, resolving conflicts peacefully and communicating effectively (Dymnicki, 2013). Findings from the current literature on social emotional learning programs shows when implemented appropriately in K-12 school systems, there are significant positive effects for students and educators and the quality of classroom organization, and instructional support is improved (Durlak et al, 2011, Hagelskamp, 2013).

Thus, a mentoring block was inserted into the upper school schedule, it occurs four days a week on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday and is thirty minutes in duration. The 2019-2020 academic schedule changed from the previous year where one thirty-minute block per week was employed. During the mentoring block, teachers encourage students to seek assistance with issues they are facing, help devise organization strategies, construct emails to content area teachers requesting clarification and set personal and academic goals. Additionally, the RULER curriculum lessons are utilized during this block of designated mentoring time. The school website states that "Each student is assigned a faculty mentor who they meet with four times per week. Mentors serve as role models, advocates, and motivators whose presence and counsel serves to encourage students to reach their full potential. Research shows that mentoring is a powerful tool that can have a positive impact on a student's academic, social and personal development" (DuBois et al, 2002).

Research questions

The purpose of this research study is to examine the phenomenon of mentorship as well as how the RULER curriculum is utilized within the mentorship block at Currey Ingram Academy. I seek to understand how the implementation of a specific block of time devoted to mentoring and teaching social emotional learning upper to students in grades 9-12 contributes to a positive relationship between teachers and students as well as the view the teachers have about the mentoring experience. Specifically, the three main questions I will answer are as follows:

- 1) How does the mentorship block contribute to building teacher-student relationships and social emotional learning?
- 2) What are the perceptions and experiences of teachers and surrounding the mentorship block and the RULER curriculum?
- 3) What opportunities and challenges exist with the implementation of the mentorship block?

Social Emotional Learning

The importance of a social emotional curriculum and its effects on students cannot be overstated. There are numerous studies that suggest there are significant positive effects on student's mental health, social awareness, and academics (Brackett, 2016, Cramer, 2016, Durlak, 2011, Payton,

2008). Mahoney et al (2018) conducted a meta-analysis from 213 school-based studies and found two major findings:

“Compared to control students, students participating in SEL programs showed significantly more positive outcomes with respect to enhanced SEL skills, attitudes, positive social behavior, and academic performance, and significantly lower levels of conduct problems and emotional distress. The higher academic performance of SEL program participants translated into an 11 percentile-point gain in achievement, suggesting that SEL programs tend to bolster, rather than detract from, students’ academic success.”

The topic of social emotional learning has become more prevalent in the literature and the lessons it teaches is sought after by educators, parents, and the community. However, there is a paucity of literature surrounding the specific experiences and perceptions of educators and administrators who mainly serve students with learning differences and have implemented a similar type of curriculum in this setting and region (Marchesi et al, 2012). This group of individuals, administrators, teachers, and students at CIA, have unique and powerful insights to share. Additionally, the literature is clear about the need for social emotional learning, yet there is a lack of evidence surrounding how to implement this curriculum in specific contexts, like CIA, a small independent school that focuses on learning differences.

Social emotional learning has been “strongly linked to moral, cognitive, and spiritual development as well academic success” (Smith, 2012). This phenomenon persists with culturally and linguistically diverse groups as well (Cramer, 2016). Besides doing better academically, students who acquire and use social emotional learning skills have significant positive effects and are more likely to get along well with others, be better prepared for life, and be more likely to give back to their communities than those students who have not had exposure and training in social emotional learning skills (DePaoli, 2018, Mahoney et al, 2018). Children who develop positive social emotional learning skills as students also have the potential for carrying the acquired knowledge into college and the workforce, as adults (Durlak et al, 2011, Lechner, 2017). There has been an increasing awareness among educators, parents, and the general public that social emotional learning is a useful and needed skill set for the workplace. In a 2006 study conducted by The Partnership for 21st Century Skills, four hundred human resource professionals were asked to list the top twenty skills they looked for in employees. The top five cited for high school graduates were as follows: professionalism, collaboration, oral communication, social responsibility and reading comprehension (Castner-Lotto, 2006). This report spurred a public call for action and a greater sense of urgency for creation and implementation of social emotional learning curriculum to prepare our youth for success in the workforce and life.

Conceptual Framework

The gap between evidence (science) and practice (implementation) remains an issue for K-12 educators and administrators. Evidence based research is slow to be applied in school settings for a variety of reasons such as lack of resources, lack of support, insufficient knowledge, poor consistency or even apathy (Farley-Ripple, 2018). Implementation science, the study of integration of research into practice, can be utilized as a framework for measuring the fidelity and success of educational initiatives and programs. Flaspohler et al. (2008) and Active Implementation Framework (AIF) (Fixsen et al., 2013, Metz & Bartley, 2015) highlight the importance of infrastructure as being essential to effective implementation of targeted programs. AIF emphasizes the need for “feedback loops” such as the Plan-Do-Study-Act cycle (Deming, 1986, Shewhart, 1931) as a means to achieve success at a system or organizational level. Implementation science literature is clear, stating successful and sustainable implementation is a process and is accomplished in stages and with clear “common features” (Damschroder, Aron, Keith, Kirsh, Alexander, & Lowery, 2009, Durlak & DuPre, 2008, Meyers, Durlak, & Wandersman, 2012). The capacity to initiate and install a program of study, like RULER, within the mentoring block requires knowledge, planning, infrastructure, and motivation.

Methods

To explore implementation of the mentoring block, I utilized interviews, observations, and a survey of eleven participating mentor teachers. Prior to collecting data or having discussions with teachers about my research project, goals, and questions, I gained permission from Dr. Jane Hannah, the head of the upper school, who emailed mentor teachers asking for volunteers (Appendix C) and created a schedule for me to visit CIA. Participation in the study was voluntary. In order to obtain a comprehensive view of structure, functions, and interactions in the mentorship block within the upper school at CIA, a variety of data collection methods were utilized and are as follows: mentorship block classroom observation (Appendix D), semi-structured interviews (Appendix E), and an electronic survey created and deployed using REDCap (Appendix F). My target population of study was upper school teachers who serve as mentors. There are fifteen mentor teachers in the upper school. My goal was to speak with and survey each of them, record conversations and insights when appropriate and permitted, observe each teachers’ mentor session once and send an anonymous survey to the group in order to glean any uncovered or sensitive thoughts and comments mentors were not comfortable speaking aloud. During December 2019 and January of 2020, ten of the fifteen teachers allowed me to interview them, eleven permitted me to observe their mentorship classroom and ten answered the REDCap survey (see Table 1 for survey respondents demographic information). Overall, a core group of eleven mentor teachers, of fifteen teachers in the upper school, participated in at least two forms of data collection. Data collected was stored on a secure laptop and within the REDCap database (Harris et al., 2009).

Table 1

Participant Demographics-REDCap

N=10

Table 1: Participants Demographics			
	Female (4)	Male (6)	
Years of Experience			
0-5	0	2	
6-15	3	1	
16+	1	3	
Education			
Bachelor's Degree	2	3	
Master's Degree	0	3	
Ph.D., Ed.S, Ed.D	2	0	

Data were collected through one-to-one interviews with teachers and researcher observations. Observations included a qualitative component consisting of open-ended fields to enter observations related to four general topics related to emotional support (i.e., positive climate, negative climate, teacher sensitivity, and regard for adolescent perspectives) and a quantitative component consisting of Likert-like items for rating specific factors associated with the same four emotional support headings. The observation tool was adapted from the CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System) framework developed by Hamre et al. (2012).

Quantitative data from closed-ended observation items were compiled in an Excel spreadsheet and analyzed using descriptive statistics. The 15 items were scored on a seven-level scale, with 1 indicating the lowest level of emotional support and seven indicating the highest level of emotional support. Items 12 through 15, under the heading ‘negative climate,’ were scored on a reverse scale, with lower scores for negative climate corresponding to higher scores for emotional support. The lowest possible score across the 15 items was 15 points, indicating that the teacher was providing the lowest level of emotional support. The highest possible score across the 15 items was 105, indicating that the teacher was providing the highest level of emotional support.

On average, participants provided a very high level of emotional support (6.4 out of 7) to their students across all four domains. The domain in which average scores across the 11 observation participants were lowest was ‘regard for adolescent perspectives,’ although scores still indicated that participants on average provided a high level of emotional support across all four components of this domain. The highest average score across the 11 observation participants was in the domain ‘teacher sensitivity,’ indicating that this was the domain in which participants were strongest, on average, at providing emotional support to their students.

Qualitative data from individual teachers' interviews, open-ended observation notes and open-ended survey responses were transcribed and imported into NVivo 12 computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software for inductive, thematic analysis. The six-step procedure recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006) was used. The first step of the analysis involved rereading the transcripts of the interviews and open-ended observation notes in full to regain familiarity with them. In the second step, the data were coded. Coding involved assigning excerpts from the transcripts that expressed a meaning relevant to answering a research question to a node in NVivo. When different excerpts expressed similar, relevant meanings, they were assigned to the same node. Each node represented a code. The codes were labeled with a short phrase to describe the data assigned to them. A total of 166 transcript excerpts were grouped into 26 codes. Table 2 is a list of the codes that emerged during the second step of the analysis.

Table 2
Data Analysis Codes

Code (listed alphabetically)	<i>n</i> of participants contributing (<i>N</i> =11)	<i>n</i> of transcript excerpts included
Assessing individual student needs	1	1
Building relationships with peers	5	5
Continuity of connections through years	3	3
Curriculum connects to student needs	7	17
Dedicated time for personal and academic guidance	8	25
Differentiating classroom and mentoring relationships	6	9
Finding time to meet with each individual student	1	1
Flexible nature of curriculum both strength and challenge	2	3
Having a book-end structure	1	1
Importance of consistency of contact	5	5
Importance of listening and trust	6	8
Managing a larger student group	1	1
Mentor goals and obligations	4	6
Mentor maintaining consistency	1	1
Mentorship block has a three-fold purpose	4	10
More can be done with executive functioning skills	1	1
Navigating student personality conflicts	3	4
Observing gender differences and student needs	2	2
Office hours and building student responsibility	6	8

Perceptions of planning and teaching with RULER curriculum	3	6
Positive perceptions of program changes	5	6
Reflecting on training and PD	3	3
RULER curriculum builds SEL skills	7	13
Self-advocacy and preparation for life beyond high school	4	6
Stress management and executive functioning	4	10
Success through flexibility and teacher reflexivity	6	11

In the third step of the analysis, the data were themed by grouping codes that had similar meanings or that had meanings that converged on an overarching theme. The 26 codes were grouped into six major themes in this step by clustering the nodes that represented them under parent nodes, which represented the themes. The fourth step of the analysis involved reviewing and refining the themes to ensure they accurately represented patterns in participants' responses. In the fifth step, the themes were named and defined. The sixth step consisted of creating the following presentation of the findings. Table 3 indicates how the codes from the second step of the analysis were grouped to form the major themes developed and finalized in the third through fifth steps.

Table 3
Data Analysis Themes and Codes

Theme/Finding Code grouped to form theme (listed alphabetically)	<i>n</i> of participants contributing (<i>N</i> =11)	<i>n</i> of transcript excerpts included
Theme 1/Finding 1.1: Trusting teacher-student partnerships are built through individualized care and support	11	52
Building relationships with peers		
Continuity of connections through years		
Dedicated time for personal and academic guidance		
Differentiating classroom and mentoring relationships		
Importance of listening and trust		
Observing gender differences and student needs		
Theme 2/Finding 1.2: Social-emotional learning is accomplished through guidance in planning, self-advocacy, and emotion regulation	11	53

Mentorship block has a three-fold purpose		
Office hours and building student responsibility		
Perceptions of planning and teaching with RULER curriculum		
RULER curriculum builds SEL skills		
Self-advocacy and preparation for life beyond high school		
Stress management and executive functioning		
Theme 3/Finding 2.1 Relationship-building allows teachers to assess students’ individual support needs	11	20
Importance of consistency of contact		
Mentor goals and obligations		
Positive perceptions of program changes		
Reflecting on training and PD		
Theme 4/Finding 2.2 The flexibility of the RULER curriculum allows teachers to meet students’ individual support needs	11	28
Curriculum connects to student needs		
Success through flexibility and teacher reflexivity		
Theme 5/Finding 3.1: The opportunity to address teachers’ challenges in structuring the mentoring block	4	5
Finding time to meet with each individual student		
Flexible nature of curriculum both strength and challenge		
Having a book-end structure		
More can be done with executive functioning skills		
Theme 6/ Finding 3.2: The opportunity to address the challenge of strain on teachers through adjustments to mentoring group composition	6	7
Assessing individual student needs		
Managing a larger student group		
Mentor maintaining consistency		
Navigating student personality conflicts		

The presentation of the organization analysis, data, and evidence is listed by research question. The discussion of answers to each research question is grouped by finding. For each finding, evidence is provided with direct quotations from the interviews, observation notes, and survey responses.

Findings

Research Question 1. How does the mentoring block contribute to building teacher-student relationships and social emotional learning?

Finding 1.1: Trusting Teacher-Student Partnerships Are Built Through Individualized Care and Support

Trusting teacher-student partnerships were built and maintained during the mentoring block. Teachers built trust by learning and caring about each student’s social, emotional, and academic needs, and by using the time to offer students individualized guidance and support to meet those needs. This finding reinforces the idea of bottom up implementation of the RULER program. The administration of CIA gave some authority to teachers to modify or change the program lessons to suit their context and this is a motivating factor that increases their will to use the curriculum when appropriate (Rowan, 1990). So, teachers were not forced to use RULER lessons in a prescribed way or even during all mentorship block classes. Instead, they were given leeway to gauge whether they could use the mentoring block time period to build rapport, have informal conversations or encourage students using a modified framework of a RULER theme or concept. When students perceived that their mentors were invested in promoting their best interests, they reciprocated with trust and respect for the mentor. This finding was consistent with previous research on implementation science indicating that the capacity to initiate a program of study like RULER (i.e., Recognizing emotions in others, Understanding emotions, Labeling emotions, Expressing emotions, and Regulating emotions) within a mentoring block requires motivation on the part of the teacher (Damschroder, Aron, Keith, Kirsh, Alexander, & Lowery, 2009; Durlak & DuPre, 2008; Meyers, Durlak, & Wandersman, 2012). In this study, teachers’ responses indicated that they were strongly motivated to provide and communicate care and support to their mentees. When asked if the block was structured to facilitate meaningful conversations with their mentees, teachers 100% agreed or strongly agreed.

The mentorship block is structured to facilitate constructive conversations with my mentees			
	female	male	
Strongly Agree	3	5	80%
Agree	1	1	20%

In an interview response, one teacher expressed the purpose of using the mentoring block to communicate sincere care for students and their needs, “I want [students] to know that I care, and that I want them to succeed and to be comfortable to be able to talk to me about anything that could influence their lives positively or negatively.” Another teacher reported that the student-centered nature of the mentoring relationship was based in part on needs assessments conducted

through informal questioning and observations during the mentoring block: “In mentoring, it’s trying to figure out, ‘How am I going to best serve you and your needs? As your mentor, what can I do to help you? How am I going to partner with you?’”

Participants’ expressions of individualized concern were also documented during researcher observations. One teacher was observed following up with a student about a health concern reported during a previous mentoring block, asking, “Did you go to the doctor? I was worried about you.” The student responded that his father, a pediatrician, had examined him. Another teacher was observed providing encouragement to students during the mentoring block while extending an offer of support. The teacher encouraged the mentees by stating, “You guys have all shown that you can do [well on the upcoming midterms].” The teacher then offered support by stating: “As your mentor, I want to check in with you. How are you feeling? Maybe we can share what’s coming up, like map it, so I can help you think about it. I want you to have a plan.”

One of the supports teachers provided during the mentoring block was individualized encouragement and feedback. In an interview response, one teacher reported that support in the form of positive feedback during the mentoring block made students more receptive to support in the form of constructive criticism,

“The more that I can see [my students’] strengths, they gain confidence, they trust me. The feedback I’m giving them is positive. They’re going to be more open. Then, when I do have more constructive kinds of feedback to give them, they’re a little more willing to listen, because they know I’m on their side. They know I see the good things in them.”

A different teacher reported that positive feedback was the primary support their students needed during the mentoring block, “My group this year is very driven. They don’t really need a lot of support from me. They do need someone to give them information, and to give them love and appreciation.”

Teachers also built relationships with their mentees during the mentoring block by facilitating fun activities to promote bonding and trust. One teacher cited examples of such activities, “We do fun things. I let them get their phone out. We’ve done little dances. It’s just to build that relationship, that more personal relationship you have with [mentees]. We’ve taken goofy pictures together.”

The relationship teachers built with students during the mentoring block was personal, but teachers distinguished it both from the teacher-student relationship in the classroom and from informal friendship. One teacher described the mentoring relationship as differing from friendship because the teacher maintained an asymmetrical authority, “This isn’t a friendship. This is more of a guiding, while maintaining that boundary of I’m still your teacher, I’m still the authority.” Another participant distinguished the mentoring relationship from the relationship teachers had with students in the classroom by suggesting that the mentoring relationship involved more input from the student, while the classroom relationship was more exclusively top-down, “In the classroom it’s more hierarchical, versus in mentorship more partnership.”

The trusting teacher-student partnerships built during the mentoring block through individualized care and support also differed from teacher-student relationships in the classroom because they

had a different purpose. While the teacher’s relationship to students in the classroom was a medium for subject-matter instruction, the purpose of cultivating the mentoring relationship was to establish trust as a basis for fostering students’ growth across all developmental domains, as one teacher stated in an interview response, “When you develop that rapport with students, it’s just much easier to share information with them and then to help them develop and grow, because you have that relationship.” The same teacher added that a personal relationship based on trust made students more receptive to guidance, “I think trust is a big part of that [mentoring] relationship. [Students are] more inherently willing to listen and understand and trust you and trust the things that you have to say.”

Table 4 displays the CLASS data as a summary of scores from eleven teachers within each of the four emotional support domains. In general, teachers provided a positive classroom climate, were sensitive and aware of students’ needs and were flexible and supportive of the adolescent perspective.

Table 4: CLASS Summary

Emotional support domain (max. possible score)	Lowest score (N=11)	Highest score (N=11)	Average Score (N=11)
Domain component (max. possible score = 7 for all)			
Positive climate (max. = 28)	20	28	25.5
Relationships	5	7	6.4
Positive Affect	4	7	6.0
Positive communications	5	7	6.5
Respect	5	7	6.6
Teacher sensitivity (max. = 28)	23	28	26.3
Awareness	5	7	6.7
Responsiveness to academic and social/emotional needs and cues	5	7	6.5
Effectiveness in addressing problems	6	7	6.6
Student Comfort	5	7	6.4
Regard for adolescent perspectives (max. = 28)	20	27	23.6
Flexibility	5	7	5.9
Connections to current life	5	7	6.6
Support for student autonomy and leadership	5	7	5.7
Meaningful peer interactions	5	7	5.4
Negative climate (max. = 21 on reverse scale)	12	21	20.2
Negative affect	2	7	6.5
Punitive Control	7	7	7.0
Disrespect	3	7	6.6
Average for all domain components	4.8	7	6.4

Finding 1.2: Social-Emotional Learning Is Accomplished Through Guidance in Planning, Self-Advocacy, and Emotion Regulation

Participants used the mentoring block to build social emotional learning by providing their mentees with guidance on planning, self-advocacy, and emotion regulation. Researchers have found that social emotional learning curriculum has the potential to positively affect students’ academic progress and peer relationships (Brackett, 2016). Social emotional learning programming is focused on developing skills such as recognizing emotions of self and others, regulating one’s own emotions, respecting others, resolving conflicts peacefully, and communicating effectively (Dymnicki, 2013). Findings from the literature have indicated when social emotional programs are implemented appropriately in K-12 school systems, there are significant, positive effects for students and educators (Durlak et al, 2011). Additionally, it should be noted that the implementation of the RULER program in CIA’s context followed the idea of implementation integrity which accounts for “programmatically expression in a manner that remains true to essential empirically warranted ideas while being responsive to varied conditions and contexts” (LeMahieu, 2011). CIA’s administration allowed mentors to find their own balance of teaching RULER lessons and providing supports that fit the context of their individual classroom. Therefore, the organizational capacity at CIA is strongly suited to support mentor teachers to navigate implementation of RULER. This capacity considers the school’s history, leadership structure and open lines of communication that aligns with CIA’s vision and mission (Tichnor-Wagner, 2018). Finding 1.2 in this study was aligned with previous research on implementation science, which indicated the capacity to initiate a program of study like RULER within a mentoring block requires knowledge and planning on the part of the teacher (Damschroder, Aron, Keith, Kirsh, Alexander, & Lowery, 2009; Durlak & DuPre, 2008; Meyers, Durlak, & Wandersman, 2012). Within the findings of this study, teachers reported their knowledge of social emotional learning and their delivery of that knowledge to students through planned, structured lessons were critical for success of social emotional learning curriculum. When asked via REDCap survey, 100% of participants responded that they are adequately prepared to serve as mentors. Likewise, 100% of the teachers reported they know what is expected of them during the mentorship block as well.

I am adequately prepared to serve as a mentor to my mentees			
	Female	Male	
Strongly Agree	3	3	60%
Agree	1	3	40%
I understand what is expected of me during mentorship block			
Strongly Agree	3	4	50%
Agree	1	2	50%

One teacher stated in an interview response that one purpose of the mentoring block was to, “Teach necessary skills and strategies that maybe [students] don’t get in the classroom.” In a questionnaire response, another teacher described the mentoring block as a time to foster social emotional learning through discussions of, “Topics like anxiety, multitasking strategies, bullying, appropriate relationships, alcohol/drugs, etc.,” and by using the thirty minute block of time, “To

help monitor students' school performance so no one is falling behind or doing poorly in their classes," and, "To work on strategies to assist in executive functioning."

To assist in planning, teachers assessed student needs by inquiring about academic progress and engaging students in reviewing their grades and scores through the MyCIA portal, which holds their academic records. One teacher was observed during the mentoring block instructing students to access their grades through the school's network to identify classes in which they might need support, with the teacher telling the mentees, "Everyone, log in to My CIA. Look for your lowest grade first and let me know who that teacher is. Click hide/show, click on that. If it still doesn't work, tell me . . . If you have a grade under 80, I'm going to encourage you to visit with the teacher for office hours." A different teacher reported in an interview response that during the mentoring block, individual students were asked questions such as, "I'm seeing that you're maybe struggling on this grade here. What's going on in that class? Do I need to reach out to that teacher?"

When teachers had assessed a student's academic needs, they sometimes assisted the students, not by intervening directly, but by coaching the student in appropriate self-advocacy skills. One teacher was observed during the mentoring block instructing a student to speak to the teacher of a class in which the student needed support, saying, "I think you need to check in with [the content instructor] about the debate, sounds like you might need some clarity." The mentoring teacher then signed the student up for a meeting with the content area teacher and walked the student to the other teacher's room. Another teacher stated during an interview that building students' self-advocacy skills was a conscious goal of mentoring block activities, so students would know how to obtain the supports they needed when they left CIA and entered college, "[Students] struggle with self-advocacy. That's one thing that we really pride ourselves at doing, is building that, so when they go off to college, they have no problem telling their instructors, 'This is my learning difference, and this is what I need.'"

Participants reported that they applied RULER during the mentoring block to assist students with executive functioning. One teacher expressed in an interview response the reason why supporting social emotional learning by using RULER during the mentoring block was a high priority, "A lot of our kids, they don't know how to express their feelings, or they don't even know that they're having those feelings. They may just be a jumbled mess inside." Some teachers used the mentoring block to deliver planned lessons to their mentees that emphasized different aspects of RULER and delivered knowledge of strategies for maintaining executive functioning. In a questionnaire response, one teacher stated RULER is used to support social emotional learning during the mentoring block, "It allows students to practice ways to regulate emotions and stress, which can facilitate better success at school."

One teacher was observed conducting a planned exercise to assist students in labeling and expressing emotions, saying to the mentees, "Think about where you are in our mood meter, high energy, high pleasantness, cheerful." The teacher showed the mentees the mood meter (Appendix A) and the zones for each quadrant, saying, "Blue, low energy. Sometimes we feel this way if we are feeling down. Today, I think I'm cheerful and focused today, that's how I feel. High energy, high pleasantness." Another teacher was observed giving examples of emotion regulation strategies to students during the mentoring block, "We have a problem. We recognize we have a mad or sad feeling. What can you do? Think of something relaxing."

Positive self-talk. Positive reappraisal, reframing the situation so we put it in a more positive light. You can distract yourself. Talking to a friend to get your mind off it. Physical space, like get away for a minute.”

One teacher reported in an interview response that mentees were led through exercises to support executive functioning when triggers were encountered, stating, “[Students] had to circle the values that are most important to them and underline them and then think about how they wanted people to see them, what they want to achieve in relationships or in their life, and then what their best self looks like.” After students defined their values and worked toward defining their conception of their best self, the mentor led them through an exercise in which they engaged with a trigger through art and then activated the conception of the best self as an emotion regulation strategy, “We did artwork about what triggers us, and then we have to stop and see our best self. We recognize what happens to our bodies when we are triggered, and then we stop.” (Appendix B)

Research Question 2. What are the perceptions and experiences of teachers surrounding the mentorship block?

Two findings emerged during analysis to answer the question of how teachers perceive and experience the mentorship block. Finding 2.1 indicated that relationship-building allows teachers to assess students’ individual support needs. Finding 2.2 indicated that the flexibility of the RULER curriculum allows teachers to meet students’ individual support needs. The following subsections are discussions of these findings.

Finding 2.1 Relationship-Building Allows Teachers to Assess Students’ Individual Support Needs

From the REDCap survey and teacher interviews, data showed that the eleven participants expressed positive perceptions of the mentorship block. They favorably compared the mentorship program during the 2019-2020 academic year, during which a thirty minute block of time was dedicated to mentoring on four days each week, to the program during the 2018-2019 academic year, during which one thirty minute block of time was allocated to mentoring per week. Participants expressed that meeting with mentees four times per week enabled them to build strong relationships with students.

One teacher stated in an interview response that having a consistent mentor and a dedicated block of time to meet almost daily provided students with a sense of stability and also a perception that they always had a starting point, the mentor and the mentoring block, when they needed support, “You can maintain that relationship of seeing them every day. They know this is part of their routine . . . the mentor is that consistent staple, and they know they can go to that person for any question.” Another participant expressed a positive perception of the allocation of four mentoring blocks per week in stating, “I really like that we spend four days a week touching base with our mentees. I feel like I have a bigger impact than, say, last year, where it was just one day that I saw them.” The participant said meeting with students frequently was important because, “[Students] get to know you a little better. I think that’s important. I think it makes a lasting impact on students of this age when they develop a strong bond with a successful adult.”

A mentoring block schedule that enabled teachers to get to know students on a personal basis was beneficial in part because it created a level of comfort that facilitated discussion of potentially sensitive topics, as one teacher stated, “Last year, we had mentoring much less, and I didn’t get that relationship piece. It felt uncomfortable trying to bridge into some of these more difficult concepts when we didn’t have that time to develop that relationship.” A second benefit of a mentoring schedule that enabled teachers to build close relationships with students was teachers were better able to observe, assess, and meet the needs of their mentees. One teacher reported getting to know students through the mentorship block allowed for recognition of deviations from usual moods and behaviors, “I had a student that was having a bad day. I was able to read that in that person. This was in the mentoring setting, and I said, ‘Are you okay? You don’t seem like yourself. You seem stressed.’” Another teacher reported assessing the needs of familiar students allowed for full advantage to be taken of the flexibility of the mentorship, “I try to read the room. Is this a day where they need a gentle push on their academics, or is this a day where they need to relax? Mentoring is a versatile space in which either can happen.” As one teacher stated, the instruction and guidance provided during the mentoring block was often tailored to meet students’ individual support needs, on the basis of the teacher’s familiarity with the mentees, “It’s very important to know where [students are] at when they come in. Is this the right day to do RULER, or is this the day to just hear about their weekend?”

Finding 2.2 The Flexibility of the RULER Curriculum Allows Teachers to Meet Students’ Individual Support Needs

Teachers spoke favorably of the RULER curriculum and particularly of the flexibility of the instruction, which allowed teachers to adapt preplanned lessons to meet the individual support needs of specific students. Participants expressed positive perceptions of the flexibility of the mentoring program, in which they exercised broad discretion in deciding which supports and instructions to offer their mentees each day. One teacher stated, “We all have our own personalities and ways of connecting to the kids. The way we’ve got it set up, there’s a lot of teacher discretion. We can shape it in a way that is genuine and authentic.”

When teachers decided a RULER lesson would be the most beneficial way to use the mentoring block, the lessons were flexible enough to be tailored to students’ specific needs, as one teacher stated, “Within a lesson, you can pick certain activities to use . . . The teacher, depending on the students, can pick and choose what to do. Sometimes, too, things come up that we need time to talk about.” Picking and choosing which lesson elements to present to students could be based on the mentor’s assessment of students’ needs, as well as on the mentors’ assessment of students’ readiness to assimilate the material, another teacher stated, “There’s some things [in RULER] I don’t think the students would get or they’re not ready for . . . I just omit things and add things that I think might work better.” Mentor teachers reported that the mentorship block was a valuable use of time, with 9 of 10 respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing. One distinction to note in the chart below is when mentor teachers were asked about alternative uses for the block. Of 10 mentors, 7 believe the time devoted to the block is useful while 3 chose to be neutral in their opinion, neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

The mentorship block is valuable use of instructional time			
	female	male	
Strongly Agree	2	5	70%
Agree	1	1	20%
Neutral	1	0	10%
Time devoted to the mentorship block would be better used in other ways.			
Strongly Disagree	1	3	40%
Disagree	1	2	30%
Neutral	2	1	30%

Research Question 3. What opportunities and challenges exist with the implementation of the mentoring block?

Two findings emerged during analysis to answer the third research question. Finding 3.1 indicated that there are opportunities to address the challenge of putting mentoring time to optimal use through additional structure and support for mentors. Finding 3.2 indicated that there is an opportunity to address the challenges of mentor strain and wasting of mentoring time by optimizing group compositions. The literature suggests that certain conditions within a context should be present for successful implementation of a prescribed program or at least to what extent a program is implemented. These include will, capacity, motivation, knowledge, and commitment. Therefore, if will of mentor teachers exists to implement the RULER program, it is essential that capacity also be present. Capacity in this finding is a time component i.e.. Planning time, ongoing support (Tichnor-Wagner, 2018). Competing demands for time in a mentor teachers schedule was noted in Finding 3.1.

Finding 3.1: The Opportunity to Address Teachers’ Challenges in Structuring the Mentoring Block

Participants described the flexibility of the mentoring program as beneficial in enabling them to meet students’ individual support needs, but when they were asked to discuss the challenges they experienced as mentors, five of them reported that they found it challenging to put the two weekly hours of mentoring time to productive use. One teacher acknowledged that the flexibility of the mentorship was beneficial for students but challenging for teachers:

The biggest challenge is also, perhaps, one of the biggest strengths, which is just the flexibility of it. There's a lot of oil in this machine. In years past, it was completely unstructured, which was challenging. The curriculum was implemented in part to remove that anxiety around what to do during this time. Teachers felt uncertain as to how to approach it. The curriculum provides a structure. It's there, but what we do on any given day is ultimately up to us. That can be challenging.

Participants did not want to eliminate flexibility through rigid structuring of the mentoring block, but they offered four suggestions for ways in which teachers could be assisted in consistency using the time in ways that benefitted students. One teacher suggested in a survey

response that teachers could use mentoring blocks more productively if they had more dedicated planning time to customize lessons and activities, stating that mentors would benefit from: “More planning time to go along with the responsibility, info on how to adjust it to meet needs of higher-need students (customizing it to specific students/groups).” Another teacher suggested in a questionnaire response that additional guidance for mentors would help them to optimize their use of the mentoring block: “The school counselor could provide activities/lessons that mentors could use with the students.”

One teacher suggested that the way in which mentoring time is allocated during the school day can make the time easier or harder for teachers to use, and that a bookend structure with mentoring at the beginning and the end of the day would help teachers focus the time on immediate support needs: “It would be nice to have mentoring for 10 minutes at the start of the day to look at the day's schedule, what they will need for each class, and then again at the end of the day to make a to-do list of homework and prioritize their time after school.” Another teacher suggested that frequent mentoring time was more beneficial toward the beginning of the year, when mentors and mentees were focused on building relationships, but that phasing out some of the unstructured mentoring blocks in favor of a more academic focus later in the academic year might be appropriate: “It is a lot of time that we meet. Toward the beginning, you need that time to develop that relationship, [but] I think maybe toward the end of the semester, we could sacrifice bit of mentorship time for more academic office hour time.”

Finding 3.2: The Opportunity to Address the Challenge of Strain on Teachers through Adjustments to Mentoring Group Composition

Participants reported two challenges associated with the composition of mentees assigned to them. The first challenge was that two or more students who could not work productively together were sometimes assigned to the same group, with the result that mentoring was frequently disrupted by student-to-student conflicts. The second challenge arose when all students in a mentoring group required a high level of support from the mentor, with the result that the mentor experienced stress and fatigue. Participants suggested that there were opportunities to address these challenges through greater attention to the composition of each mentor's group of mentees.

One teacher said of the effect of incompatible student personalities on the productivity of the mentorship: “One of my groups didn't get along very well. That was, by far, the least productive year in terms of what students got out of mentoring because they were always bickering with one another.” Another teacher said the primary challenge of the mentorship was, “Just the particular mix of students. There's a conflict with a couple of them at times. Then they can be friends, and then there's conflict another day.” To address this challenge, a teacher suggested that mentors should take the initiative in reporting incompatible students to administration in order to have one or more students reassigned: “Maybe you get one or two students that just can't stand each other. At that point, you would go to admin and say, ‘This isn't working for us.’” However, when student-to-student conflicts were manageable, another teacher stated, the cooperation and bonding in the mentoring group often resolved the tension in the relationships: “Over the course of the semester, I do see that they're more comfortable with each other. They're more comfortable sharing things that they feel. I've heard them encouraging one another more. They are forming their little friendships.”

The composition of the mentoring group could also raise challenges for teachers when there was not a balance between higher-needs and lower-needs students. One teacher stated: “Some students need a lot of support, and some need little support. If you’re constantly getting a mentor group every year that needs a lot of support, you can feel exhausted.” Another teacher described an experience of working with a group composed entirely of higher-needs students: “My first year, I had a group that all had lots of missing assignments, and they needed me to crack the whip on them and say, ‘Okay, we’re writing this down, we’re meeting with this teacher.’ I had to do a lot. It’s nice to have a balanced group.” A teacher suggested that the problem of imbalanced mentoring group compositions could be addressed by taking the opportunity to consider student needs and mentor capabilities when assigning students, or “Just thinking about the way they group the kids. We rearranged my group a little bit trying to figure out—they were like, ‘Let’s put some kids together who might have a different set of needs.’”

Discussion

Mentor teachers report positive feelings about mentoring block, and they found the relationship building during this time allows them to understand the students and their needs better. This deeper understanding gives them the opportunity to provide meaningful learning opportunities pertaining to SEL. Mentor teachers have the freedom to structure SEL lessons according to the needs of the students which allows them to decide which learning opportunities should be presented without having to follow a rigid prescribed sequence. The current organization of SEL lessons offers teachers’ discretion regarding the nature of the mentorship classes including completing engaging activities. Flexibility enables the teachers to provide activities that they perceive the students may need most, including fun activities that further serve to build the teacher-student relationship.

Mentor teachers noted some challenges revolving around the structure of the mentoring block, specifically the SEL portion. Although the discretion to decide on the sequence and nature of the classes was beneficial, some participants noted this as a challenge, citing it was still another lesson to prepare. Being flexible regarding the classes benefitted the students but complicated the situation for teachers. Additionally, there is the level of support needed by some students which means they may require more support than others. The varying levels of support needed can complicate the mentoring block for teachers. It is possible that all the students in a mentorship block could require a significant amount of support which makes it harder for teachers to manage the class. In some instances, the composition of students within a classroom were incompatible. Although it is a learning opportunity for students to develop resilience, it serves to complicate management of the mentoring block. In some cases, the teachers believed students should be separated for the purposes of the better implementation of the SEL program. This situation triggered a suggestion that teachers should be able to manage the composition of the mentorship block groups to ease the instructional challenges during the blocks especially if there are students who do not get along with one another.

Takeaways

From the interviews, observation data and questionnaire, some general takeaways emerged. CIA’s context is important to note again, as it speaks to the varying nature of approaches used by

teachers. The school's small class size and total upper school size allows for building bonds and positive connections between mentors and mentees that may not be as easily built into a larger school's schedule. Generally, and evidenced by the data collected, teachers and students enjoyed the mentorship block and relationships that the scheduled time-period cultivated. The observations and interactions were mainly positive (See Table 4 above), although, some challenges were mentioned and discussed.

The mentorship block also offered a chance for mentees to establish a rapport with mentors in a non-academic sense, outside of the traditional classroom stereotype. For example, during one interview a mentor teacher explained her mentoring role, specifically during the block, as differing from the typical teacher-student relationship. She stated:

"I also teach them in health, so I know a lot about their lives. It's always interesting finding the balance because there's no other relationship like a teacher/student relationship. You have friendships, but this isn't a friendship. That's why I like the word mentor because that's why you're doing it. Advising is a little bit different, it is like giving advice. This is more of a guiding—yeah. It is a friendship while maintaining that boundary of I'm still your teacher, I'm still the authority—"

Another teacher had similar things to say about building relationships with students as a mentor.

"I think one of my gifts as a human is just building quality relationships. To me this is one of the most rewarding parts of my job is that I actually am allowed to do that, encouraged to do that. I have designated people who are the administration says, 'Build this relationship with these students.' To me I feel very comfortable with it. I feel like I'm good at it. I feel like I'm able to—because of that relationship, I'm able to help students meet needs that maybe they wouldn't if they didn't have a mentor."

Building relationships and making connections was an area of focus for teachers in the mentorship block. Mentors mention using students' current needs to determine lesson content and the use of the RULER curriculum for the day or week. Use of specific lessons were dependent on what is going on in the mentees' lives, whether school related or personally, as well as who they are as learners and people. Although the teachers used the RULER program to guide SEL instruction, they were also attuned to the needs and mood of the mentee group and the possibility that a different approach may be warranted.

"I tend to cut some of the curriculum because it's built for a larger group. It's like, In your big group, discuss this, and then in a smaller group, discuss this. I try to pick and choose the parts of it that I think most directly apply to my girls."

Another teacher noted:

It's just you have to have the right environment of small sizes, so that you can really help the whole student, not just—it's not just about academics. 'Cause if they're struggling with depression, you kind of have to—that comes first...' The same teacher stated: "One of the things I like about RULER, so some of the other things that we've done in mentoring have been a little bit less structured... the fact that I can just open a document in the morning, and look through the lesson, and say, "This is what will work for my

group. This will not for work my group,” is just perfect. I can make it longer. I can make it shorter. I can tweak it however I want to meet the needs of the students that I’m currently with.”

Managing students in an informal setting such as a mentoring block can be challenging for some mentors and the needs for ongoing support for some students can look different in a grade level, or because of the composition of a class. Mixed into this challenge is evidence of some incompatibilities between students which can be disruptive and interfere with the mentorship block time.

For example, a mentor noted:

“As far as difficulties, just the mix of students I have. I've walked by other mentoring classes and it's so quiet and there's only four of them. It's like they're just easy. Just the particular mix, I think, of students. High energy. There's a conflict with a couple of them, at times though. Then they can be friends and then there's conflict another day. They come in with a high amount of energy. It's a class where there's no homework. There's no grades. There's no assessments. They think, "We can just relax in it." It does need to be a time of calming down, but they don't calm down. That there's some difficulty there.”

Likewise, one teacher stated:

“The other challenge can be some students need a lot of support, and some need little support. If you’re constantly getting a mentor group every year that needs a lot of support, you can feel exhausted, or that it’s unfair.” As well as, “...then if you get a group that maybe doesn’t quite jive very well, that can be a challenge as well... maybe you get one or two students that just can’t stand each other.”

Recommendations

From observations, survey data collection and interviews regarding the mentorship block at CIA and teachers’ perceptions and experiences surrounding it , the following recommendations were abstracted: (1) some mentor teachers would benefit from initial or additional training on mentoring, (2) restructure mentee groups based on (a) support needs and (b) personality compatibility (3) create a true mentorship block with complete implementation of RULER as the curriculum is intended to be utilized by developing a seminar type class per grade level (4) mentor teachers should receive ongoing support and professional development in mentoring,

1) **Training in Mentoring.** Mentor training is important to the success of any mentoring program (MENTOR, 2015). In addressing the need for mentor training that is not solely focused on a SEL program, an initial workshop should be conducted with all mentor teachers. The workshop could be presented in two or more afternoon sessions so that the instructional time is not sacrificed, possibly on Wednesdays when students are dismissed early. The selection of presenters of workshops is important to the overall success of the training. It may be prudent to solicit an expert from Vanderbilt University Peabody College, especially given its close ties and relationships between Vanderbilt and Currey Ingram Academy. The interactional nature of these workshops, together with opportunities for

attendees to contribute to the discussions based on their unique experience could benefit the mentor teachers at CIA. The proposed workshop would serve to enhance the current mentorship block concept by augmenting teachers' mentoring skills and introducing group goal setting in mentoring. This would complement the teaching excellence policy of CIA and fit in with the mission of the school that states their instruction is evidence based for all students.

2) Restructure Mentorship Block: Mentee Groups The flexibility needed in structuring mentee groups may pose a challenge since CIA has a small student corps and may have to be grouped based on their developmental stage and needs. Instituting flexibility in the grouping of mentees should be considered so students can learn to manage their emotions and preferences yet realize that they cannot always change groups with good reason. However, self-advocacy should be encouraged when appropriate. Similarly, students requiring more support during the mentoring block should be encouraged to become less dependent on teacher support. Therefore, teachers could collaboratively develop instructional competencies such as scaffolding to assist students. Development of instructional competencies can be addressed by Upper School administration selecting appropriate and ongoing professional development opportunities for teachers. Alternatively, CIA could arrange for an education specialist to provide tailor-made sessions to the faculty on this topic.

3) Restructure Mentorship Block: Schedule. Alternatively, and if feasible, the schedule could be changed to include a class that focuses solely on teaching the RULER curriculum to implement the Social Emotional Learning program. Thus, instead of four thirty-minute sessions per week that a mentor teacher could use the curriculum, there would be a seminar style class for all upper school grade levels devoted to teaching RULER. The upper school already has great flexibility in scheduling, offers multiple elective and explore courses and could likely implement this schedule change with ease. Of note, they currently operate on a block schedule system as well. Evidence in literature suggests that when implementation integrity is followed, a program can still be successful. In fact, evidence exists that suggests responding or adapting curriculum to fit a specific context is as important as its implementation which is essentially what teachers were already doing with the mentorship block in 2019-2020. Paul LeMahieu (2011) states "What we need is less fidelity of implementation (do exactly what they say to do) and more integrity of implementation (do what matters most and works best while accommodating local needs and circumstances). This idea of integrity in implementation allows for programmatic expression in a manner that remains true to essential empirically warranted ideas while being responsive to varied conditions and contexts." CIA consistently adapts to the needs of its students and what is best for them as learners, so this recommendation fits their mission.

4) Create a Professional Learning Community. Mentor teachers' need for ongoing professional development, training and support can be met with instituting a mentorship professional learning community (PLC) which could meet on a regular, ongoing basis or as needed basis (e.g., once a month or every three months). Teachers may find this forum useful to discuss challenges encountered during mentorship blocks and for planning the blocks. In addition, ongoing professional development can be targeted to prevent stagnation and stereotypical approaches to mentoring of students. The mentorship PLC will serve to provide peer support to mentor teachers which will mitigate teacher feelings of isolation regarding

their mentoring role. In the 1990s, the National Mentoring Partnership was established (<https://www.mentoring.org/>). The mission of this group, called MENTOR, is "Our mission is to fuel the quantity and quality of mentoring relationships for America's young people and to close the mentoring gap." This group maintains a national database of youth mentoring programs and link volunteer mentors with mentees. MENTOR has established a partnership with the University of Massachusetts through which mentoring research is done to further knowledge on mentoring the youth. Their publication *The Chronicle of Evidence-Based Mentoring*, provides research findings and serves as a conversational forum for mentors. CIA could participate in MENTOR to further teachers' knowledge of mentorship and receive ongoing development through the e-magazine.

Overview of Mentoring Resources

MENTOR

The MENTOR organization provides e-training through use of their publication *Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring* (MENTOR, 2015), available on their website (<https://www.mentoring.org/program-resources/elements-of-effective-practice-for-mentoring/>). Apart from accessing the training manual online, the trainee receives self-assessment material and opportunities for reflection after each chapter. Although this program does not provide extensive interpersonal contact, the e-learning format enables teachers to participate asynchronously in the training. With the latest information on mentorship, the program includes a section on program planning and management covering mentor program design and best practices for implementing programs. Additionally, the MENTOR website offers a toolkit to support mentors in building a successful program. The toolkit provides activities and online worksheets. The mentor training focuses on recruiting mentors from the community, to mentor the youth and does not explicitly aim to train teachers as mentors, nor does it focus on students with different learning needs. However, because of the broad nature of the activities and resources, they could be adapted for use with CIA mentor teachers.

United States Department of Education

The Mentoring Programs section of the U. S. Department of Education developed *Ongoing Training for Mentors: Twelve Interactive Sessions* (2006) in collaboration with the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools. This training manual for mentors includes general aspects of being a mentor, such as establishing boundaries and communication skills. Specific situations that mentors and mentees may face include being a bully victim, homework support, goal setting, healthy lifestyle, supporting mentees during a crisis, planning activities, money management, and exiting the program. Additionally, the training comes in book format available free of charge. It can be accessed by anybody with an interest in mentoring youth.

Partners for Youth With Disabilities

Axelrod, Campbell, and Holt (2005) developed a book *Best Practices for Mentoring Youth with Disabilities*, which was published by the Partners for Youth with Disabilities. The publication resulted from advocating by parents of children with different learning needs who realized that their children also needed mentoring. This movement included recruiting and training mentors

with different learning needs who were successful adults to mentor youth with matching learning needs. The outcomes of this endeavor were that the youth gained confidence, and hope was instilled by mentors who have similar challenges. The mentor program allows for different kinds of mentor-mentee contact, including virtual contact, in-person, group, or school-based.

Context of CIA

The existing mentoring programs are mostly presented in published format where the mentor uses self-study with online support from the developers. Mentors are matched with mentees in individual programs, although the authors also mentioned group mentoring. On average, the mentors are community-based volunteers who participate in mentoring individual mentees. Although some programs target youth with different learning needs and autism, programs mostly focus on general education students. These programs may not be tailor-made for the mentorship block at CIA. However, the programs' overall approach and elements could be useful in developing or adapting a mentor program for grade 9-12 mentor-teachers at CIA. Upper school administrators of CIA may choose to examine the contents of the available programs before entering into discussions with an outside organization to provide workshops on mentorship training. This could provide direction and specificity to their engagement with potential workshop facilitators in developing the best-fitting format for the workshops.

The literature on general mentor training and mentoring programs provides some pointers about important mentoring aspects that could be used when training mentor teachers. Dickenson (2015) identified essential questions to be asked when designing a mentoring program. Questions to ask include (i) what is the goal of the program and (ii) why is mentorship chosen as opposed to other kinds of support programs. Other issues to consider include who should take responsibility for implementing the program, program resources such as people and money, and the current program constraints. Not all these questions may be appropriate in the case of the CIA mentorship program. However, it is vital to ensure that teachers and leaders share common goals and administrative structures exist to ensure the program's long-term success.

Leaders and teachers must address shared goal setting and program targets during mentorship training. Mentor training should include a definition of a mentor. Instead of using a published description, the group should develop a definition to suit the school situation. Identification of a mentor's characteristics could be created by the group and later be checked against published features. By having the group participate in identifying characteristics, the facilitator of training acknowledges their expertise in mentoring they have already developed by interacting with CIA students. Such participation keeps participants interested and ensures the characteristics are related to the unique teaching environment of the school. The group should discuss each characteristic, and the participating teachers can provide examples relevant to their situation. The facilitator will emphasize characteristics such as listening, communication, being compassionate, and approachable. The workshop format allows for participant contribution, consensus, and skill-building opportunities, which are important elements in adult education. Mentor teachers could allocate time to develop mentee training tips and ideas regarding appropriate mentor-mentee relationship behavior including how to set boundaries (Evans, 1997). Developing topics to be addressed during mentor training should be done by CIA administration, the mentor teacher group with facilitator input. By engaging the mentor teachers in developing program topics,

leadership ensures group needs are addressed. Finally, teachers should evaluate the workshop and provide feedback for next steps and further training.

Conclusion

The research conducted with Currey Ingram Academy mentor teachers for grades 9-12 included class observations, interviews, and a survey. First, the insights gained from the data collected suggest the recommendation for mentorship training, increased flexibility of mentee grouping within a grade, a change in scheduling in order to properly implement the RULER curriculum and ongoing professional training to avoid stagnation and isolation of mentor teachers. Currently, CIA has a mentorship block that occurs four days per week for 30 minutes each day. The proposed workshop on mentorship aims to optimize the mentoring that is already taking place. The proposed workshop for mentor teachers can be held on several Wednesday afternoons when the teachers are unencumbered, and students have been dismissed. A series of workshops would enhance the current mentorship block by augmenting teachers' skills and introducing group goal setting for mentoring. The workshop outcomes would complement the teaching excellence policy of CIA and fit in with the school's mission.

Two other recommendations include (a) restructuring of mentee or (b) reconfiguring the mentorship block schedule overall into a dedicated class for SEL. The restructuring or increased flexibility of mentee groupings to avoid disruption in SEL classes based on conflicts between students warrants attention. The principle that educators convey to students is that they need to work through personal differences and apply the SEL principles to manage their own emotions while accommodating other individuals. It is essential students learn to accept others and switching to other groups may signal to students they do not need to adapt to their given social situation. On the other hand, should the disruptions be such that teaching becomes too difficult, it may be beneficial to have the flexibility to swap mentees within the grade level. Teachers could benefit from ongoing professional education on techniques to facilitate a higher level of tolerance for personal differences within their mentee groups. This need could be addressed by either attending existing opportunities or obtaining the services of a professional educator who specializes in this area. Likewise, separating the mentorship block and creating a separate course for the Social Emotional Learning curriculum, RULER, could alleviate the issue of differing implementation methods. RULER was designed to be implemented systemically thus a dedicated course for all grade levels could ensure that all lessons and concepts are taught in the upper school.

Lastly, the need for a professional learning community (PLC) to address possible stagnation and isolation of teachers is suggested. The teachers could establish their own mentor PLC that meets regularly. Linking into a more comprehensive PLC on mentoring students could be beneficial to teachers. Different online opportunities were identified which CIA grade 9-12 mentor teachers could join or simply access. Teachers must have the opportunity to participate in the identification and ultimate choice of affiliation with an outside group

Limitations and Future Research

Limitations

This qualitative study has some limitations regarding the sample population used. The study provides a snapshot of the experiences and perceptions of eleven of fifteen mentor teachers at CIA. Contact with participants included one observation, one interview and a follow-up survey. Although every effort was made to include all fifteen mentor teachers, only eleven consented to participate. There was also no randomization because of the small size of the faculty. Thus, the sample size is small. Next, because of the limited time of interaction with teachers, there was limited time spent with each participant and no means for comparison between one mentorship block class (for one teacher) versus another day with the same teacher. This group of mentors was a convenience sample and ultimately, the teachers at CIA were chosen because of the ease of access to the school.

Future Research

More research is needed to identify mentoring resources and opportunities to make a final decision about moving forward with training and professional development for CIA faculty especially given that the school's mission is to provide evidence based instruction and to provide teachers with needed resources in which to do so. Additionally, gaining stakeholder buy in would be prudent as well. The cohort of teachers at CIA is exceptional. They are highly trained and knowledgeable of current trends so if future opportunities are identified, their input should be garnered.

Future research should include studying the experiences and perceptions of upper school students as well as their parents and possibly community members. A longitudinal case study of CIA students could be conducted to study the long-term effects of the mentorship block and embedded RULER curriculum within it.

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Appendices

A-RULER Mood Chart

B-RULER Overview Table

C-Letter of cooperation-CIA

D-Class observation form

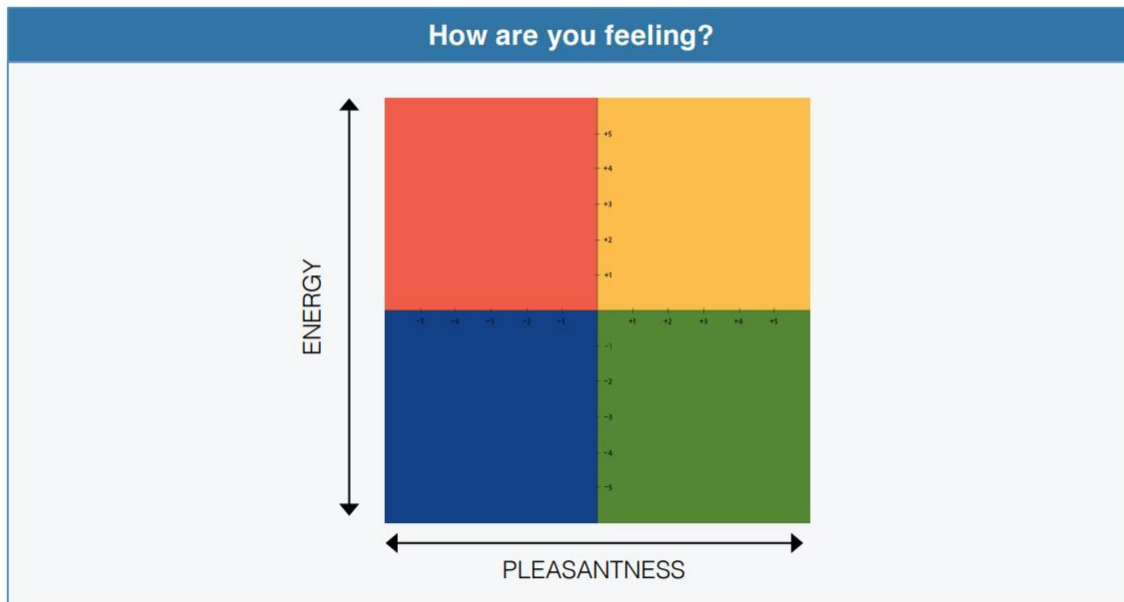
E-Interview protocol/questions

F-Redcap survey/questionnaire

G-IRB Letter

Appendix A-RULER Mood Meter and Skills

Mood Meter Check-in and RULER Skills



RULER Questions

1. How are you feeling? (Recognizing & Labeling)
2. What happened to make you feel this way? (Understanding)
3. How are you showing your feeling? (Expressing)
4. What are you doing to feel more, less, or the same of that same feeling? (Regulating)

RULER Skills

Recognizing emotions	Using cues to understand what we are feeling and what others are feeling
Understanding emotions	Understanding the causes and consequences of an emotion
Labeling emotions	Giving emotions a name
Expressing emotions	How we show and express our emotions and how we show our emotions in socially appropriate ways
Regulating emotions	What we think about or do to feel more or less of an emotion or to keep feeling the same amount of an emotion

Appendix B-RULER Metamoment Strategies

Meta-Moment Strategies for Regulating Your Emotions

Effective Strategies	Actions
In the Moment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breathing • Mindfulness/Relaxation • Reframing • Private self-talk • Visualization • Distraction • Physical space/distance
Long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meditation • Spirituality • Physical activity (stretching, walking, yoga) • Constructive activity (hobbies, reading, cooking, painting) • Entertainment (music, television, videogames) • Modifying the situation • Finding support from others • Taking action for a cause or social issue • Focusing on solving the problem • Working hard to achieve a goal • Shifting or changing the goal • Seeking professional help
Ineffective Strategies	Actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoidance • Withdrawal • Denial • Ignoring the emotion or problem • Wishful thinking • Rumination and worry • Suppression • Self-denigration • Blaming oneself or others • Procrastination • Acting out • Poor health habits • Abusing substances

Appendix C-Letter of Cooperation



CURREY INGRAM ACADEMY

November 11, 2019

Vanderbilt IRB
3319 West End Ave.
Suite 600
Nashville, TN 37203

Dear Vanderbilt IRB:

RE: Permission to visit Currey Ingram Academy & observe Upper School mentor teachers

Via this letter, I grant permission for Leslie Coker Fowler, a researcher and doctoral candidate from Vanderbilt University Peabody College of Education to visit my school, Currey Ingram Academy, to conduct interviews with me, interviews with Upper School mentor teachers and to observe Upper School teachers in the mentorship block during the fall 2019 semester and spring 2020 semester, if necessary. The purpose of the visit is to learn about teachers' experiences and perceptions surrounding the mentorship block at Currey Ingram Academy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jane N. Hannah".

Jane N. Hannah, Ed.D.
Upper School Division Head
Currey Ingram Academy

Appendix D-CLASS Observation Form

OBSERVATION DOCUMENT

Date of Observation	
Grade Level	
Teacher Name	
Beginning Time	
Ending Time	
Number of Students	

Observation Evidence

Domains and Dimensions	Notes:
Emotional Support: Positive Climate: Describe emotional connectedness between mentor and mentees. (nonverbal, verbal, respect, warmth)	
Negative Climate: Describe the frequency, quality, and intensity of negative interactions)	
Teacher Sensitivity: Describe the responsiveness of the mentor to the social/emotional, behavioral, and developmental needs of mentees.	
Regard for Adolescent Perspectives: Describe the degree in which the mentor is able to meet and capitalize on social and developmental needs of mentees.	

SCORING RUBRIC

Positive Climate

	Low (1, 2)	Mid (3, 4, 5)	High (6, 7)
Relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical proximity • Peer interactions • Shared positive affect • Social conversation 	The teacher and students appear distant from and disinterested in one another	The teacher and some students appear generally supportive and interested in one another, but these interactions are muted or not representative of the majority of students in the class.	There are many indications that the teacher and students enjoy warm and supportive relationships with one another.
Positive Affect <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smiling • Laughter • Enthusiasm 	The teacher and student display flat affect and do not appear to enjoy their time in the class.	The teacher and students demonstrate some indications of genuine positive affect; however, these displays may be brief, muted, or not characteristic of the majority of students in the class.	There are frequent genuine displays of positive affect among the teacher and students.
Positive communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive comments • Positive expectations 	The teacher and students do not provide positive comments or indicate positive expectations of one another.	The teacher and students sometimes provide positive comments or indicate positive expectations of one another; however, these communications may be brief, somewhat perfunctory, or not observed among the majority of students in the class.	There are frequent positive communications among the teachers and students.
Respect <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respectful language • Use of each other's names • Warm, calm voice • Listening to each other • cooperation 	The teacher and students rarely, if ever demonstrate respect for one another.	The teacher and students sometimes demonstrate respect for each other; however, these interactions are not consistently observed across tie or students.	The teacher and students consistently demonstrate respect for one another.

Negative Climate

	Low (1, 2)	Mid (3, 4, 5)	High (6, 7)
Negative Affect <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irritability • Anger • Physical aggression • Disconnected or escalating negativity 	The class is characterized by the absence of strong negative affect and only rare episodes of milder negativity by the teacher and/or students.	Mild instances of irritability, anger, or other negative affect by the teachers and/or students are observed on multiple occasions.	The class is characterized by severe, and/or consistent irritability, anger, or other negative affect by the teacher and/or students.
Punitive control <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yelling • Threats • Harsh Punishment • Physical control 	The teacher does not yell at students or make threats to establish control.	The teacher makes occasional mild attempts at punitive control through raised voice, mild threats, or physical contact.	The teacher makes frequent or intensive/severe attempts to control students through yelling, threatening, or physically controlling students.
Disrespect <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teasing • Bullying • Humiliation and sarcasm • Exclusionary behavior • Inflammatory, discriminatory, derogatory language or behavior 	The teacher and students are not sarcastic or disrespectful to one another through words and/or actions.	The teacher and/or students are repeatedly, mildly disrespectful of one another or are observed to occasionally engage in brief but more intensely disrespectful interactions.	The class is characterized by repeated, intense disrespectful language and behavior between the teacher and students or among students.

Teacher Sensitivity

Low (1, 2)

Mid (3, 4, 5)

High (6, 7)

<p>Awareness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checks in with students • Anticipates problems • Notices difficulties 	<p>The teacher does not monitor students for cues and/or consistently fails to notice when students need extra support or assistance.</p>	<p>The teacher sometimes monitors students for cues and notices when students need extra support or assistance, but there are times when this does not happen.</p>	<p>The teacher consistently monitors students for cues and notices when students need extra support or assistance.</p>
<p>Responsiveness to academic and social/emotional needs and cues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individualized support • Reassurance and assistance • Adjusts pacing/wait time as needed • Re-engagement • Acknowledgement of emotions and out of class factors • Timely response 	<p>The teacher is unresponsive to, and/or dismissed of, students' academic and social/emotional needs and cues for support.</p>	<p>The teacher is sometimes responsive to students' academic and social/emotional needs and cues for support, but this responsiveness may be brief or not observed across the observation or across students.</p>	<p>The teacher is consistently responsive to students' academic and social/emotional needs and cues for support.</p>
<p>Effectiveness in addressing problems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student issues/questions resolved • Follow up 	<p>The teacher is ineffective at helping students, allowing student problems and/or confusion to persist.</p>	<p>The teacher generally attempts to help students who need assistance, but these attempts are not consistently effective at addressing problems.</p>	<p>The teacher is consistently effective in addressing students' questions, concerns and problems as observed by resolution.</p>
<p>Student Comfort</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeks support and guidance • Take risks • Participate freely 	<p>Students rarely seek support, share their ideas with, or respond to questions from the teacher.</p>	<p>Student sometimes seek support, share their ideas with, or respond to questions from the teacher; however, these types of interactions are not consistent or not observed across the majority of students.</p>	<p>Students consistently appear comfortable seeking support from, sharing their ideas with, and responding freely to the teacher.</p>

Regard for Adolescent Perspectives

Low (1, 2)

Mid (3, 4, 5)

High (6, 7)

Flexibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows flexibility • Follows students lead • Encourages student ideas and opinions 	The teacher rigidly provides all of the structure for the class and rarely follows students leads or encourages students' ideas and opinions.	The teacher provides structure for the class, but at times is flexible, follows students' leads, and/or encourages students ideas and opinions.	The teacher is flexible and consistently follows student ideas and openness.
Connections to current life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connects content to adolescent life • Communicates usefulness 	Material is not connected to current experiences of adolescents and information about how or why the material is of value to students is not presented.	Material is sometimes connected to the current experiences of adolescents and sometimes makes salient how or why the material is of value to students.	Material is meaningfully connected to the experiences of adolescents and is presented in such a way that students understand how or why it is of value to them.
Support for student autonomy and leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows choice • Chances for leadership • Gives students responsibility • Relaxed structure for movement 	Students do not have choices within lessons and are not provided with opportunities or responsibility.	Students have some choices within lessons and are given occasional opportunities for leadership responsibility; however, these opportunities may be somewhat controlled by the teacher.	Students are provided with meaningful choices within lessons and are given authentic opportunities for leadership and responsibility.
Meaningful peer interactions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides structures for peer sharing and group work 	The teacher discourages peer-peer interactions that are meaningful within the context of the lesson.	The teacher provides some opportunities for peer-peer interactions, but they are somewhat superficial in nature.	The teacher promotes opportunities for peer-peer interactions that are meaningful and serve an integral role within the lesson.

Appendix E-Structured Interview Questions for Mentors

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR MENTORS

Questions focus on perspectives of their relationship between mentors and mentees

Adapted from: Whitaker, R. C., Dearth-Wesley, T., & Gooze, R. A. (2015). Workplace stress and the quality of teacher–children relationships in Head Start. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 30*, 57-69. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2014.08.000>

1. What do you see as the purpose of the mentoring block?
2. How would you characterize your relationship with your mentees?
3. Describe the level of comfort you have regarding your relationship with your mentees.
4. What specific supports do you give to your mentees?
5. How do you approach discipline in your classroom? How, if at all, is your approach different in mentorship block? How do you approach giving praise?

Questions focus on implementation of the mentorship block.

6. What do you see as the greatest benefit of the implementation of mentorship program?
7. What support are you (or were you) provided in order to execute the mentorship program goals? How was the RULER training beneficial to you?
8. What difficulties do you experience with the mentoring block, if any?
9. What would you say is the greatest challenge of the mentorship block?

Questions focus on curriculum used for mentoring block

10. Describe the curriculum you utilize during the mentorship block.
11. How closely do you follow the RULER lessons?
12. Describe a typical mentoring session in your classroom.
13. Describe how the curriculum for social emotional learning supports building relationships with your mentees.

Appendix F-REDCap Survey for Mentor Teachers

Confidential

Page 1 of 2

Mentor survey

The purpose of this survey is to collect anonymous data regarding the upper school mentorship block at Currey Ingram Academy. It will take approximately 5 minutes to complete.

Please respond using your personal perspectives, ideas and experiences. No individual data will be identifiable and aggregate results will be reported to Currey Ingram Academy leadership.

Thank you!

Please choose your level of agreement with each statement surrounding your perceptions and experiences as a mentor to upper school students at Currey Ingram Academy this academic school year, 2019-2020.

	strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree
1) I am adequately prepared to serve as a mentor to my mentees.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2) I understand what is expected of me during mentorship block.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3) The mentorship block is structured to facilitate constructive conversations with my mentees.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4) The mentorship block is valuable use of instructional time.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5) Time devoted to the mentorship block would be better used in other ways.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6) Briefly describe the purpose of the mentorship block.	<hr/>				
7) If you could make any improvements to the implementation of the mentorship block, what would they be?	<hr/>				
8) Please describe how the mentorship block guides Curry Ingram Academy upper school students to achieve academic success.	<hr/>				
9) Please indicate your highest level of education.	<input type="radio"/> Bachelor's degree <input type="radio"/> Master's degree <input type="radio"/> Master's plus <input type="radio"/> Ph.D, Ed.S, Ed.D, <input type="radio"/> Other				

Appendix G-IRB Letter

Human Research Protections Program – HRPP
Supporting the work of the IRB and Providing HRPP Oversight



RE: IRB #192022 "Educator perceptions and experiences of an upper school mentorship block"

Dear Leslie Coker Fowler:

A designee of the Institutional Review Board reviewed the research study identified above. The designee determined the project does not qualify as "research" per 45 CFR §46.102(d).

(d) Research means a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge. Activities which meet this definition constitute research for purposes of this policy, whether or not they are conducted or supported under a program which is considered research for other purposes.

The purpose of this project is to examine the phenomenon of mentorship at Currey Ingram Academy. Specifically, how the implementation of a specific block of time devoted to mentoring upper school students in grades 9-12 contributes to positive educational environment as well as the perspectives and experiences the teachers have about the mentoring experience.

Please note that before initiating activities at the site, you are required to obtain a letter of cooperation.

As this does not meet the "criteria for research" as described in 45 CFR §46.102(d), IRB approval is not required.

Please note: Any changes to this proposal that may alter its "non-research" status should be presented to the IRB for approval prior to implementation of the changes. In accordance with IRB Policy III.J, amendments will be accepted up to one year from the date of approval. If such changes are requested beyond this time frame, submission of a new proposal is required.

Sincerely,

Louis Clifford Rhodes MBA
Institutional Review Board
Behavioral Sciences Committee

Electronic Signature: Louis Clifford Rhodes/VUMC/Vanderbilt : (0a64b2a076dba491da467c96a48044e1)

Signed On: 11/08/2019 3:41:24 PM CST