THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY
SCHREYER HONORS COLLEGE


DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY


TRANSFORMATIVE RELATIONSHIPS AND EMPOWERMENT


EBONY FORD
SPRING 2015


A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements
for a baccalaureate degree
in Psychology
with honors in Psychology


Reviewed and approved* by the following:

Marinda Harrell-Levy
Assistant Professor of Human Development and Family Studies
Thesis Supervisor

Pauline Guerin
Associate Professor of Psychology
Honors Adviser

* Signatures are on file in the Schreyer Honors College.

# ABSTRACT

Two studies, one quantitative and one qualitative, were conducted to determine the link between transformative mentoring experiences and positive development later in life. Qualitatively, eight interviews were conducted with former students of a required high school course focused on building self-efficacy. Participants reported positive development later in life as a result of both their time in the course and their relationships with the course's teachers. Participants were heavily influenced by the supportive environment of the course which was facilitated by their teachers who acted as unconventional mentors. Quantitatively, 135 college students were surveyed to examine the relationship between experiences with role models and forms of empowerment. Three forms of empowerment were measured: self-efficacy, power, and community activism. Participants were considered empowered if they had experienced an increase in their self-efficacy, feelings of power, and efforts toward activism. The results of linear regression analyses revealed that there is a significant, positive relationship between perceptions of role models and levels of self-efficacy and community activism later in life, respectively. Significance was not found for the relationship between participants' perception of role models and feelings of power later in life.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

# LIST OF FIGURES

**LIST OF TABLES**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

# Chapter 1

# Introduction

## Background

Mentoring relationships during adolescence have been shown to be highly beneficial for students in need of guidance. There is often a significant deal of stress on high school students just on the brink of adulthood and it is sometimes enough to discourage many from continuing their education. According to the Alliance for Excellent Education, approximately 7,000 students drop out of high school every day (2011). While negative circumstances may account for a few individual cases, many students simply do not feel motivated or stimulated enough to stay in school. This lack of motivation can lead to a lifetime of underachieving and capitulating to stressful situations. The National Dropout Prevention Center/Network suggest that mentoring has proven beneficial for at-risk youth and has resulted in increased graduation rates, improved school achievement, and improved self-esteem (2015). Mentors can provide the guidance, support, and motivation many students may not receive in a hectic home environment. In turn, mentors can feel satisfied knowing that they are helping someone in need achieve the goals they set for themselves. Mentoring experiences have the potential to encourage students to challenge themselves, persevere during demanding periods of life, and feel empowered to help themselves and those around them.

## Conceptual Underpinnings

This study included three theories as a theoretical framework of this thesis. Grounded Theory is an inductive research method used to explain data collected during qualitative research. Transformational Learning Theory suggests that transformational learning shapes, impacts, and induces change within the student (Cooper, n.d.). Social Learning Theory suggests that the process of learning, which is reinforced

by use of rewards and punishments, occurs via observation or teaching and is highly influenced by social environment.

## Statement of the Problem

The purpose of the present study was to determine whether participants who had mentors (or role models with whom participants had the opportunity to interact) in their first eighteen years of life experienced higher levels of self-esteem, self-efficacy, and other forms of empowerment during their young adult and adult years. Having a positive self-perception and feeling powerful enough to create change in one's environment are qualities that are likely to make a difference well into adulthood. Informal mentoring relationships can be found in a many different environments, including schools, workplaces, and even the neighborhoods in which we live. Guidance received from someone with an emotional commitment is vital for all ages and informal mentoring is just one way to assure that an individual is receiving this important benefit. Overall, this research is an attempt to explore the dynamics of informal mentorship and structured guidance in the lives of youth in hopes of informing policy and program interventions related to improving outcomes for youth. One additional goal is to better inform and equip readers seeking out mentors or to become mentors.

## Purpose of the Study

- To determine the effect mentoring relationships have on levels of empowerment
- To examine the effects a mandatory course in social justice had on the development of former students in the class
- To determine the role the social justice teacher played in the lives of her students

## Research Questions

- Will participants with more transformative mentoring express higher levels of self-efficacy?

- Will participants with more transformative mentoring experiences express higher levels of community activism?

- Will participants with more transformative mentoring experiences express higher levels of power?

**Definitions and Terms**

<u>Empowerment</u> is the process of gaining power over the decisions and resources that affect your life. In the present study, empowerment is conceptualized more specifically as the sense of self-efficacy and willingness to preserve control over one's own life and a sense of power in influencing external and usually superior forces (Corrigan, 2006).

<u>Transformation</u> is the positive or negative effects or change experienced after an intervention.

<u>Self-efficacy</u> is a person's belief that she has the ability to accomplish a goal.

<u>Unconventional mentorship</u> is the unusual form of mentorship in which the course is structured as a mentoring program with the teacher as facilitator.

# Chapter 2

# Literature Review

The following three sections are a review of literature regarding topics pertinent to the present studies. The first section defines empowerment and most importantly discusses the empowerment scale from which three factors (self-esteem-self-efficacy; power-powerlessness; and community activism and autonomy) were used for the quantitative portion of the present research. The second section discusses what constitutes a mentor and a mentoring relationship as well as the importance of these relationships. Finally, the third section discusses the transformative effects of mentoring relationships exhibited by participants in previous studies.

## Empowerment

In August of 1997, Rogers, Chamberlin, Ellison, and Crean set out to test a recently developed scale that measured the construct of empowerment and its correlation to involvement in self-help programs. The group of researchers defined this construct based on previous literature and definitions given by consumers of mental health services. A concise description of empowerment based on the compilation of given definitions would be a sense of self-efficacy and willingness to preserve control over one's own life and a sense of power in influencing external and usually superior forces (Corrigan, 2006; Corrigan, Giffort, Rashid, Leary, & Okeke, 1999; Rogers, Chamberlin, Ellison, & Crean, 1997). Rogers et al. (1997) used the twenty-eight item scale to assess 271 members of six self-help groups. The twenty-eight items were divided into five factors: self-esteem-self-efficacy, power-powerlessness, community activism and autonomy, optimism and control over the future, and righteous anger. The items were combined to achieve an overall empowerment score, the highest possible score being four. The average score among the six groups was between 2.75 and 3.02. It was found that there was no significant

difference between genders, race, marital status, or level of education. It was concluded that "there are three legs or supports that constitute empowerment" (Rogers et al., 1997, p. 1045). These legs were described as self-esteem-self efficacy, actual power, and righteous anger/ community activism. In addition to these concepts, Tengland (2007) concluded that empowerment was a complex subject that encapsulated concepts such as: autonomy, "freedom, knowledge, self-esteem, self-coincidence, and control over health or life" (p.197).

Corrigan, Giffort, Rashid, Leary, and Okeke used the same empowerment scale in 1999, confirming its validity and reliability. The researchers used the twenty-eight items from the aforementioned scale as a part of a larger recovery scale to determine how well this method of combining previously validated scales to measure a new construct worked (Corrigan, Giffort, Rashid, Leary, & Okeke, 1999). It was determined that the recovery scale they developed was both valid and reliable. Corrigan used the empowerment scale developed by Rogers et al. (1997) again in 2006 to determine the relationship between participation in consumer-operated services and empowerment. In this context, Corrigan described these services as "programs largely developed by people with psychiatric disabilities for people with psychiatric disabilities" and defined empowerment as "personal control over decisions about all domains of life" (p. 1493). He hypothesized that participating in peer support would enhance a sense of empowerment. This seems similar to Rogers et al.'s notion that participating in self-help programs would achieve this same effect. However, contrary to the results achieved by Rogers et al., Corrigan's research determined that participation in peer support did, in fact, significantly correlate with a sense of empowerment, though the magnitude of this correlation was small (2006). These relatively different findings could be explained by the different populations that were studied.

Christens, Collura, and Tahir (2013) suggested that an important component of empowerment was hope. However, the important factors for feeling empowered often differed based on the population being studied.  For this reason, the study focused on four groups categorized by their level of hope, level of critical consciousness, and level of alienation. The research was based on the notion of critical

consciousness by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire who suggested that "hope is necessary but it is not enough" to overcome whatever obstacles one may face (Christens, Collura, & Tahir, 2013). To overcome these obstacles, the researchers posited that, besides hope and a critical understanding of social issues and inequalities, it was also necessary to possess self-efficacy in order to affect systematic change; without self-efficacy, one could be fully aware of an inequality but may not feel empowered enough to try to change it (Christens, Collura, & Tahir, 2013). Hope and self-efficacy as factors of empowerment can be seen on the empowerment scale by Rogers et al (1997).

O'Connor (1997) further studied empowerment however, this time qualitatively. The study focused on six, low-income, African American adolescents, who, while realizing their high ambitions and achievement, also recognized the role that race and class have in the likelihood of success in the lives of African Americans with low socio-economic status. The only biographical factor in the study that distinguished the selected groups from the other respondents was their familiarity with struggle, both individually and collectively. She found that their awareness of their struggle did not affect their academic success, but rather served as a motivation and contributed to the adolescents' sense of human agency. This awareness was suggested to be a result of the level of empowerment exhibited by parents to the youth. Those with parents who actively demonstrated their belief that they had some level of control over external and superior forces held these same beliefs. This belief, in turn, positively influenced the youths' level of academic success. This finding suggests that being in an environment that promotes or teaches empowerment may lead to one feeling empowered. Comparing these results with the results achieved by Rogers et al. (1997) seemed to suggest that the likelihood of gaining a sense of empowerment from those in one's external environment may be influenced by the level of closeness between the empowered and the disempowered.

**Mentoring**

Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory suggested that the process of learning occurred via observation or teaching and was highly influenced by social environment. This process was reinforced by

the use of rewards and punishments. This meant that children learned from and imitated the behaviors in their environment. As previously mentioned, O'Connor's (1997) findings suggested that the children who felt empowered had been influenced by parents who exhibited empowerment. This suggests that these children learned to be empowered via observation as supported by the Social Learning theory. In a dissertation by DeSecottier (1998), the researcher used this theory to explain the importance of mentorship in the development of adolescents. DeSecottier posited that guidance during this period of development is essential but the guidance may not always be available from a parent or relative and can, in fact, be provided by a non-familial adult who makes a "sustained personal commitment to a young person needing the guidance, moral support, and approval of a warm-hearted adult" (p. 31). DuBois and Karcher (2005) suggested that the mentor-mentee relationship required a mentor that had more experience than the mentee, a mentor who offered guidance that promoted the mentee's growth and development, and an emotional bond that signified trust between the mentor and the mentee (DuBois & Karcher, 2005). Based on the Social Learning theory, it is possible for mentees to observe and imitate such qualities.

DuBois and Silverthorn (2005) investigated characteristics of non-familial mentoring relationships as indicators of adjustment outcomes among young adults and adolescents. Such outcomes were assessed in domains such as education/work, problematic behavior, psychological well-being, and physical health. DuBois and Silverthorn found that favorable outcomes were more prevalent in relationships between adolescents and mentors outside of their families, especially in the domain of psychological well-being. Royse (1998) reported on this type of mentoring on at-risk youth.  A four-year mentoring project developed for African American adolescents was conducted with the goal of evaluating the effects that mentorship had on high-risk youth. The study gauged the effects on youth through a lens that considered the youth's self-esteem, attitude toward drugs, school, grades, and observance of disciplinary rules. Royse found it difficult to document the positive benefits of mentoring, and offered several explanations to account for that difficulty. While the. study did not permit for an efficient way to measure the success of mentor relationships, Royse noted that such relationships may very well be

beneficial to at-risk youth, but must not be measured objectively as was done in this study.

Bogat and Liang (2005) studied the gender differences that arise in youth mentoring. They found that females and males had different attitudinal, psychological, and behavioral paths of growth during adolescence due to the pressure to conform to certain gender roles and stereotypes. As a result of this, males sought increased autonomy while females ultimately sought to strengthen their relationships in order to develop their identities and increase their sense of love and belonging (Bogat & Liang, 2005). It is likely that these gender differences have significant effects on how either gender responds to and develops as a result of a mentoring relationship. It is also likely that, because of this gender difference, the gender of the mentor may play a significant role in this development.

## Transformation

In the present study, empowerment is considered a form of transformation. Tourigny, Hebert, Daigneault, and Claude (2005) studied the effects of a group therapy program for teenage girls who reported having been sexually abused as children, and evaluated the overall transformation of the group through a pre and post- test design as compared to a control group. The study consisted of an average of twenty weekly two-hour meetings. When compared with the control group, results revealed the significant improvement in the youth of the experimental group in areas such as post-traumatic stress, internalized and externalized behavior issues, coping, maternal relationships, and feelings of empowerment. These findings suggest that group therapy was effective in promoting the positive transformation in sexually abused teenagers. However, this only supports that positive transformation is possible in a formal group setting. It is important to determine the effects, if any, of mentorship that is individual and informal.

Dang and Miller (2013) studied the effects of natural mentoring relationships on individuals. These researchers focused on homeless youth and the problems usually faced by this at-risk population. To determine this effect, the researchers conducted interviews with twenty-three homeless youth who reported having natural mentors. They found that the youth often viewed the mentors as surrogate parents

and important figures for social support. Participants reported a feeling of loss that was overcome by the sense of belonging and love as a result of the relationships (Dang & Miller, 2013). Hurd and Zimmerman (2014) also examined these effects. The study focused on the connection between natural mentoring relationships and life satisfaction (as a measure of psychological well-being), as well as natural mentoring relationships and symptoms of depression (as a measure of psychological distress), of 396 young adults (of which 209 participants reported having had a natural mentor since fourteen years of age). Natural mentors were defined as non-parental adults with whom the youth had an established relationship that was not romantic in nature. The researchers suggested that natural mentoring relationships could improve psychological well-being by promoting the development of important interpersonal skills, such as appropriately expressing emotions, problem solving, and resolving conflicts (Hurd & Zimmerman, 2014). The researchers concluded that a natural mentoring relationship did benefit the psychological well-being of the mentees; however, benefits depended on the level of closeness between the mentor and the mentee as well as the relationship's duration (Hurd & Zimmerman, 2014). The same was found to be true of formal mentoring relationships. In addition, the duration of the relationship and the frequency of interaction between the mentor and mentee were also found to be important factors of transformation (Miller, Barnes, Miller, & McKinnon, 2012).

Hurd and Sellers (2013) also found that the level of closeness or connection between the mentor and the mentee was an important factor in how beneficial the relationship was. While black adolescents, the focus group in this study, who felt highly connected to their mentors exhibited better social skills, greater psychological well-being, and increased academic engagement, those who felt little connection to their mentor and those with no mentor did not exhibit these benefits (Hurd & Sellers, 2013). In a study conducted by Keating, Tomishima, Foster and Alessandri (2002), it was found that there may be a difference in how certain races respond to mentoring. While all of the at-risk youth, the focus group of this study, were matched with a mentor for the same duration, non-African American youth seemed to respond more positively to the mentoring program relative to the African American youth. Whereas the

non-African American youth saw a decrease in the magnitude of internalized and externalized problem behavior and a decrease in hopelessness, the African American youth did not exhibit such progress; there were no significant differences in the internalized/externalized behavior problems or the degree of hopelessness from pre-intervention to post-intervention for the African American youth (Keating et al., 2002). However, Gray (2011) found that a group of African American male youths who were assigned formal mentors were positively affected academically and behaviorally. Both the participants and their parents reported that the mentor program proved beneficial (Gray, 2011).

Regardless of the differences in responses based on gender and race or whether it is formal or informal, the overall consensus of established research on the subject is that mentoring positively affects the individual. Eby, Allen, Evans, Ng, and DuBois (2008) found that the positive effects of mentoring even proved true across other domains including the workplace. Those with mentors in the workplace tended to have more positive career and work attitudes (Eby, Allen, Evans, Ng, & DuBois, 2008). Dallos and Comley-Ross (2005) offered attachment theory as an explanation for these positive effects. The attachment theory is centered on the development of trust in an individual from infancy. As needs are met by those an individual depends on, the individual's identity is shaped and a bond is created between the provider and the dependent. Contrarily, those who do not have their needs met by a provider do not develop this bond and consequently, develop an untrusting nature (Dallos & Comley-Ross, 2005). Individuals who do not develop this bond with a provider may seek solace with a mentor or surrogate as did the homeless youth in the study by Dang and Miller (2013). These mentors develop an emotional bond with the mentee and effectively fill the role of the provider. This bond promotes the development of trust in the mentee.

# Chapter 3

# Methodology and Procedures

## Study 1 Qualitative

**Theoretical Framework**

Grounded theory is an inductive research method used to explain data collected during qualitative research. It necessitates that theories be grounded or based on observation. This method reverses most social science approaches in which researchers begin with a theory and then use data collecting methods to test that theory. Grounded theory has four stages: identifying the area of study or group of interest, collecting data regarding that group, coding the data as it is collected, and writing memos or notes throughout the research process (Scott, 2009).

**Data Collection**

During the present study, the group of interest was eight former A. Catholic High School students who took a mandatory course in Social Justice (SJ). Respondents were recruited using a pool of participants from a previous study conducted with the same high school by the researcher's adviser. Pseudonyms were used to protect the name sand identities of all participants.

The SJ course is a mandatory class for eleventh and twelfth grade students in attendance at A. Catholic High School, a parochial school in an urban area in Northeastern United States. The course was created by Mr. Roger Harrison with the goal of encouraging students to think critically and be engaged in social activism. Throughout the course, students discuss provocative social issues including racial equality, homelessness, and poverty in their immediate area and around the world. The course also requires that students participate in annual food and clothing drives as well as volunteer at a local soup kitchen in which they serve food to and converse with patrons at the soup kitchen. Students are then encouraged to reflect on these experiences via writing, discussion, and prayer.

Sixty-nine potential participants were contacted via email regarding participation in the study. Eight respondents resulted from this pool. There were five female respondents and three male respondents (See Table 1). Respondents were predominantly African American with the exception of one respondent who was the son of two Haitian immigrants. The aforementioned respondent was also an exception regarding graduation year. While seven of the eight respondents graduated high school between 1999 and 2009, this respondent graduated from A. Catholic High School in 1987. Although this might have made him an outlier for the research, data from his interview was still valuable in that he was the only respondent to take the SJ class with the course's founder, Mr. Harrison. The other respondents were students of two teachers who taught the SJ course following Mr. Harrison's unexpected passing in 1996 (See Table 1).

**Table 1 Demographics**

| Name | Year of Graduation | Social Justice Teacher | Gender | Race |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Rita** | 2000 | Ms. Roberts | Female | Black |
| **Emily** | 1999 | Ms. Roberts | Female | Black |
| **Deborah** | 2009 | Ms. Martin | Female | African and American |
| **John** | 1987 | Mr. Harrison | Male | Haitian and American |
| **Lauren** | 2009 | Ms. Martin | Female | Black |
| **Harold** | 2000 | Ms. Martin | Male | Black |
| **Christopher** | 2000 | Ms. Martin | Male | Black |
| **Karen** | 2008 | Ms. Martin | Female | Black |

Interviews were conducted during November and December 2014. Interviews ranged from twenty-three minutes to an hour and seventeen minutes (See Table 2). Data were collected via telephone interviews with seven of the respondents and via email with one respondent (See Table 2).

**Table 2 Interview Information**

| Name | Date of Interview | Duration of Interview | Interview Conducted via |
|------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| **Deborah** | 7-Nov-14 | 35 minutes | Phone |
| **Emily** | 8-Nov-14 | 39 minutes | Phone |
| **Rita** | 8-Nov-14 | 33 minutes | Phone |
| **John** | 29-Nov-14 | 1 hour, 17 minutes | Phone |
| **Harold** | 22-Nov-14 | 1 hour, 29 minutes | Phone |
| **Lauren** | 2-Dec-14 and 5-Dec-14 | 58 minutes and 23 minutes | Phone |
| **Christopher** | 10-Nov-14 | 42 minutes | Phone |
| **Karen** | 23-Dec-14 | N/A | Email |

Interview questions were divided into six categories:

- Background Information- Respondents were asked questions regarding graduation year, highest degree of education, and community service habits.

- Social Justice and A. Catholic High School- Respondents were asked if they considered their SJ teacher a mentor and if their relationship was empowering.

- Other Mentors- Respondents were asked how other mentors compared to their SJ teacher.

- Personal Biography- Respondents were asked if strategies learned during SJ helped them cope with stressful experiences after high school.

- Life Experiences and Connection to the Class- Respondents were asked whether they reflected on stressful experiences that occurred prior to high school while in SJ class.

- Empowerment- Respondents were asked if their levels of empowerment and their views on the less fortunate were affected by the course.

- Life Experiences and Connection to the Class- Respondents were asked whether they reflected on stressful experiences that occurred prior to high school while in social justice class.

- Empowerment- Respondents were asked if their levels of empowerment and their views on the less fortunate were affected by the course.

**Data Analysis**

Interviews were recorded and transcribed by the researcher. Notes were taken during each interview and compiled into field notes (See Appendix B) that review the overall interview process, difficulties, and first impressions. Hand coding was used to analyze data collected during qualitative interviews. Two coding themes (Unconventional Mentorship and Forms of Transformation) were determined based on reviewed literature, field notes, and input from the researcher's thesis adviser. Each theme was divided into three sub-themes to further analyze the data. Theme 1 was divided into teacher as facilitator/guide, exposure via course content, and bereavement/symbolic loss. Theme 2 was divided into self-esteem, self-efficacy, and empowerment.

**Epistemological Stance**

The researcher is an undergraduate Psychology major at Penn State University. She is conducting this thesis to meet the qualifications for graduating with honors in Psychology. She became interested in transformative mentoring relationships after her experience with a high school teacher who was very influential and supportive during negative life experiences. As this may have encouraged the researcher to interpret the research based on her own experiences, steps were taken to avoid this bias.

To protect the integrity of the research, the researcher worked closely with her adviser to recruit potential participants for qualitative interviews. All possible participants were former A. Catholic High School students. The researcher did not have any other information about these participants prior to the interviews. The same email was sent to all potential participants to ensure that everyone had the

information necessary to make an informed decision about participating in the research.

During interviews, respondents were asked questions that allowed them to elaborate as much as they pleased without interruption from the researcher. When respondents offered short or succinct responses, the researcher did not pry for more information. Although this may have diminished the chances of receiving a better quality response, the researcher's main concern was the comfort of the respondent.

Overall, the researcher took many steps to avoid tainting the research.

**Study 2 Quantitative**

**Data Collection**

During the present study, the group of interest was college students over the age of eighteen from Penn State University Brandywine and Temple University. Respondents were recruited using emails sent by several professors on the researcher's behalf. The researcher also recruited participants using the social media website Facebook and via fliers posted around the Penn State Brandywine campus. There were a total of 135 participants.

Participants partook in an online survey that took approximately fifteen to twenty minutes. Consent for their participation was on the first page of the survey. The consent form detailed the purpose of the study, the procedures to be followed, discomforts and risks, benefits of the study, and statements regarding confidentiality, right to ask questions, and voluntary participation. Participants were unable to proceed to the questionnaire without agreeing to the terms detailed in the consent form.

The survey was divided into three sections. There were a total of sixteen Likert scales in the survey. The first section posed questions regarding participants' first eighteen years of life. The first twelve questions in the first section were asked to acquire demographic information from participants (e.g. gender, marital status, race/ethnicity, year of high school graduation, college major, and religious denomination).The remaining questions in the first section used eleven scales to inquire about experiences with food security/insecurity, personal or familial drug/alcohol use and abuse, domestic violence, sexual abuse, and the impact these experiences had on the participants' perceptions of life during this time. Prompts and sample questions for each scale are below.

- Prompt: During the first 18 years of life, how often did you (and members of your household) experience the following problems with food?
    - Sample: I/we worried food would run out before I/we got money to buy more

- Prompt: Do the following experiences describe your first 18 years of life?
    - Sample: Did you live with anyone who used drugs?

Prompt: Think of the people with whom you lived the first 18 years of life. For each row below, click yes if you lived with this type of person at least some of the time.
- o Sample: Original Mother (Biological or Adoptive)

- Prompt: Do the following experiences describe your first 18 years of life?
  - o Sample: Did you live with anyone who used street drugs?

Prompt: Sometimes physical blows occur between parents. While you were growing up in your first 18 years of life, how often did your parent (or guardian) do these things to another parent (or guardian)?
- o Sample: Push, grab, slap, or throw something at the other?

- Prompt: Sometimes parents or other adults hurt children. While you were growing up, that is during your first 18 years of life, how often did a parent, step-parent, or adult living in your home…
  - o Sample: Swear at you, insult you, or put you down?

- Prompt: While you were growing up, during your first 18 years of life, how true was each of the following statements?
  - o Sample: You knew there was someone to take care of you and protect you?

- Prompt: Some people, while growing up in their first 18 years of life, had sexual experience with an adult or someone at least five years older than themselves. These experiences may have involved a relative, family friend, or stranger. During your first 18 years of life, did an adult or older relative, family friend or stranger ever…
  - o Sample: Touch or fondle your body in a sexual way?

- Prompt: Apart from the other sexual experiences you have already told us about, while you were growing up during your first 18 years of life…
  - o Sample: Did anyone about your own age ever force or threaten to harm you in order to have sexual contact?

- Prompt: Thinking about your neighborhood as a whole, how much of a problem do you feel each of the following is in your neighborhood? Please indicate the seriousness of each on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not a problem and 5 is a serious problem.
  - o Sample: Too much traffic

The second and third sections focused on transformations of behavior or outlook as a result of a specific class (Section B) or a specific person (Section C). Section B prompted participants to think about an influential class or course taken at any point in their lives. They were then asked to answer questions regarding subjects discussed in class and the influence this class had the participant's behaviors, beliefs, and ideas. There were four scales in Section B. Prompts and sample questions for each scale are below.

The second and third sections focused on transformations of behavior or outlook as a result of a specific

class (Section B) or a specific person (Section C).Section B prompted participants to think about an

influential class or course taken at any point in their lives. They were then asked to answer questions

regarding subjects discussed in class and the influence this class had the participant's behaviors, beliefs,

and ideas. There were four scales in Section B. Prompts and sample questions for each scale are below.

- Prompt: Did this class…
  - Sample: Cause you to question the way you normally act?

- Prompt: Continue thinking about the class as you answer the following questions. Using the agreement scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by choosing the appropriate number.
  - Sample: I questioned my ideas and realized I no longer agreed with my previous beliefs or role expectations.

- Prompt: During this influential class, did you learn about or discuss the following issues?
  - Sample: Addiction

- Prompt: Did any of the following class assignments/experiences make this class influential? (Check all that apply)
  - Sample: Classroom Discussion/ Dialogues

Section C prompted participants to think about a time during adolescence when they realized

their values, beliefs, opinions, or expectations had changed for the better. They were then asked to

identify the person, if any, they would credit for this transformation (e.g. a role model, teacher, coach,

religious leader, guidance counselor, mentor, or peer). Two scales were used to identify the level of

influence this person had on participants' self-perception. The remaining series of scales sought to

determine participants' levels of empowerment using five factors (self-esteem-self-efficacy; power-

powerlessness; community activism and autonomy; optimism and control over the future; and righteous

anger) from an empowerment scale developed by Rogers et al. (1997). Prompts and sample questions are

below.

- Prompt: Help us learn about this role model. Indicate whether you agree with the following statements.
  - Sample: This person helped me to challenge myself to succeed.

- Prompt: This very last question contains a list of ideas you may have about yourself. Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement.
    Sample: I generally accomplish what I set out to do.

**Data Analysis**

Linear regression is a method used in data analysis that aims to model the linear relationship between a dependent variable and an independent variable (Biddix, 2009). Linear regression analyses were used in the present study to determine whether having a relationship with and positive perception of a role model, the predictor variables, were independently and significantly associated with self-efficacy, power, and community activism later in life. There were two independent variables in this study. Self-efficacy, power, and activism (the dependent variables) were tested against participants having a role model/mentor (Independent variable 1) and having positive perceptions of this person (Independent variable 2). Gender, race, religious background, religiosity, and socioeconomic status were used as control variables. Participants were given two options for gender (male or female), seven options for race (White, Black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, Arab/Middle Eastern, and Other), and six options for religious background (Christian, Muslim, Christian-Catholic, Jewish, do not have one, and other). Religiosity was determined with a question regarding how often participants attended religious services for which they were given six options (Never, Less than once a month, 2-3 times a month, Once a week, 2-3 times a week, and daily). Socioeconomic status was determined with questions regarding food security/insecurity. Participants who had never experienced food insecurity were considered high SES and participants who had experienced some or greater food insecurity were considered low SES.

Two scales were used to determine the transformative effects participants believed their mentor had on their levels of empowerment. Three forms of empowerment were measured: self-efficacy, power, and community activism. All items were measured on a seven-point scale (1=strongly disagree; 3=neither agree nor disagree; 7=strongly agree). Self-efficacy was measured using eight items that assessed the transformative effects mentors had on participants' levels of self-efficacy ($\alpha$=.95). Power was measured using five items that assessed the levels of power participants felt after their time with a role model or

mentor (α=.81). Community activism was measured using five items that assessed the degree to which participants' levels of community activism and autonomy were transformed by their time with their respective role models or mentors (α=.85).

**Reliability and Validity**

Reliability and validity are vital in all quantitative research. Validity ensures that the research method measures what it is intended to measure. An instrument used for quantitative research must have both content validity and external validity. External validity concerns the generalizability of results. Using a sample that is able to accurately represent the general population ensures that a study has external validity. Content validity refers to an instrument's accuracy in measuring what it is intended to measure. Reliability ensures that the aforementioned criteria are done on a consistent basis. The present study utilized questions and scales that had been used in previous studies like the study on empowerment by Rogers et al. in 1997. Using previously tested material ensured the validity and reliability of this study.

Descriptive analyses, including scatterplots, were used to determine if any of the model assumptions had been violated prior to performing the linear regression. These analyses were performed for all of the variables in the present study, including the main variables (See Table 3). All scales and measures used in this study were used and validated in earlier studies on similar samples. Correlation tests were performed between key variables in the study. Statistical significance was found for the relationship between positive perceptions of a mentor/role model and participants' self-efficacy and activism, respectively. Correlation was significant at the 0.01 level for both relationships (See Table 4). The coefficient of determination ($R^2$) is a measure that reveals how much variability in the data can be explained by the regression model. In the present study, 58% of the variability is explained by the regression model, indicating an acceptable fit of the model.

**Table 3 Mean and Standard Deviation**

| | | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sex | 18 | 1 | 2 | .69 | .462 |
| How often do you attend religious services? | 14 | 1 | 7 | .38 | 1.599 |
| Model | 9 | 2.67 | 7.00 | .9813 | .99476 |
| During this time in your life, was there a person who influenced this positive change? | 4 | 1 | 2 | .17 | .378 |
| Food security | 01 | 1.00 | 4.00 | .5578 | .83680 |
| Self-efficacy | 1 | 1.78 | 7.00 | .8085 | 1.06805 |
| Power | 1 | 1.00 | 7.00 | .6013 | 1.15092 |
| Activism | 0 | 1.00 | 7.00 | .8574 | 1.04414 |

**Table 4 Correlations**

| | | model | During this time in your life, was there a person who influenced this positive change? | efficacy | power | activism |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| model | Pearson Correlation | | -.184 | .583** | -.010 | .587** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .084 | .000 | .927 | .000 |
| | N | 89 | 89 | 89 | 89 | 88 |
| During this time in your life, was there a person who influenced this positive change? | Pearson Correlation | .184 | 1 | -.034 | -.042 | -.058 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 084 | | .748 | .692 | .586 |
| | N | | 94 | 91 | 91 | 90 |
| efficacy | Pearson Correlation | 583** | -.034 | 1 | .070 | .711** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 000 | .748 | | .512 | .000 |
| | N | 9 | 91 | 91 | 91 | 90 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| power | Pearson Correlation | .010 | -.042 | .070 | 1 | -.068 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 927 | .692 | .512 | | .527 |
| | N | 9 | 91 | 91 | 91 | 90 |
| activism | Pearson Correlation | 587** | -.058 | .711** | -.068 | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .586 | .000 | .527 | |
| | N | 88 | 90 | 90 | 90 | 90 |

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).


## Aims of Present Study

Study 2 of this thesis will explore the following hypotheses:

- Participants with more transformative mentoring experiences will express higher levels of self-efficacy.

- Participants with higher levels of transformative mentoring experiences will express higher levels of power.

- Participants with higher levels of transformative mentoring experiences will express higher levels of community activism and autonomy.

# Chapter 4

# Results and Discussion

## Study 1 Qualitative

**Results**

Respondents spoke positively about their experiences with their respective SJ teachers and the impact these experiences had on their lives during and following their departure from A. Catholic High School. Two themes emerged during interviews: unconventional mentorship and forms of transformation.

Theme 1 (Unconventional Mentorship) (See Table 5) was created to illustrate the role the SJ teacher and the course had in the lives of these former students. For example, throughout the course of the interviews, it was discovered that many students received unexpected consolation from their SJ teachers during times of bereavement. For this reason, Theme 1 was divided into three sub-themes: teacher acts as moral and spiritual guide (teacher as guide), teacher facilitates exposure via course content (teacher as facilitator), and teacher supports students during bereavement/symbolic loss (teacher as supporter). When it became apparent that "mentor" was not the title most participants assigned to their SJ teacher, the subthemes helped clarify the mentor like roles/identities assumed by the teachers. The first sub-theme was developed after a thorough review of field notes and transcripts to identify how the SJ teachers guided and supported their students in ways resembling mentorship.

Theme 2 (Forms of Transformation) (See Table 6) was created prior to the interviews in order to identify what aspects of participants social development was affected by their time at A. Catholic High School. Three aspects of social development (self-esteem, self-efficacy, and empowerment) were used as sub-themes.

**Table 5 Theme 1: Unconventional Mentorship**

|  | TEACHER AS GUIDE/MOTIVATOR… | EXPOSURE | BEREAVEMENT/LOSS |
|---|---|---|---|
| **DEBORAH** | "She would always be happy to see us and hear about what we were doing and kind of make sure that we still were living the life that you know we said that we wanted to live when we were at C." | "…going to C. really shaped my outlook at how a school and a community should be." | "…when I was taking social justice one of my grandmothers just passed away so I remember that I wrote about her and her death and how it really affected our family as a whole…" |
| **EMILY** | "…she taught us a lot about you know how we should look at the world and how we should look at other people who are less fortunate and who have different beliefs than us or who are poor or disenfranchised…" | "So it was all about doing things to help other people. You weren't just sitting in a classroom you know learning about theories and things like that. I mean we did that too but there was an action component that was very different than other classes you take." | "…my dad died when I was 11." |
| **RITA** | "And with her…she was definitely more understanding than a lot of other teachers or adults period at the time that I had in my life." | "…I'm definitely more into community service now. Like I would have never…I didn't know what a soup kitchen was prior to social justice class." | N/A |
| **JOHN** | "He made it okay for us to feel like giving back was the right thing to do." "Even the students who didn't care for him knew that he cared for them." | "And you just help them with the prep. And then when the homeless people come in, you serve them, and then you clean up after them. So the reason why I bring that up is because I've been doing stuff with homeless shelters since that time." | "I grew up in Haiti so growing up was difficult…I didn't grow up with my parents. I was in a boarding house which was equivalent to…an orphanage." |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **LAUREN** | "I was able to sit down and talk to her about some things…personal things." "She goes above and beyond for her students whether she had a close relationship with you or not." "If you were ever in trouble or what not, she'd do her best to try to help you out." | "I wrote a piece about my mom. I read one of my essays to the whole school. I talked about when I was out in the streets and just on my way to my mom's house and a homeless guy was there. And I past him and immediately after I passed him, I stopped and turned around and started talking to him and I gave him a $10 bill. He grabbed my hand and kept thanking me and saying how much people my age just don't care about people like him…even older adults." | N/A |
| **HAROLD** | "She was definitely, definitely engaged in the lives of children and concerned about our wellbeing and…I think she was working really hard to produce the next social movement leaders." | "It was a requirement in the school that each student participate in the soup kitchen." "…it pretty much laid the foundation for me and community work and giving back." | "That's the person that's supposed to be your nurturer, your provider…your first educator. I didn't have that since birth." "You know as a child experiencing that much loss, you develop a wall." "…social justice has definitely you know provided the segue for my healing." |
| **CHRISTOPHER** | "When my father died…Ms. Martin cam and gave me a hug…like that was the first thing she did. She just came and gave me a hug. That I'll never forget." "She kept me focused…she understood." "And with Ms. Martin, I could | "I mean when we went to the soup kitchen, I think that was probably one of the most enlightening experiences of my life." | "Ms. Martin actually told us to try to keep journals and it's funny, when my father died, I kept a journal." "When my father died, Ms. Martin was very instrumental in just keeping me balanced and sane during that time. So without her…I wouldn't |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | be a little more open than someone at school is used to me being…emotional in that way." "She was just someone, no matter what it was, she was that person that could help you. She was definitely key in my life." | | have kept up with what I was doing." |
| **KAREN** | "I still keep in contact with her to this very day. She came to my grandmother's funeral [when] she passed away during my sophomore year of college, and she attended my college graduation." "My experience with her and this class are empowering because she always told us to question assumptions." | | "I forgave my father for abandoning my sister and me." "I also forgave my mother's killer." |

**Table 6 Theme 2: Forms of Transformation**

| | SELF-ESSTEM | SELF-EFFICACY | EMPOWERMENT |
|---|---|---|---|
| **DEBORAH** | "Yeah just being determined and even when you…some days when you want to give up just not giving up because that's not who you are. And you know just being strong…a strong individual and knowing you know that it doesn't always go you know the way you want it to." | "But if you work hard and push yourself…you'll ultimately succeed." "I always knew that in order to make change, you have to be heard and you have to do that just because you know we didn't always have that option." | "I think it was empowering because it gave me a sense of accountability that I kept throughout my life and helped me to you know make the right choices and be the person if you saw something unjust, standing up for it and saying 'I won't be the victim…I won't let this happen to anybody else.'" |
| **EMILY** | "I definitely think learning about perseverance and overcoming obstacles and you know that there's challenges in life but you have to push through…I mean I | "…nothing's going to change unless you change it." | "I would consider it to be empowering because we learned about biblical and modern day examples of advocates and how you can advocate for the poor and advocate for those who don't have a voice." |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | definitely would say that helped…that education helped me being able to get through college in those challenging situations.” | | |
| **RITA** | N/A | “And that right there…like hearing the recent news and what I learned in social justice, it kind of makes me now want to see what I can do as far as like getting a part of a 'stop the bullying' program…I definitely think social justice…is influencing me wanting to do that.” | “I’m definitely more into community service now. Like I would have never…I didn’t even know what a soup kitchen was prior to social justice class. Now I can honestly say that influenced me wanting to give back. |
| **JOHN** | “Life is not always about you. Sometimes when you do for other people, you have a greater sense of yourself by what you get out of it. And that certainly is true to this day.” | “Don’t just sit there feeling sorry for yourself and day dreaming. Go make it happen.” “After I was done with his class, for me I was like there’s nothing I can’t do. There’s no change that’s too small. There’s no change that you can make that you feel like it’s too small. And you only underestimate the power of your influence on others and if you don’t at least take advantage of it then you’ll never know the lives you’ve touched” | “I’ve been doing community service since I was in the tenth grade because he showed us how to live and what you should do and I still do it.” “I don’t underestimate the power of my influence. I’m very well empowered. In fact, I know the difference I can make.” |
| **LAUREN** | “I’m like 'Aw man. So much attention just because I gave this guy money.’ But at the same time, I felt a little proud of myself because I’m taking the time out to help someone.” | “It empowered me to the point that you say 'I can do that.’ I want to do the same things that person did.” | “I felt empowered and basically I can make a difference. And I have a calling to do much more than just what I want to do. That’s why even to this day, I’m striving to become a social worker because I like to help people and see the importance of building relationships and empowering people and telling them that they can do better and showing them that there’s hope. |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **HAROLD** | "You know being positive and giving other people chances and trusting other people was something new. That was something that I really had to learn how to do. But you know with the guides…the mentors that I did have you know they were able to push me through that." | "And if you're not engaged or educated about things that exist in your communities and in the world itself, you'll be naïve and you'll be led astray very easily." "…no matter where I go in life, no matter how successful I may get, how unsuccessful I may be, we have to be grateful for the things that we have and always remember to give back to those who are less fortunate, who don't have the blessings that we do." | "I was inspired to be able to spread awareness and change the mindset. Of people and how we're viewed. And I think that's why I work really diligently to do more and to get people to understand the African American inner city man and woman, to understand the young people, understand the language that they speak, understand the body gestures, the body language that they may give off and not be threatened by it." |
| **CHRISTOPHER** | "I've always been the type to judge people on how they treat me, not what other people think." | "I want to get an understanding. And with understanding, we can figure out how to change it." "…let's try to get an understanding of who we're helping and then we can try to start caning the situation." | "…just to know that I can make change. So no matter who you are or what situation you're in, I know that I can create change within an environment." "…she really inspired me and empowered me to know that you can create change, no matter who you are or your size…whatever it is. If you have a voice and you stand up for something, you really can create change." |
| **KAREN** | N/A | "My past relationships with Ms. Martin and the class affect my life today because I now serve as an advocate for my special needs students and problem teens." | "Before I entered my social justice class, I didn't know how much power I had but once I finished that class, I realized how much power I had." |

**Theme 1: Unconventional Mentorship**

Generally, respondents were hesitant to assign their SJ teachers with the title of "mentor." While many agreed that the teacher was certainly a mentor to others, (e.g. When asked whether she considered her teacher, Ms. Martin, a mentor, Rita responded, "Um…yeah I think she could be. In fact, I think when we got into uh our senior year, she was a mentor to a lot of the girls not particularly myself because I had

my adviser and I had a couple of other like science teachers who I really related with. But um I think she could have been and…and was to a lot of people"), they were consistent in their contention that that was not the nature of their relationships. Responses to questions regarding the teacher's impact revealed that the relationship between teacher and student was one in which the teacher took on the role of facilitator or guide in the lives of his or her students.  This same line of questioning provoked responses in which the teacher was referred to as someone who served to motivate or advise his or her students. Although all of the respondents described definitively mentor-like characteristics for their SJ teachers, they remained resolute that this was not the case. (e.g. When asked if he considered his teacher Mr. Harrison a mentor, one respondent, John, attempted to explain why he did not. "When you're mentoring someone, I guess it depends how you look at it but generally it's more one-on-one and there's more interaction. But the interaction I had with him wasn't just mentoring although he mentored us in that respect. But I would say he was more influential. You know you have good teachers out there. They may not have been your mentor but you know they influenced you to do the right thing if that makes sense.") This idea of mentoring in an unconventional style was implied during several interviews. The first sub-theme was developed to determine the title that best described the role of the SJ teacher.

Respondents shared personal experiences they had with their SJ teachers during and after their time in SJ. While several students like Deborah spoke of the impression their SJ teachers had on their class overall, (e.g. "She would always be happy to see us and hear about what we were doing and kind of make sure that we still were living the life that you know we said that we wanted to live when we were at [A. Catholic High School].") others spoke of more endearing experiences they shared with their teacher. One respondent in particular raved about how vital Ms. Martin was to his continued focus on school during trying times. Christopher recalled the days in ninth grade immediately following his father's unexpected death. While many of his fellow classmates interrogated him on the circumstances of his father's passing, he recalled Ms. Martin's response, one he says he will never forget. (e.g. "When my father died…Ms. Martin came and gave me a hug. Like that was the first thing she did. She just came and

gave me a hug.") Christopher admitted that he had a closer bond with Ms. Martin than he had with his peers at A. Catholic High School (e.g. "And with Ms. Martin, I could be a little more open than someone at school is used to me being…emotional in that way.") He then went on to mention the personal effects Ms. Martin had on him after his father's passing. (e.g. "She was just someone, no matter what it was, she was that person that could help you. She was definitely key in my life.") Although he did not explain further, Christopher was the only respondent to accept the term "mentor" as a title for his SJ teacher. (e.g. When asked if he considered Ms. Martin a mentor, Christopher responded, "Yes. Definitely.")

The second sub-theme regarding exposure via course content and its application in the real world emerged as many students credited the SJ course for their dedication to servicing the community. One respondent, John, spoke of his teacher, Mr. Harrison, in terms of the impact their relationship had on his community service habits. (e.g. "He made it okay for us to feel like giving back was the right thing to do.") Other respondents also talked about the impact they believed their SJ teacher had on the class as a whole. Harold spoke of his teacher, Ms. Martin, in this way and explained what he posited was her ultimate purpose in teaching the course (e.g. "She was definitely, definitely engaged in the lives of children and concerned about our wellbeing and…I think she was working really hard to produce the next social movement leaders.") During the interview, respondents were asked to think about the writing they did in the course. While many could not recall specific examples of topics they wrote about, Lauren recalled writing about an experience which she believes was heavily influenced by course content and Ms. Martin.

I talked about when I was out in the streets and just on my way to my mom's house. A homeless guy was there and I passed him and immediately after I passed him, I stopped and turned around and started talking to him and I gave him a $10 bill. He grabbed my hand and kept thanking me and saying how much people my age just don't care about people like him, even older adults. At the same time I was a little embarrassed because there were people in the street and people in the cars and people on their porches and doorsteps and I'm like "aw man so much attention just 'cause I gave this guy money." But at

the same time I felt a little proud of myself because I'm taking the time out to help someone.

Lauren explained that her decision to offer the man money was influenced by the biblical story of the Good Samaritan that she learned about from Ms. Martin. Her experience illustrates the way the course content in SJ (the combination of religious teachings and social activism) was able to be applied outside of the classroom, allowing Lauren to build her self-esteem while helping someone in need.

Other unconventional teaching methods were also used during the course, allowing respondents to apply their knowledge to real-world situations. During Social Justice, all students were required to volunteer in a soup kitchen. Every respondent enjoyed this particular experience and spoke of the influence it had on them at the time. (e.g. When speaking about this experience, Christopher replied, "I mean when we went to the soup kitchen, I think that was probably one of the most enlightening experiences of my life.") (Rita had this to say about her experience: "I'm definitely more into community service now. Like I would have never…I didn't even know what a soup kitchen was prior to SJ class. Now I can honestly say that influenced me wanting to give back.) The alternative teaching methods employed by teachers of SJ made it distinct from other courses (e.g. When asked about her experiences in class, Emily replied, "So it was all about doing things to help other people. You weren't just sitting in a classroom you know learning about theories and things like that. I mean we did that too but there was an action component that was very different than other classes you take.") and motivated several students to continue volunteer work long after graduating from A. Catholic High school. (e.g. John credited Mr. Harrison's teaching methods for continuing to volunteer for more than twenty years: "I've been doing community service since I was in the tenth grade because he showed us how to live and what you should do and I still do it.")

The third theme regarding bereavement/symbolic loss emerged after several respondents revealed that they experienced deaths of family/friends or symbolic loss while in SJ. Harold experienced the deaths of several of his friends and family members while growing up. He also dealt heavily with symbolic loss as both his mother and father were incarcerated at the time of his birth. He admitted to developing a

figurative wall regarding emotions and never feeling happy as a child because he did not have the person that he believed was supposed to be "[his] nurturer, [his] provider, [and his] first educator." (After being unhappy for majority of his childhood, Harold admitted: e.g. "…Social Justice has definitely you know provided the segue for my healing.") Christopher remembered keeping a journal when his father died as per a suggestion by Ms. Murphy. (e.g. "When my father died, Ms. Martin was very instrumental in just keeping me balanced and sane during that time. So without her…I wouldn't have kept up with what I was doing.") Karen, the only respondent interviewed via email, credited both Ms. Martin and SJ for her being able to eventually forgive her mother's murderer as well as her father for abandoning her family. (When speaking about the impact social justice had on her life, Karen responded, "My social justice class impacted me in more ways than what I can imagine. It was the class that taught me what forgiveness truly is. I decided that I forgave my father for abandoning my sister and me.  In addition, I also forgave my mother's killer.")

Overall, respondents had a wide range of personal experiences with their SJ teachers that could be interpreted as mentoring relationships. Although a singular title comparable to "mentor" was not provided by respondents in the quotes above, interactions between teachers and students suggest that there was a socially supportive environment in SJ facilitated by the SJ teacher. In the following section, respondents identify how this environment and the teacher generated personal transformation.

**Theme 2: Forms of Transformation**

Sub-themes for forms of transformation (self-esteem, self-efficacy, and empowerment) were determined prior to the interviews. These three aspects of social development were chosen as sub-themes because previous literature suggests that they act as building blocks for transformation. One must feel positively about herself (self-esteem) in order to believe that she can create change (self-efficacy). She must then feel motivated or powerful enough to actually take the necessary steps to complete that goal (empowerment). Although respondents were explicitly asked about their levels of empowerment, they were not explicitly asked about their levels of self-esteem or self-efficacy during the interview. However,

many respondents inadvertently revealed changes in their levels of self-esteem and self-efficacy during questioning.

Indications of self-esteem were evident as respondents spoke about how they felt about themselves. While some respondents like Christopher seemed to already have a good sense of himself while in high school (e.g. "I've always been the type to judge people on how they treat me, not what other people think.") others like Emily credited SJ for her ability to overcome certain stressful situations she faced while in college (e.g. "I definitely think learning about perseverance and overcoming obstacles and you know that there's challenges in life but you have to push through…I mean I definitely would say that helped…that education helped me being able to get through college in those challenging situations."). Karen admitted to struggling with her sexual identity during high school. This struggle caused her much inner turmoil, especially while in attendance at A. Catholic High school, a deeply religious institution. She believes that her struggle was finally ended due to her religion and stated, "Since college, Jesus has restored my sexuality, my identity, self-worth, etc." Karen also struggled with depressive episodes and suicidal thoughts following her mother's death, which occurred before her time in SJ. After taking the class, she claimed "The life lesson I learned from this class is to stop being the victim." Harold also struggled with his self-esteem while at A. Catholic High School. He ascribed his ability to keep moving forward despite inner conflict to the teachers he had while in school. (e.g. "They gave me the encouragement I needed to keep moving forward. I really wanted to give up when I felt like I didn't belong at [A. Catholic High School]. Um they were the ones that reassured me that I was in the right place…that I deserved to be there just as much as anyone else.")

Many questions regarding empowerment elicited responses that were more indicative of changes in self-efficacy. Christopher seemed to exhibit this heightened level of self-efficacy the most. When asked how Ms. Martin or SJ influenced his life outside of high school, Christopher responded, "…just to know that I can make change. So no matter who you are or what situation you're in, I know that I can create change within an environment." John and Lauren both shared similar sentiments when the topic of

discussion was empowerment. John had no doubts about how influential he could be in an environment. (e.g. "I don't underestimate the power of my influence. I'm very well empowered. In fact, I know the difference I can make.") Lauren claimed that the class empowered her to want to create change the way the historical figures she learned about created change. (e.g. "It empowered me to the point that you say 'I can do that.' I want to do the same things that person did.") She went on to say, "I felt empowered and basically I can make a difference. And I have a calling to do much more than just what I want to do. That's why even to this day, I'm striving to become a social worker because I like to help people and see the importance of building relationships and empowering people and telling them that they can do better and showing them that there's hope."

Respondents were asked explicit questions about their levels of empowerment during and after the course. To determine if the course content or the teacher had any effects on their levels of empowerment, respondents were asked if they believed their time in SJ was empowering. Every respondent agreed that their time in SJ was empowering. John, the oldest respondent, was one of the few to elaborate on how his teacher, Mr. Harrison, empowered him. When asked if their relationship was empowering, John responded:

Oh without a doubt. And he told me something that I live by and this was after I left high school. He said, "You know what? You should live in such a way that every life that you touch, you leave it that much better than if you hadn't touched it. And if it's anything less than that, you should go back and retouch it so you make a difference." And especially now in medicine, I totally see that. I mean I get that way anyway but you can just imagine the ripple effect. You know if everybody kind of…if they were mentally aware that every life that they were going to touch, they were going to make sure that that interaction was going to be something that was positive and it was going to be good, and if they hadn't done it, they go back to make sure that happens…if you had most people living that way, you wouldn't have half the problems you have right now in the world anyway.

John, who now works as a medical doctor, continued this thought by explaining how he uses the

unforgettable words of his SJ teacher when communicating with his patients and the students he mentors. This process of reciprocal empowerment (the empowered attempting to empower others) ensures that the transformation John experienced while in SJ and the legacy of the course's founder never die and continue to change lives.

Towards the end of the interview, every respondent was asked whether they felt "more powerful" after taking Social Justice. Responses to this question revealed that all but one respondent's levels of self-efficacy and empowerment were affected by the course. Deborah credited her feelings of empowerment to being a teenager and feeling somewhat invincible as teenagers are wont to do. However, every other respondent affirmed that they definitely felt more powerful after taking the course. John believed that both his teacher and the class affected how powerful he felt after taking the course. (e.g. When asked this question, John responded, "Absolutely. Absolutely. That I will absolutely credit to him. After I was done with his class, for me I was like there's nothing I can't do. There's no change that's too small. There's no change that you can make that you feel like it's too small. And you only underestimate the power of your influence on others and if you don't at least take advantage of it then you'll never know the lives you've touched.")

Another respondent, Harold, shared an experience he had at A. Catholic High School which he says most people would consider negative. During his time in SJ, students were given an assignment to create a collage that represented unity. Harold made a collage with pictures featuring him and dozens of other African American males, many from rival neighborhoods, who had all come together one night to enjoy Go-Go music at a local club. Despite Harold's pride in his work, both his SJ teacher and principal considered the collage to be a representation of gang culture and Harold received a failing grade. Although the experience had an immediately negative outcome, Harold claimed that this experience is what empowered him the most during his time at A. Catholic High School.

Um after that experience with the project…like I said it wasn't…some might say it was a negative experience but it was definitely an experience that empowered me. Um empowered me

to bring awareness of the issues of inner city youth to the forefront. Um so yeah definitely it

empowered me. All the different activities that we did were empowering but that really

empowered me 'cause I needed people to know you know "this is who we are. We're here." You

know what I'm saying don't judge us, you know? You know…yeah it definitely empowered me.

This experience demonstrated the transformative nature of Social Justice. Harold was able to take

an undesirable event and use it as motivation to create change within his community, which many may

see as the ultimate goal of the course.

Overall, respondents were positively influenced by both their SJ teachers and course content.

These influences were exhibited by improved levels of self-esteem, self-efficacy, and empowerment.

Based on the interviews, the unconventional mentorship portrayed by SJ teachers and the supportive

environment of the course in general appear to be definitely effective resources for producing

transformative experiences.

**Discussion**

*Findings*

The present study examined the relationship between the transformative mentoring experiences

offered by a course in SJ and former students' current levels of empowerment, as indicated primarily by

levels of self-esteem, self-efficacy, and other more general forms of empowerment. Based on the findings

of this study, participants were heavily influenced by the supportive environment of the SJ course which

was facilitated by the SJ teacher who acted as an unconventional mentor. Guidance during adolescence is

vital to the development of an individual's sense of self. However, this guidance may not always be

offered by a parent and it is sometimes necessary for a non-familial adult to take on this role. According

to DeSecottier (1998), this non-familial adult need only to be someone who simply makes a "sustained

personal commitment to a young person needing the guidance, moral support, and approval of a warm-

hearted adult" (pg. 31). Further, DuBois and Karcher (2005) suggest that the relationship between mentor

and mentee must be one in which the mentor has more experience than the mentee, promotes the mentee's growth and development, and cultivates an emotional bond that signifies trust between mentor and mentee. Based solely on the aforementioned data, the SJ teacher certainly meets the criteria to be considered a mentor. However, respondents were hesitant to make this connection causing me to determine what makes the mentoring offered by the SJ teacher unconventional.

Although participants spoke positively about their SJ teachers' instruction styles and the differences in the course content of SJ as compared with other classes, many were hesitant to refer to their relationship with their respective teachers as a mentoring relationship. This may be explained partially by participants' understanding of mentorship as formal mentorship; there may have been a lack of awareness of informal mentorship, which is less well-known and more ambiguous in nature. Informal mentorship is not guided or organized by some external entity and the terms of the relationship often remain undefined. Alternatively, perhaps what denotes the mentoring methods of the teacher unconventional is the idea that the teacher did not act alone in this process. In the literature reviewed, researchers refer to a mentor as an individual person who promotes change in an individual mentee. However, in this case, it is reasonable to propose that it was the teacher in conjunction with the course itself that promoted change in a group of individuals. The conventional one to one ratio of mentor and mentee that denotes the usual mentoring relationship was cultivated into a relationship that is not between individuals but between a mentoring program and a class of students. This may explain why respondents did not consider their teachers to be mentors. When asked this question during the interview, respondents likely had their own preconceived ideas of what constitutes someone as a mentor. This is evident in one of the quotes used in the results in which a participant replies "When you're mentoring someone… generally it's more one-on-one and there's more interaction." The interaction between the teacher and individual students was limited in that there was an entire class that needed to be mentored. Perhaps the likelihood of respondents considering their teachers as mentors would have been improved had each individual received more one on one time with teachers but, as with many classes, this was not the case. Instead, students were mentored

collectively, deeming this relationship "unconventional."

By way of this unconventional mentorship, some former students were able to undergo transformations in their self-perception. Findings from O'Connor (1997) suggest that being in an environment that promotes or teaches empowerment may lead to one feeling empowered. The SJ course sought to empower the students by building their self-efficacy. Transformations to self-efficacy and empowerment as well as self-esteem were examined in the present study. While only some respondents exhibited increases in self-esteem during their time in SJ, every respondent stated that they felt empowered by the course and responses offered strong indication in regards to an increase in self-efficacy.

Based on studies on empowerment by O'Connor (1997) and Rogers et al. (1997), the likelihood of gaining a sense of empowerment from those in one's external environment may be influenced by the level of closeness between the empowered and the disempowered. Thus, it is reasonable to say that respondents who had closer relationships with their SJ teachers experienced greater social development than those who did not feel such closeness. This would explain why at least one respondent did not make the connection between her empowerment and the course. Gender differences between respondents and SJ teachers may offer another explanation. Bogat and Liang (2005) suggested that females and males have different attitudinal, psychological, and behavioral paths of growth during adolescence. While males sought increased autonomy, females sought to strengthen their relationships in order to develop their identities. Of the five females interviewed in the present study, two considered their relationships with their SJ teachers close and spoke positively of the mentoring experience. The remaining three females did not consider their relationships with their SJ teachers close and therefore did not consider her to be a mentor. Keating et al. (2002), suggest that race plays a factor in mentees' responses to mentorship. According to the 2002 study, non-African Americans responded more positively to the mentoring program. However, since all of the respondents in the present study were African American, that comparison cannot be made.

*Implications, Limitations, and Future Research*

The results from the present study provide evidence for the benefits of informal mentoring regardless of whether it is organized using conventional or unconventional methods. In the case of A. Catholic High School, mentoring was offered in the form of a mandatory course in Social Justice. Due to the ideals instilled in them during their time in SJ, the majority of the participants continue to serve as pillars of their communities by volunteering their time in a multitude of fashions without any compensation. It stands to reason that if this course of study was applied in other educational environments, similar benefits could be experienced by students who have never attended A. Catholic High school. As I have only been out of high school for four years, I can still recall my former classmates sharing with me that they felt lost and unsure of their social development when leaving high school. Because I was able to develop a mentoring relationship with a teacher, I did not experience these feelings. However, many students were not as lucky and most likely continued their formative years without the guidance offered by a mentor. This study demonstrates the need for a SJ class to be instituted in other schools for students on the precipice of adulthood.

The sample size of the present study consisted of eight participants from a Catholic school in an urban area. Although this was not the intended sample size and efforts were made to increase this number during recruitment, a smaller sample allowed for more in-depth analysis. However, because the present study was qualitative and included a small sample, the results were never intended to be generalizable. Therefore, the degree to which these results can inform practices in other contexts and at other schools is unclear. Time constraints hindered further recruitment for more participants and did not allow for potential participants, who may have been unavailable at the time of recruitment, to participate in the research. Due to limited experience with the qualitative protocol, mistakes were made which may have resulted in respondents providing less information than anticipated. Future research regarding the transformative effects of SJ or mentoring in general should recruit a larger sample size in order to

examine the links between the course, the teacher, and the students' transformation while accounting for graduation year, gender (of teachers and students), and race.

## Study 2 Quantitative

### Results

There were a total of 135 participants in the present study. Of the total number of participants, there were eighty-two females, thirty-six males, and seventeen unknown responses. Participants were given six options for race. There were fifty-nine White, non-Hispanic participants, forty-three Black, non-Hispanic participants, six Hispanic participants, six Asian or Pacific Islander participants, three Arab/Middle Eastern participants, and two participants who identified as other. Six options were given for religious denomination. There were fifty-two Christian participants, twenty-two Catholic participants, two Muslim participants, two Jewish participants, and nine participants who identified with other religions. Twenty-seven participants did not identify with any religion. Participants were asked to identify their frequency of attendance to religious services. Forty-six participants disclosed that they never attend religious services. Thirty-three participants attended services less than once a month and sixteen participants attended services once a week.

Two scales were used to determine the transformative effects participants believed their mentor had on their levels of empowerment. Three forms of empowerment were measured: self-efficacy, power, and community activism.
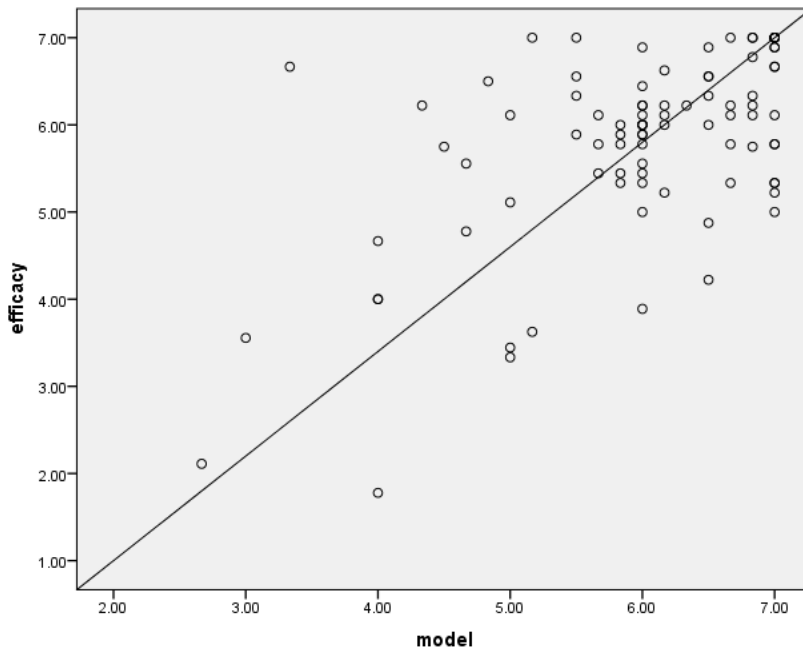
### *Hypothesis One*

Literature discussed in chapter two indicated the importance of youth mentoring in later attitudinal, psychological, and behavioral paths of growth (e.g. Bogat and Liang, 2005). Self-efficacy is an important indicator of empowerment and one possible path to growth. Therefore, the first hypothesis

was that there would be a positive relationship between having transformative mentoring experiences and self-efficacy. Results of linear regression analyses revealed that there is a significant, positive relationship between perceptions of mentoring experiences and levels of self-efficacy ($\beta$=.71, p <.00; see Table 7). Scatterplots were also used to fit the regression line and create a graphical representation the results; see Figure 1). Specifically, those participants who felt challenged and encouraged by their mentor also reported higher levels of self-efficacy. The percent variance explained by this model was 38%. As expected, significance (at p<.05) associated with beta coefficients for each variable indicated that none of the control variables (SES, sex, marital status, race/ethnicity, religious denomination, and religiosity) were good predictors of self-efficacy. The combined variance shows how the chosen predictor (as well as other variables in the model) contributes to self-efficacy; however, there are other factors left unexplained by this model.

Table 7 Linear Regression Analyses (w/ Perception of Mentor as Independent Variable)

| Dependent Variable | B | Significance |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| **Efficacy** | .705 | .000 |
| **Activism** | .598 | .000 |
| **Power** | .111 | .433 |

**Figure 1 Scatterplot for Hypothesis 1 with Fitted Regression Line**
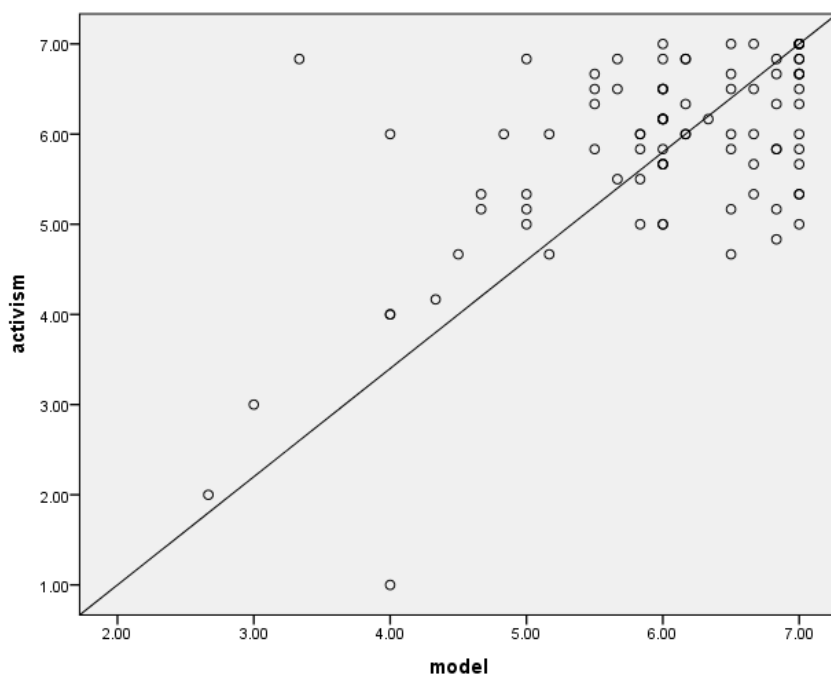
*Hypothesis Two*

Literature discussed in chapter two indicated that feelings of power (versus feelings of powerlessness) could also be an indicator of empowerment (e.g. Bogat and Liang, 2005). Therefore, the second hypothesis was that participants with higher levels of transformative mentoring experiences will express higher levels of power. Results of linear regression analyses revealed that there is not a significant relationship between perceptions of mentoring experiences and feelings of power, controlling for all else.

*Hypothesis Three*

Literature discussed in chapter two levels of community activism could be considered an indicator of empowerment (e.g. Bogat and Liang, 2005). Therefore, the third hypothesis was that participants with higher levels of transformative mentoring experiences will express higher levels of community activism and autonomy. Results of linear regression analyses revealed that there is a significant, positive relationship between perceptions of mentoring experiences and levels of community

activism and autonomy ($\beta$=.60, p <.00; see Table 7). Scatterplots were also used to fit the regression line and create a graphical representation the results; see Figure 2). Specifically, those participants who felt challenged and encouraged by their mentor also reported higher levels of activism and autonomy. The percent variance explained by this model was 41%. As expected, significance (at p<.05) associated with beta coefficients for each variable indicated that none of the control variables (SES, sex, marital status, race/ethnicity, religious denomination, and religiosity) were good predictors of self-efficacy. The combined variance shows how the chosen predictor (as well as other variables in the model) contributes to activism and autonomy; however, there are other factors left unexplained by this model.



**Figure 2 Scatterplot of Hypothesis 3 with Fitted Regression Line**

Overall, linear regression analyses revealed that there is a significant, positive correlation between perceptions of mentoring experiences and levels of self-efficacy and community activism later in life. Significance was not found for the relationship between participants' perceptions of transformative experiences and feelings of power later in life (See Table 7). No significance was found for the

relationships between any of the outcome variables (self-efficacy, community activism, and power) and the presence of a mentor, the other independent variable.

**Discussion**

At the beginning of the present study, it was hypothesized that participants with more transformative mentoring experiences would express higher levels of self-efficacy, community activism, and power. Self-efficacy is the belief that one may accomplish what he or she sets out to do. Community activism is the idea that collaborative efforts made within a community are necessary to better said community and those within it. Power was considered the extent to which one believes that she is in control of her own life. Transformative mentoring experiences were considered any non-romantic relationships a mentee had with a non-familial adult, marked by the adult's capacity to evoke change in the mentee's behavior, outlook, and self-perception. Although no significance was found for the relationships between having a mentor/role model and levels of empowerment, results revealed that there was a significant, positive correlation between participants' perceptions of their mentors and levels of self-efficacy and community activism later in life, respectively. These findings suggest that those who consider their relationships with mentors to be transformative are likely to experience benefits in regards to their levels of self-efficacy and community activism. As previously stated, the overall consensus of established research on the subject is that mentoring positively affects individuals. This consensus is derived from quantitative and qualitative studies that focused on determining the difference that mentoring relationships can make. Nevertheless, it was surprising to find that participants' levels of power were affected by neither having a mentor nor having a positive perception of their mentoring experiences. This finding may have several possible explanations. Hurd and Zimmerman (2014) and Miller et al. (2012) suggest that the duration of the relationship, frequency of interaction, and the level of closeness as perceived by the mentee are all important factors for transformation. However, the most interesting explanation may be simply that the benefits of mentoring cannot be measured objectively, as concluded by Royse (1998). The effects of mentoring must instead be studied qualitatively to assess the

abovementioned factors that contribute to a mentee's transformation.

Generalizability in the present study is limited in that the sample only consisted of college students from two schools. Although some college campuses are able to account for much of the population in race and gender diversity, the age range for college students is usually only representative of a small demographic. Further, due to mistakes in the recruitment process by the researcher, data between the two schools used in the study cannot be differentiated; therefore, conclusions cannot be made regarding differences between participants at Penn State Brandywine and Temple University. The intended sample size for the present study was 150 participants. However, the researcher was only able to recruit135 participants, of which only 118 participants completed the entire survey.

# Chapter 5

## General Discussion

The present thesis deploys the concept of empowerment to capture the way significant nonrelated adults role models (whom the researcher initially referred to as mentors) support and guide protégés, and what, if anything, this means for empowerment later in life. Quantitatively, participants were considered empowered if they had experienced increase in their self-efficacy, efforts toward activism, and feelings of power. Qualitatively, empowerment was defined more broadly. Participants were asked to reflect on experiences with high school teachers, who, through the nature of teaching a mandatory course on SJ, were expected to have relationships with students that moved beyond convention, and into the realm of social support. Therefore, participants were asked to reflect on whether they felt empowered, disempowered, or neither empowered or disempowered, as a result of their relationship with this teacher.

The two studies discussed in this thesis examined only a small portion of the population in hopes of determining the relationship between the aforementioned mentoring experiences and levels of empowerment. Qualitatively, it was determined that transformations in levels of self-efficacy, self-esteem, and other forms of empowerment were elicited by the supportive environment of a SJ class and facilitated by the SJ teacher, who served as an unconventional mentor. Quantitatively, it was determined that participants' perceptions of their mentors or role models were positively linked to levels of self-efficacy and community activism later in life. In other words, individuals who considered their time with their mentors to be transformative or beneficial experienced changes in their self-perception, outlook, and behavior; individuals who did not consider relationships with role models or mentors to be beneficial did not experience these changes. Regardless of perception, levels of power were not found to be affected in the quantitative study. However, this does not take away from the known benefits of mentoring. As suggested by several of the qualitative respondents, the mentoring they received in high school was responsible for the levels of power and self-efficacy they felt after completing high school. Three respondents even credited their respective teachers with motivating them to stay in school through hard

times. It is clear that mentoring heavily influenced the decisions they made during and immediately after high school and well into adulthood. If one message is to be taken from the results of both the qualitative and quantitative studies in this thesis, it is that all mentoring relationships have the potential to be transformative and every effort should be made to ensure that this is the case for all youth. This can serve as support for programs like Big Brothers Big Sisters of America which matches mentors with children in need of guidance.

Future research should examine how life experiences moderate the relationship between having a mentor and experiencing transformation. After addressing the various limitations mentioned in the previous section, it would be interesting to examine the differences in perceptions of mentoring experiences of participants in a variety of college majors. It is possible that students who major in any of the social sciences may be more exposed to matters concerning the impact relationships in childhood and adolescence can have in adulthood. Lastly, in regards to the qualitative study, the extent to which transformation is a result of the class or the teacher should be examined more in depth than what was possible in the present study. A prospective study that follows youth before, during, and after mentorship would be ideal, and allow us to better assess causality. More respondents as well as interviews with teachers may provide more insight into the true nature of the relationship between the teacher, the class, and respondents' self-perceptions and social development later in life.

**Appendix A**

**Sample Interview Transcription**

Date: November 29, 2014

Time: 2:33 pm-3:50 pm

**Respondent**: Were you a student of Carroll high school as well?
**Interviewer**: No but I'm a student of Dr. Harrell-Levy at Penn State Brandywine.
**Respondent**: Oh okay. That's fine. I had spoken to someone I don't know maybe about a year and a half ago.
**Interviewer**: Mhm.
**Respondent**: And it seemed like they went to Carroll and instituted at least the start of this.
**Interviewer**: Yeah.
**Respondent**: Or at least some portion of this and I had a lot of exchange with them. That's why I was asking.
**Interviewer**: Oh okay. Well, I'm not sure about what happened a year ago, but Dr. Harrell-Levy did give me an overview of the initial research.
**Respondent**: Okay.
**Interviewer**: And I'm just doing a follow-up based on that research.
**Respondent**: Sure.
**Interviewer**: Okay. So, before we start, I should ask you how much time you have for the interview.
**Respondent**: Um how much time do you need?
**Interviewer**: Well um my previous interviews have taken between 40 minutes and an hour.
**Respondent**: That's fine.
**Interviewer**: Okay. So, like I said I'm doing a follow-up to Dr. Harrell-Levy's research with Carroll high school. For the people who went to Carroll high school that I'm interviewing, I'm just focusing on transformational relationships. So your social justice class…we're looking at that as something that could possibly be a transformational. Like the relationship you had with your social justice teacher. We're looking at that as if…that teacher could have acted as a mentor…and how she or he has affected your life.
**Respondent**: Okay.
**Interviewer**: And based on that, we want to know how empowered you feel or how much influence you feel you have over your life.
**Respondent**: Okay.
**Interviewer**: Okay. And a little bit about me, I'm just an undergrad. I'm in my senior year. I'm doing this research for my undergraduate thesis.
**Respondent**: Okay. What are you majoring in?
**Interviewer**: Psychology.
**Respondent**: Okay. So sounds good.
**Interviewer**: Yeah. So the finished product um I'm working on should be done around April. So when we're finished the interview, if you have any questions about that…a lot of people have been asking about the finished product so when it's done, I'd be glad to send you and whoever else a copy.

**Respondent**: Okay.

**Interviewer**: And I'm not sure if Dr. Harrell-Levy's gonna write something, but I'll send you whatever she writes too.

**Respondent**: Sure.

**Interviewer**: Okay. I have to remind you that the interview and everything that you say will be kept completely confidential.

**Respondent**: Okay.

**Interviewer**: Dr. Harrell-Levy is working on getting the consent forms sent out. I'm not sure if she sent them yet but just keep an eye out for that.

**Respondent**: Okay. Is that gonna be by mail or is that gonna be electronic?

**Interviewer**: It's gonna be by mail.

**Respondent**: Okay.

**Interviewer**: I think we just need you to sign it and send it back.

**Respondent**: Okay.

**Interviewer**: Alright. Before we start, do you have any questions for me?

**Respondent**: No.

**Interviewer**: Okay. So the first part of the interview is background information.

**Respondent**: Okay.

**Interviewer**: so the first question is what year did you graduate high school?

**Respondent**: I graduated in 1987.

**Interviewer**: Okay. And if I stop during any time and it gets quiet, it's not because we've been disconnected. I'm just taking notes.

**Respondent**: No, I understand.

**Interviewer**: Okay. Who was your social justice teacher?

**Respondent**: It was Robert Harrison. H-o-d-e-r-n-y.

**Interviewer**: You're actually the first person I've interviewed that has had the chance to meet Mr. Harrison.

**Respondent**: Yeah. Actually he's um…he was quite the character actually.

**Interviewer**: So I'm definitely looking forward to hearing about him. I've had students who were at Carroll after he was already gone and they've all expressed feelings about wanting to meet him and wishing they had him so I'm definitely looking forward to hearing about him.

**Respondent**: Yeah, he was a good guy. He was a nutball but he was a great guy.

**Interviewer**: *laughing* Alright. How would you describe your current job or career path?

**Respondent**: Uh well I'm a doctor. I'm a physician. I work in the emergency department. I'm an emergency medical physician.

**Interviewer**: Okay. What's your uh…so your highest degree of education is a doctorate?

**Respondent**: Um yeah it's an M.D. degree…medical degree.

**Interviewer**: Okay. Did you receive any scholarships to attend high school, undergrad, or graduate school?

**Respondent**: Um I got a…I had some for high school. I had a band scholarship 'cause you know Carroll high school is a private school. Uh so I got a scholarship for band. At the time, it wasn't that expensive. I think it was $1200 a year and I got like a $400 scholarship for band. And then I worked and my parents also chipped in and paid the rest of it. And when I went to American University, I had a full tuition scholarship. It was tuition only so I picked up room and board, books, that kind of stuff. And that was academic so it wasn't sports related or anything like that and I had it for all four years. And when I went into medical school, which was several years after college…probably about 10 years after I left college, I went into medical school. The medical school I went to is in Massachusetts. It's the University of Massachusetts, a state school. And because it's a state school, funded by tax dollars if you will, they only take in-state residents so the tuition was relatively inexpensive and I got a partial scholarship to cover all of that as well too.

**Interviewer**: Okay. And would you have been able to attend any of that without the scholarships?
**Respondent**: Oh, there's no way I would have been able to attend without the scholarships. I would've because I was working. I worked full time when I was in medical school so I would've just paid it out of pocket and a lot of it I did. So that, even if I didn't have the scholarship, I would've gone because I was a professional by that point. But college, it was a little bit different. I would have still gone, maybe not to that school because it would have been too expensive for me to work and pay for it. So I would have gone to a school I could afford. But since I could afford that one with full tuition, that's where I went.
**Interviewer**: Do you vote in elections?
**Respondent**: I do. I do and you should too.
**Interviewer**: And do you participate in community service?
**Respondent**: I do a lot of community services, yes.
**Interviewer**: Can you tell me a little bit about that?
**Respondent**: Yeah, so when I was in high school, that was one of the things with Dr. Harrison with his social justice class…even before that. So, the social justice class, just to give you a background, when I was in school, when I was at Carroll, it was a course that you took in your third year. So I was a junior at that point but it's both your junior and senior year. Now Dr. Harrison, like any other teacher, also had time when he covered for other teachers etcetera so it's not like we had to wait until that time of year or until you were a junior to have any exposure to him. He was also kind of like the spirit teacher in terms of you know pride of the school, that kind of stuff. You know we used to have pep rallies and get all pumped up and everything else. So he organized that and we also had these fence parties. I don't know if you ever heard of it but the school, particularly in an urban environment…the school would be closed in and there are parts of the school that would be fenced in if you will…a regular chain link fence. And we used to have these uh…I'm trying to think of what the right word is to say. In any case, every year we would have a logo for the school, some kind of saying like "Carroll pride and joy" or you know "green and gold glory" that kind of stuff. And what we would do is we would actually put paper into the fencing that are big enough to make up the letters. So you know across the whole…and you can imagine it's a long school so the side of the fence goes maybe three quarters of a block. In between each post, from one post to the next, would be a full letter, usually about 15 or 16 feet tall and maybe 14 wide. And he would organize and orchestrate what the logo would be the Friday night before the biggest game before the school year starts. A bunch of students would come out and it was a volunteer session. We would go in and fill all that stuff out. And then when the students come in for the year, you just have this little logo that's along the wall and you could see it even from the street as well too. The reason why I brought that up is because through tha6t I was exposed to him and he does a lot of community service. So from that, I started doing community service work with him. The homeless shelter was one. The soup kitchen was another one. So the soup kitchen was for students in social justice. Every student had to go and do at least one morning. You go in from seven to noon, you serve, you help. There are some people that are at that shelter all the time. And you come in and you're just a hired hand. So they say "today we're making mashed potatoes, peanut butter sandwiches, and all sorts of other stuff." And you just help them with the prep. And then when the homeless people come in, you serve them, and then you clean up after them. So the reason why I bring that up is because I've been doing stuff with homeless shelters since that time.
**Interviewer**: Okay.
**Respondent**: And I kept doing it for probably…let's see my junior year was '85-'86? So yeah, from 1985 to about 2004, I would do work back and forth for homeless shelters. I used to do a lot more when I was in college but then I had kids and I couldn't do as much. And I started doing community service for this group called Fanny Mae. Fanny Mae…I don't know if you ever heard of Fanny Mae but they are a big conglomerate arm of federal financing. So when you get a loan, you go to a bank and there are certain banks that are federally funded and they're federally funded to cover certain programs. Within them, within Fanny Mae, they actually had a peer-support for high school. In other words, they'd go to the worst high schools in D.C. and find students that were actually smart enough…that could go somewhere…basically students that had a lot of potential but that may not be in the best environment to

support where they would go next. So through that they had mentors. I was a math tutor for those students ad taught them SAT prep. This is when I was in college. I taught them math SAT prep free of charge. I used to run clinics. And the kids that were part of that program would come to it. And I actually just opened it up to anybody because the students that were in the program were serious. They came because the program sort of demanded that they did but they were serious enough that they would come anyway. But there were other students who I think could have benefited from it but because they weren't in the program, it's not that they weren't allowed, they just weren't included. So I thought if I go to the school, I can teach the students in the program and if any other students want to get involved, I'll teach them too. So I got into to doing that. And actually initially it was a job for me. Like I was getting paid by Fanny Mae to help these students but then I continued to do it. So I've been doing math tutoring from about 1990 up until about 5 years ago.

**Interviewer**: Okay.

**Respondent**: I went to school in the district, in Washington D.C. for university and while I was at the university, that's when I was doing the Fanny Mae stuff. Hold on one second.

**Interviewer**: Okay.

**Respondent**: *talking in background* So while I was at American University, that's when I started doing math tutoring. I actually got a lot out of it and I liked it so I kept doing it. I kept volunteering in the soup kitchen even after that. I had kids early after I got out of school. My daughter was born in '91. I'm only telling you that because as your family situation changes, it alters how much time you have.

**Interviewer**: Yeah.

**Respondent**: So the things I used to do with the homeless kitchen, I couldn't do that anymore. So I started to do other volunteer work. I coached soccer. The math, I kept doing. When I got into medical school that was in Massachusetts…when we moved up there, of course I'm not around homeless shelters or anything like that anymore. We used to also raise food for the poor. That was also something we did at Carroll actually every year around Thanksgiving. We used to have the Thanksgiving drive. As people kept bring stuff in, we'd have a countdown to how much…as people kept bringing stuff in, we would mark it off and we would beat our goals almost every year. So I actually took the same principles and did them at work…when I worked with computers. I did them at the medical school a few times. And in the middle of that, I was also doing math tutoring. Because I was being mentored myself by other students when I was working my way trying to get into medical school. Once I got in…I got in through a program that looked out for minority students. So once I got in, I started mentoring for college students who wanted to go to medical school and just didn't know how to do it. I still do that today actually.

**Interviewer**: Okay.

**Respondent**: The math tutoring I stopped just because we moved back down to the D.C. area which is where we are now. The homeless kitchen you know every once in a while, I'll go in and do that but not with enough consistency. That is to say that I've always had my hands in some kind of community service piece since I got into high school even up to now. Some of it's changed a little bit but there's still quite a bit of mentoring and a lot of other stuff that I do to give back. And for me, it's just…it's not that we were taught that but if someone helps you, you should have enough mindset to be able to help back. So other things that I do for community service…I grew up in Haiti. The first 10 years of my life, I was in Haiti…well I went to school in Haiti. I was born in D.C. I went to school in Haiti so now as a medical doctor, one of my goals is always to go back to help out that community. So I go back to Haiti once sometimes twice a year and just do free medical clinic care in the outskirts of the country. I speak the language, I know the people. You know what I mean like I know the culture, all that other stuff too. So in addition to the stuff I've done here in the U.S., I actually do go to Haiti. And even before the earthquake, I was helping out…after the earthquake, certainly after that as well too. At least from my standpoint, I give back a lot. I'm fortunate for what I have. Now was that learned from Mr. Harrison? Sure. I think he influenced us to be…actually I wouldn't say as much that he was an influence. He made it okay for us to feel like giving back was the right thing to do. I think a lot of people have that innately in them but when you don't have a lot of examples and a lot of people to give that push to say "you should look outside

yourself to volunteer and do all that other stuff," he A) made it cool to do that and B) he gave you the self-esteem and said you know "life is not always about you. Sometimes when you do for other people, you have a greater sense of yourself by what you get out of it." And that certainly is true to this day. Would I have been someone to volunteer as much or at all if I hadn't met him? I think so because I'm just that kind of person. But having had him as a vehicle to show me how easy it was to say "okay I'm gonna do this" like the creativity to come up with a project and stuff and say "I'm interested in this so let me go help with this." He definitely was influential in giving us the means to make those things happen as opposed to conversations you have with your friends. I mean I've taken a lot of my friends to homeless shelters. When they were in school, nobody's doing any of that. You know initially they kind of made fun of it but then they realized that at the end of the day, everyone's like "that was pretty cool. You remember that guy? This and that." So at the end of the day, you can tell that it touched them. Coming from the inner city, one of the things that I've found about going to the homeless shelter is that as long as you have…giving back is one thing right? So that's an easy one to see. You gave and you helped this person out but what you don't realize is that it's so easy to give up on life and do whatever's out there. You know the kids that are selling drugs, making easy money, going into anything that might give them a fast buck, and that's okay. But I met a homeless guy …I'll never forget this. It was my junior year in high school. He had 2 diplomas in his pocket. He had a PhD…he had a bachelor's degree from Harvard.

**Interviewer**: Mhm.

**Respondent**: And he had a PhD from Princeton. And in the world that I grew up in, if you got that, you should be conquering the world upside down.

**Interviewer**: right.

**Respondent**: But here it is, this guy's homeless. You can definitely tell he's got some psych issues going on, maybe schizophrenic or whatever it is. But for the short time he was able to clearly express himself, he was asking me "what are you taking up?" "I'm in high school. Aw man I wanna go to college!" At that time I wanted to go to Georgetown because of the name, I know it's a good school and it could get me where I want and then he popped this in front of me. Like okay. Life is a little harder than just getting a degree from a great place. There still are a lot of other things that you have to appreciate and to get balanced on. I'll never forget that because his thing was "you can come from the best of schools and still not have anything. It all depends on how you come out of it." And that to a great extent may have convinced me to go to American [University] because I could've…there were some other schools that were interested and gave me scholarships to go there but I remember him like "you should go to a place that's comfortable for you and it's not gonna cost you a lot. And you make the best out of your education no matter where you go." So anyway that's probably more than what you wanted to know but that's the background.

**Interviewer**: That's fine. I appreciate any information you give so if you feel the need to elaborate, I'm here to listen. So for this second section, we're gonna focus on the social justice class and your experience at Carroll high school.

**Respondent**: Okay.

**Interviewer**: So to start, could you briefly describe Mr. Harrison, the school, and how your feelings have changed over time?

**Respondent**: Okay. So I'll start with Mr. Harrison. As far as I knew, I think he was a Vietnam vet. And if I recall correctly talking to him, when he came out of the seventies, he felt somewhat lost….not lost but like he didn't have a purpose. So I think we he came to Carroll high school to teach, the school gave him a purpose. So he saw these kids that he wanted to help out and I think that he just grew to like it. So as a person, he was probably about 5'10, probably weighed about 160 pounds, very easy going, short blond hair, kind of like in a bowl cut…kind of like the Beatles type if you will…dirty blond. The reason I mention that is because as students from the inner city, we ragged on him left and right. He could take it and he could dish it too. So hanging out with him actually was a lot of fun. We had that respect for him because he was a teacher but I don't think he ever made anyone feel that they weren't approachable to talk to him. I've had a lot of very personal conversations with him…him and other teachers too. All that

to say, the school is an incredibly supportive environment; supportive in a sense that you're being taught. You're being pushed to elevate yourself to greater sense. You know instead of dumbing down the information, you had to step to it so we always felt that. But at the same time there was an incredible amount of support. There was a lot of spiritual…it was a deeply spiritually run school. I just remember religion and the better kind of man was always at the forefront of everything. So prayer with religion class, social justice…instead of having…we had religion class in ninth and tenth grade and our religion class equivalent was social justice. That's the class that he taught. There was no book that he taught out of. He made his own book and the thing we got was a binder full of a bunch of newspaper articles with different topics. I remember…you may not know this or you may…have you ever heard of Bernard Goetz?

**Interviewer**: I'm not sure.

**Respondent**: So Bernard Goetz was this guy who was in New York City.

**Interviewer**: Mhm.

**Respondent**: Deemed vigilante or not, depends on your opinion. But he shot 5 black kids on the subway in New York.

**Interviewer**: Oh yeah.

**Respondent**: And it's funny because we have Ferguson now. We've got that kid that was in Florida, I forget his name. Um Rodney King…we've had all of these different things and it's funny because that topic has been around for a long time. So Bernard Goetz was not charged…I don't think he was charged. I think he was charged and he was acquitted. So there were a lot people thinking he was a hero. "Oh you got all these punk kids. He was a vigilante. He was just defending himself." But when you look at the facts, and I can't remember verbatim, but when you look at the whole thing, some kids where they were shot suggested that they were shot in the arm or the back which means they were away from him. Maybe once he pulled out the gun, they started running away which I would imagine that they would. But the point is the point of entry on some of the wounds that they got suggested that they were pointing away from him, maybe running away…definitely not charging at him. So in that class, we had about 5 or 6 articles on that topic. The first one glorified Bernard Goetz. The second was arguably from the African American community that downgraded…that was like this is not right. The other one was written from a legal standpoint like "we're not picking sides. These are the facts." And we spent about a week just on that topic. Anyway, all that to say that was our book. Our book was not something you could go buy off the shelf. That's how he taught. He had the different articles on different things on topics that he felt we should know about and that we should be cognizant of. So racial tension was one or racial divide depending on how you look at it. I remember nuclear because at the time, the U.S. and Russia were going through the nuclear arms race so he had stuff about that. He had abortion on there. So Roe v Wade and all that stuff. So we talked about a lot of  different stuff and what made his class fun is we would come to class, it wasn't like he was just be on the board and we'd be writing. We just sat in the class and we talked. I don't remember any kid ever falling asleep in his class. I mean every once in a while you get some kid who's just not interested whatever. But for the most part, it always was fairly lively conversation. So that's how he was but I think the reason he was able to do that so well is because the school sort of supported that kind of teacher. And he was one of many that were that talented. So if you ask me what did the school mean to me, the school meant that I could be exposed to teachers like himself and several others, some of which were brothers…you know like you have nuns…some of which are brothers. And you know math and all that other stuff…but the school itself had a very deep spiritual foundation. At the core of it was good Christian values. Whether you're Christian or not, that's just what they were about. So how do I feel about the school now? I mean clearly I speak about it with a lot of pride. I don't know the school very well since I left it. Maybe I've interacted with it about 2 or 3 three years after that because I had friends who had younger brothers. When I was a student there, it was an all-boys school. That's the first thing you should know. I think that changed in 1990 something, like '91, '92 I think. It became a coed school. It was an all-boys school and it was predominantly black when I went to

school there. But I think prior to the mid-eighties, it was mixed. In the seventies, in the early [art of the seventies, I think it was predominantly white.

**Interviewer**: Mhm.

**Respondent**: If I recall correctly. When I started working because I worked at IBM while I was in college…you ever heard of Inroads?

**Interviewer**: No.

**Respondent**: Okay. Jeez well that's too bad, man. Well, you're a senior. Yeah, that's too bad.

**Interviewer**: You can tell me about it *laughing*

**Respondent**: Uh Inroads is literally spelled I-N-R-O-A-D-S. It's a program that takes minority students that are in college, that are about to be college bound…that's usually when they get recruited, in their senior year. And it's the same thing, kind of like the Fanny Mae approach, except they look at college students that have good grades and that are interested in industry but wouldn't know how to go about getting a job or you know thrive in it.

**Interviewer**: Right.

**Respondent**: And so what they'll do is Inroads will go to companies like Fanny Mae, IBM, all of these other big [inaudible] companies and say "instead of you spending money to donate, here's another way to do the same thing except you'll have a kid mentor themselves through your business." And they hopefully can become a coworker or someone that you would want to keep and also give them the skill set to become better business folks. And so what they'd do is put a job aside, and that was the commitment from the corporate company. They would pay them, put a job aside, and also donate money for the kid to do conferences and all of the other stuff. So Inroads goes to high schools, gets a bunch of people to come in and apply, and you have to go into them like a job interview. Like you have to get dressed…it's a business thing. And kids who get the jobs are a part of Inroads and those who don't are asked to apply the following year. And when you get the job, you work at that company 9 to 5 or whatever the hours are. You work with someone like a manager or something that can help mentor you while you're there. You can be in finance; you can be in banking, economics. I was in computers. It was kind of early but I was on computers. And when I say it was kind of early, I mean like computers before the internet, before Microsoft, before people even had desktop computers everywhere. Anyway, the reason that I mention Inroads is because when I left high school, and I started working at IBM at Inroads and the person that ended up being my mentor happened to be a graduate of Archbishop Carroll high school. He graduated in the sixties. And yet my math teacher who I love dearly, who got me to go into math when I got to college, was a classmate of his. And of course when he found that out, he took me under his wing and because of him I thrived at IBM. I did very, very well. He just basically gave me the business mind and the will to succeed in any sort of business industry. And when I decided to go to medical school, I employed some of the same concepts that he helped me out with. So all of that to say, all of the people that come from there…when I met him, we knew about the school. We connected. We connected anyway but even more because I knew the core of his foundation when he was a kid in school and he knows mine and he knows where I'm coming from. So how do I feel about the school? The school is awesome! It's a great school. I don't know anything about it after it became a coed school. I'm assuming that a lot of the same principles are still there…principles like the same ethics not like the physical person who's the principal. I think a lot of the core principles of the school still exist. I don't know a lot about the students and the teachers that are there but the school definitely means a lot to me certainly anyone who has graduated from Carroll. You can ask and people usually take great pride in the school itself as well too. I mean I don't know if that answered your question…

**Interviewer**: Yeah, it answered my question. So about your relationship with Mr. Harrison, would you consider it close?

**Respondent**: Oh yeah! We were very close. He knew me, I knew him. I hung out with him. It was interesting because Harrison was only about 15 or so years older than us. It was almost like if you had an older brother, or if you had siblings that were 15 or 16 and their friends. He was a very, very good guy. And you know at the time, my English was not very good. I mean I grew up in Haiti so I just didn't speak

all that well. And he was always very supportive of me…gave me directions. In fact, even after I left high school, when I was in Inroads, I took over...one of the things you have to do with Inroads is community service work. I went back to the school to talk to him about that. I was like "hey, man. I really think that setting up the kids for the soup kitchen would be a great community service." And he was like "yeah that's easy to do. You can just do this, this, and this." And that's exactly what I did. In fact, the Inroads people loved…the kids initially were like "oh my god we gotta do this" because a lot of them were from affluent areas. I mean they were smart but they were from affluent areas. They influenced students that were maybe from a low economic background but…so there were a lot of eye turners like "aw man we gotta go do this" but every single one of them who went to that soup kitchen came back saying that they would do it again and in fact they would help to organize it to make a big thing for it. I got an award for it actually and I gave it to him. I gave it to Mr. Harrison and he's like "aw you should keep it" and I'm like "no, man, this is all you." So I was very close with him in the sense that I could go to him anytime I wanted to but he wasn't on speed dial if you will. Of course there were no cell phones back then so it's not like he was on my speed dial or anything. I knew where he lived but I'd never been to his house. He knew where I lived because he dropped me off a couple times but it's not like he'd come and hang out with me. I never felt that if I needed to catch up to him that I couldn't just meet with him somewhere and then just hang out with him…for whatever that's worth.

**Interviewer**: So would you consider him a mentor?

**Respondent**: Oh yeah without a doubt. The funny thing is I would describe him as being more influential than mentoring.

**Interviewer**: Okay.

**Respondent**: Because I mentor a lot of people and I go back to them and make sure they're doing the right things and I kind of help them. "Hey you should do this. This is the next step. This is not a bad idea." When you're mentoring someone, I guess it depends how you look at it but generally it's more one-on-one and there's more interaction. But the interaction I had with him wasn't just a mentoring although he mentored us in that respect. But I would say he was more influential. You know you have good teachers out there. They may not have been your mentor but you know they influenced you to do the right thing if that makes sense.

**Interviewer**: Yeah that makes sense. So…

**Respondent**: You know if you're doing a lot of these interviews, one thing that may help you is uh get a little tape recorder and just record the conversation and just pull in and out of it what you need when you're done.

**Interviewer**: Oh yeah. *laughing* Well I'm actually obligated by Dr. Harrell-Levy to record all the interviews. It's recording right now. I just like to take notes so I can have both you know?

**Respondent**: No, I hear you. Sometimes it strikes you a certain way so your notes will be much better to delineate what it is that you got out of it.

**Interviewer**: I'm trying to do both so I apologize for the silence.

**Respondent**: Oh no, you're fine! That's no worries. I'm not that rigid.

**Interviewer**: Okay. Alright so it sounds like Mr. Harrison cared about you and showed that he cared about his students?

**Respondent**: Oh yeah, he definitely did. Even the students who didn't care for him knew that he cared about them.

**Interviewer**: Okay. So would you consider the relationship you had with him empowering?

**Respondent**: Oh without a doubt. And he told me something that I live by and this was after I left high school. He said, "You know what? You should live in such a way that every life that you touch, you leave it that much better than if you hadn't touched it. And if it's anything less than that, you should go back and retouch it so you make a difference." And especially now in medicine, I totally see that. I mean I get that way anyway but you can just imagine the ripple effect. You know if everybody kind of…if they were mentally aware that every life that they were going to touch, they were gonna make sure that that interaction was gonna be something that was positive and it was gonna be good, and if they hadn't done

it, they go back to make sure that happens…if you had most people living that way, you wouldn't have half the problems you have right now in the world anyway.

**Interviewer**: Okay. So immediately after taking the class, would you say it had an immediate effect?

**Respondent**: Oh yeah. The interaction with him already had its effect when I first walked into the school just because I had a lot of interaction with him even prior to that. The class certainly enhanced and accentuated the type of person that he was. He went over topics that I'm not so sure…I mean I used to talk to my friends in the city and they have no idea some of the topics we talked about. They're aware of them but they're not aware of them enough in deep conversation to actually have an opinion that has some intelligence behind it. So definitely influential and certainly moving forward from there…I've been doing community service since I was in the tenth grade because he showed us how to live and what you should do and I still do it.

**Interviewer**: So how would you compare your relationship with Mr. Harrison to your relationship with other adults in your life?

**Respondent**: Um that's an interesting question. Honestly, you know you're empowered to…I always look at what I bring to the table and I don't worry about what the other person necessarily brings. And with that whole mindset of trying to touch somebody's life in a positive way, I focus on my own being. So relationships I have with people, I have them based on who I am and whatever honesty I bring to the table…or dishonesty depending on the person's frame of mind. So, I've never really judged my relationship with anyone else. How was my relationship with other people? I know how I treat people and I know what I need to do…I know how I should treat people and I know how I should respect them. And I take that mindset with everyone, whether it's a small child, my own kids, other adults, in-laws, professors, teachers, coworkers. You know there's just a certain level of honesty and forthrightness that I just live by. And there's some that are gonna…that's gonna appeal to them and that great. And there are others that are not gonna be interested in it and that's okay too. So it's not necessary for me to have definition of relationships with other people because it's not how it works. That being said, I have excellent relationships with people. There's my teachers, folks that I've worked with, coworkers, people who find you dependable. I think when you're well liked and you do the right things, it always brings out the best in other folks. Even when they don't see the best in themselves, it still sort of comes out that way. So I've had many other folks that have influenced me and that have mentored me, truly mentored me like in a very positive way. Like I was saying my boss at IBM it happens to be that he also went to Carroll. When I worked at Fanny Mae, the gentleman that I worked for…even though we were helping out the high school students and we were getting paid for it, that was the ultimate job. I was mentoring kids, teaching them how to do stuff, and getting paid for it. That's like a trifecta. That's also what reminding me that medicine is probably what I should focus on because you'll be helping people at the core of when they feel most vulnerable and you really have to have the best interest at heart to really deliver that care even if they don't see that themselves. And then to actually get paid for it is tantamount to sort of the golden goose if you will. But I've had very good relationships with other mentors. And having mentored people, I really learned what it is. My mentors taught me what it is to mentor someone and how to be honest with them. You're not gonna help somebody if you're gonna lie to them. You owe it to them to be honest about who you are and who they are. If they're doing something right, you have to tell them. If they're doing something wrong, you have to tell them like "hey, man, from what I've seen, this is not the right thing to do. Harrison was definitely like that and I kind of migrate to people that have that same sense of compassion and honesty in their relationships. So how's it been with other people? I was lucky to have him in there. But again, he was one of many teachers. There were about 5 other teachers at my school that were just like him and you could easily be doing this report on their foundation and the kind of person that they were. Like for me, he stood out because of who he was but they all did too.

**Interviewer**: Is there anybody who stood out maybe more than him?

**Respondent**: I think they were all equally as influential. Like I can count on one hand…I've got 5 teachers in mind that I thought easily as influential to me as he was. Like I wouldn't put them above him and I certainly wouldn't put them above him. He had his own style. There's no question about it. Like I

said he was a nutball which was great but every now and then you're like "this dude's gonna blow a gasket any minute now."

**Interviewer**: *laughing*

**Respondent**: He never did but I think that that little edge was always what was nice about him because it was well controlled and you know there were a lot of other teachers and brothers that were the same way. And as I went through life, I kind of migrated…you know having seen what works well and the people who do it well, it's not that hard to identify them as you move forward. So I've been very fortunate in that respect but I really think relationships with folks like him helped me to say "this guy could be a great mentor to me even though he doesn't think he would do it." And then you can extract that information out of them without making people feel uncomfortable. You know you just go to them for advice and things. I'm mean there's some people that are very shy and they're kind of reserved but they're very good, they would be great mentors. They would not necessarily look at themselves that way and then you have to be somewhat skillful to go to them and extract and get information from them and seek their help. And they'll help you. They're very helpful people but they wouldn't be the type to say "hey, kid, come here. Let me show you something." You have to go to them and say "hey, can you show me this?" And they will do it. So working with somebody like him allowed me to understand those traits in other people. You know if we can find traits in other people that are like the way he was and the way he was as a person, then you knew whatever relationship you were gonna have would be a very positive and influential one. And actually looking back, he was a good role model for me in that respect. He was not necessarily my role model but I used him and those other teachers to say "if I'm gonna seek help from people, they're gonna have to be these types of individuals and they'll have to have these characteristics." And I've been very fortunate but looking back maybe that was the formula that I was using and I just didn't realize it.

**Interviewer**: So, for this next section, it's gonna be about your personal biography.

**Respondent**: *laughing* It's probably worth about a dollar or so.

**Interviewer**: *laughing* Um we might focus on stressful experiences so at any point if you feel uncomfortable sharing, feel free to stop and I'll be happy to go to the next question.

**Respondent**: Okay.

**Interviewer**: So to start could you tell me what it was like growing up?

**Respondent**: Well, like I said even though I was born in the states, I grew up in Haiti so growing up was difficult. You're not with your parents. I didn't grow up with my parents. I was in a boarding house which was the equivalent…the best thing you could use in your mind…picture an orphanage. You're being cared for by people that are caring for you because they're caring for you even though your parents are paying for it but you're being raised by strangers to a certain extent. But there are core values of Christianity and doing the right thing and when people do…so it was tough. I don't care where you grew up, if you grew up in Haiti it was a tough environment to be in. And then you're around a lot of other people. The place where I was there were other kids that were in the same situation. I grew up a very social kid. It doesn't matter where I was, I'd get along and I'd find my way. I don't need that much direction but I could see through people a little bit better having been in that environment. I wasn't in an environment where you could be sheltered if you will. If you were a good kid, adults liked you and they treated you well. If you weren't worthy of it then you got the bad end of that stick. And in countries like Haiti, they do beat kids and all that other stuff too so it's a very tight balance in that respect. With that said, it probably was one of the best educations I've felt I got. When I left Haiti, even though I couldn't speak English, my math and anything else that was translatable to U.S. courses, I was like 5 or 6 years ahead of my own compatriots. You know tough environment, poor…can't say much about that…struggled. But I did junior high and high school in the states. That's when I actually started to live with my parents. I used to always come for vacations in the summer time you know to D.C. But when I finally [inaudible] I think I was like 11. I don't know how to describe it. I had a mom and dad, very good folks. They were first generation immigrants. They struggled, busted their butts with businesses and everything to try to keep themselves afloat. Education to them was tantamount to any goal you could have so they worked hard to give us that. But we grew up in different cultures. You know I didn't grow up with

parents who felt like…you know stuff that kids normally go to their parents and say "hey, can you do this? Can you show me that? Can I have this?" You know my parents were more like if it's necessary then great. If not, you're gonna have to figure out a way to go do it. So the school of hard knocks I would say. I don't think it was any less love than the school of hard knocks.

**Interviewer**: Okay.

**Respondent**: Excuse me one second.

**Interviewer**: Okay.

**Respondent**: Yeah so it was good. A lot of people look back on their background…it was poor and somewhat tight. You know it was a tough situation. You know it's made me who I am. I certainly appreciate it.

**Interviewer**: How would you…what would you describe as your most stressful experience since high school?

**Respondent**: Since high school?

**Interviewer**: Yes.

**Respondent**: *laughing* Well alright, let me give you a scenario. Try working full time, in medical school full time with three kids and a home.

**Interviewer**: Wow.

**Respondent**: and do that for 8 years. I would say arguably for me that was a stressful period of time. But it was actually one of my favorite times.

**Interviewer**: And would you say that anything you learned in social justice helped you to cope with that time?

**Respondent**: You know what? The funny thing is even with all of that, I was still volunteering and doing math tutoring. I was still volunteering mentoring other medical students. And going to the high school around the corner and corralling medical students together to come out there and teach math to the local students who just struggled with it. Even though it was more work on me, that was my escape. So here's a perspective: it didn't matter how hard I had it, somebody else had it harder.

**Interviewer**: Right.

**Respondent**: And when I can see…not when I can see. By looking at that…I look at the opportunity like I'm in medical school. Most people don't even reach that. I'm in computers, I'm doing well. Most people can't reach that. So for me, I kind of was a walking example for kids who were in struggling situations. Like "dude, I grew up in Haiti, man. You don't have it worse than that. And here's where I'm at. There's no reason you can't be at that point either. Don't just sit there feeling sorry for yourself and day dreaming. Go make it happen. And oh by the way, I'll sit next to you and teach you the math to make it happen." So for me, I had a sense of purpose probably greater than the actual work itself. I'm not a…Haitians, not to throw the race up as God or something but adversities is what we deal with. You work 2, 3, 4, 5 jobs if you have to to feed your family. You do what you gotta do. There's really nothing that was that special to me. And when I look back at least I was working and being educated, making good money and taking care of my kids. There are people in far worse situations than that. I never looked at the level of stress I had and said "oh my god. Woe is me." I always looked at it and said, "Thank God I wanna do this and I can do this." So the stress was different. You're only get 3 or 4 hours a day for years at a time and yeah that can wear on you but I hung out with my kids. That was an escape. And I went and tutored and that was an escape. It worked for me because it was a way to think and solve problems. The stress of medical school was a lot of learning but I enjoyed that learning. I was like "wow. I didn't know this was like this. That was interesting." Like you might read a book now and say "I gotta do this for this test and I got all this other stuff going on." Whereas I'd pick up the book and say "holy smokes, that's how that works? I would've never thought that." You can have two people doing the exact same thing and they'll get something totally different out of it. Their interaction is gonna be very different simply because of how they approach it. If that helps…

**Interviewer**: Yeah. Yeah.

**Respondent**: So when I had all that learning, yeah I had a lot of stuff to read for tests and I knew I had to put the time in and I did them, but I also knew I would learn. I was like "I wanna know how the body works, man. That's gonna be freaking awesome." So once I get a sense of…the more I learned about it, the more I knew what was going on, the better it was for me. I was like "aw, man. I did not realize that's how that worked. That's unbelievable." So for me the reading…sometimes it was a chore, but most of the time it was a welcoming discovery. You're not gonna get a lot of people telling you sitting around and reading medical books is a welcoming discovery. They are stressed out.

**Interviewer**: Alright so I told you the interview would take between 40 minutes and an hour. It's been about 58 minutes so far. I don't wanna hold you too much longer.

**Respondent**: So, you're fine. Like I said I have the afternoon wide open. I knew you'd be calling so I purposely didn't schedule anything for…hang on one second.

**Interviewer**: Okay.

**Respondent**: *talking in background* Sorry about that.

**Interviewer**: No problem.

**Respondent**: So yeah you know it's not a problem for me. I'd rather you get the information you're looking for. And you can always cut me off too because you will probably get more information about what you're looking for. If it's not the direction you're going in you can be like "yeah, yeah, dude. I appreciate it. You can stop that."

**Interviewer**: No, you're giving really valuable information and I'm taking it all in and I'm taking notes and I appreciate it. I just wanna make sure I'm not taking your time.

**Respondent**: No, you're fine. Don't worry about it. And in general, I can speak for myself.

**Interviewer**: Yeah. Okay.

**Respondent**: If I gotta go, I'd be like "you know what? Dude, this is great but I gotta go."

**Interviewer**: Right. *laughing* Okay. For this next section, we're focusing on your life experiences and how they connect to the class.

**Respondent**: Okay.

**Interviewer**: So while I'm asking these questions, just think about any difficult experiences you've had before and during high school.

**Respondent**: Uh huh.

**Interviewer**: Were any of these experiences relevant to the class and your relationship with Mr. Harrison?

**Respondent**: Sure. Um…difficult situations? I can think of a lot of difficult situations but they were really more interactions with people and matching personalities more so than anything else. When I was working with computers, I had a…not a supervisor like a manager but we had a team of engineers…like a team leader but that person is not necessarily your manager. You just have to respond to them for the stuff you have to turn in. So, let's say you're working on a group project and what's your teacher's name again?

**Interviewer**: Dr. Harrell-Levy.

**Respondent**: And she…is it a she or a he?

**Interviewer**: She.

**Respondent**: He?

**Interviewer**: She.

**Respondent**: It's a she. Okay. So she's at the head of everything and she goes "you know what? We're gonna sub-divide this into three sections. You can be the team leader for you guys. This one's the team leader for you guys." So the person who's the team leader, you have to sort of funnel the information to them because they have to organize and get it back to her. So they're not necessarily your teacher or who's gonna give you your grades but they can influence it and they can make your job harder or not. They can come back and say "well you did this stuff totally incorrect. We need more information." So they can make your life harder or difficult. So a person like that is not your direct boss but because of the position that they're in, they have some influence into that. And when I was in computers I had a couple

people that were in those lead positions that were very difficult to deal with and made the job tougher than it really had to be…a little bit more stressful than it had to be. But you know at the end of the day I was always…Mr. Harrison, he as well as many other teachers would say "you should focus on what you're doing right and not doing right." And as long as you know your heart's in the right place, every once in a while the problem may not necessarily be you. It may be the other person. And you gotta kind of find a way to just say you may have to suck it up because that's just how it is. So growing up the way I did in Haiti, you're gonna be in a lot of situations where you're gonna wanna feel sorry for yourself and it can be very frustrating but you're only gonna do well in that situation if you manage it. And so working with folks like Harrison, they gave you the tools to kind of fall back within yourself and have love for the other person even though you hate their guts. And to look at it like this person is very difficult and they probably don't have very many friends so they just go through life expecting that that's just not gonna happen. They're just kind of jerks if you will. And you start to feel sorry for those individuals and the best thing you can realize is that at least your relationship or interaction with them can be a positive one. And that goes back to make sure you touch every life and you leave it better than how you found it. So those are core values that are in me but I don't think that's only through that class. I mean I have a lot of life experiences that made me look at life that way. My parents are in that same capacity as well too. You know individuals for whatever it's worth…you would like to think that one person made a huge difference and it totally changed your life around, and certainly he did but like I said before I feel very fortunate in that I've had many folks that have done that for me. And my own survival is a coalition of those individuals as a group as opposed to one particular person steering me in a direction. Now he was that way for a lot of other students. I know that for sure. I still have friends that are like "Harrison was the man" like they've never come across anybody who had done that for them. I was fortunate to have not just him but a lot of other people. And when I say a lot…like 5 or 6 that I can count on my hands. These guys were pretty influential too. So you know struggles, sure I've had them. Difficult moments? Sure. I've always had the confidence to feel like I could deal with it myself and to manage the person and to manage the situation. You never let a situation manage you. You should always manage the situation. And you use whatever background that you have. IF anything, my manager at IBM was probably more influential in helping me with that over the course of life than Harrison. Not to say he didn't have any effect, he had a great effect. But he made us think about things outside of ourselves. Like there's a world out there outside of ourselves. Like we look at everything black and white and then I get to college and there's like Arabs and Jews and I'm like "what the hell is this? What are you guys talking about, man? The real problem is in the inner city." Then I realized these issues go back thousands of years. *laughing* And that's what he was good at. He always made us think about things that weren't immediately in front of us. It influenced us and we didn't even know it. So a broader scope in life. But in terms of struggles or anything else, I don't really have a lot of stuff that sticks out. I roll with the punches. That's what I do.
**Interviewer**: Did you ever write about any of your difficult experiences while in class?
**Respondent**: Did I ever write about them?
**Interviewer**: Yeah.
**Respondent**: In medical school I did. I worked at a medical school where we had the opportunity to do clinics which is to work with docs that are in the community so it can be like in the ER, it could be someone who has a small office. I decided to do mine through the department of corrections. And I wrote about that because that experience was actually…it really touched me because half the patients I saw there, a lot of them were conniving and sneaky and they have ulterior motives but then I realized that many of them had faces of my cousins, uncles, aunts, and the kids I knew from the street and I felt like it was weird. I mean yeah they had these jumpsuits on and they were in jail but talking to them, a lot of them sounded like people that I grew up with. Which ironically a few of them ended up in jail but it wasn't at the place where I was. So they're talking about their different plights and I'm like "yeah, man. I know about three guys like you." And that I'll credit to Harrison. You don't judge somebody's situation because you don't know what got them there. You know there's an overwhelming, lop-sided number of African Americans that are in jail. You wonder about the circumstances in the eighties. That was classic.

You get one small crack on you, right? Crack, a little rock of cocaine. You get caught with that in the eighties, you're 5 to 10 automatically. But you can have a bag of marijuana, mushrooms, ecstasy, or whatever else you have and it's a slap on the wrist. And in your urban environment, what are you more likely…and this was like at the top of the crack cocaine era. What are you more likely to find on the folks in the inner city? It's gonna be crack cocaine. If you have the powder on you, it's nowhere near as bad. You can have a pound of cocaine on you, you'll get some years, but you get that one little small piece of rock, that's 5 to 10 automatically. We looked at that statistic very carefully when we were in that class. So when I was at the jail and I'd hear "yeah I've been here for about 12." And that's about the time…of course if you're dealing, you're gonna have a lot of it on you. So did I ever write about it? I did when I was in medical school and it was a totally different perspective there. Like people are gonna be like "oh, I was touched by the inmates in jail and this and that" but teacher cried because he said I described the people like they're my family. I go "they are, dude. They just don't have my last name but I can take you somewhere where you can see a lot of them that I know." It's just sad. So I write about that experience. In fact, I still have that paper. It's probably about 18 pages of heartache but anyway if you're interested in it at some point, I could scrape it up and send it to you.

**Interviewer**: Okay.

**Respondent**: That's your world. You don't have to. You don't have to do me the favor of saying "sure send it." Only if you're interested.

**Interviewer**: Well, I'd be interested in taking a look at it. So for our last section, it's gonna be about empowerment.

**Respondent**: Okay.

**Interviewer**: And for the purpose of our research, we're defining empowerment as the process of gaining power over decisions and resources or that you have the trust, influence, and the means to influence decisions.

**Respondent**: Okay.

**Interviewer**: So the first part is asking whether your teacher, Mr. Harrison, had any influence over other areas of your life but you've already described how he's had those influences. So the second part says that Harrison once said that he hoped students felt powerful after taking this course. Would you say that you felt more powerful?

**Respondent**: Oh, no doubt.

**Interviewer**: Okay.

**Respondent**: Absolutely. Absolutely. That I will absolutely credit to him. After I was done with his class, for me I was like there's nothing I can't do. There's no change that's too small. There's no change that you can make that you feel like it's too small. And you only underestimate the power of your influence on others and if you don't at least take advantage of it then you'll never know the lives you've touched. So plain and simple I have about 25 doctors that I mentored after I got into medical school…like they were students. They were just trying to go to medical school. Some were coworkers. I had a coworker when I worked in computers that was flabbergasted that I had kids and that I was going to school and he wanted to do the same thing and that was an OBGYN doctor with his own family and everything else. Yeah I don't underestimate the power of my influence. I'm very well empowered. In fact, I know the difference I can make. I'm not afraid to make that difference and show people. You know if I have to show you how to do it, I will. I'm not gonna yell at you for it. I'm not gonna make you feel bad for not doing it. But if you tell me "hey, I would like to…" I'm gonna say "okay, here's how we do it." I've never felt…I've never believed in putting my life in somebody else's hands, like hoping that that person will do this and this and this for me. I don't ask people to do things for me; I ask them to show me how. So the concept is this: if you come to me and you're fishing and you say "hey, man. You've got a couple fish. Can I have one?" I'll say no but I'll take you to the store, I will buy you a fishing rod, I'll show you how to buy tackle, put it on your hook, and I'll show you where the best fishing holes are and I'll sit with you for a couple of days until you get it down. And then after that, we're done because the idea is not for me to just hand you that fish. The idea is for you to learn how to fish for yourself. That's how I live and I definitely

learned and was empowered by his class that way. There's no question in my mind that I can be influential. That's a function of me and no one else.

**Interviewer**: Okay. And for the last question: Are your feelings about other people like the poor or those afflicted with addiction different because of the class?

**Respondent**: Say it again.

**Interviewer**: Are your feelings about other people like the poor or those afflicted with addiction different because of the class?

**Respondent**: Um different? You mean like good different or bad different?

**Interviewer**: Either way. Like did the class make you look at those people differently than you did before?

**Respondent**: The class reinforced what I was doing to begin with. The problem with the timing of the class is that where I was at that point, I was already that type of person. I grew up in Haiti, man. *laughing* You're not gonna get a reality check any greater than growing up in a country like that. So I've seen people that are addicted and all that other stuff. When I got older I became more cognizant of what causes those things and sure that class was great in showing us other factors that comes into play but I was never one to judge somebody negatively because of their addiction or social situation. I mean you can't be any poorer than what I've seen in Haiti. And we were never judged above anyone else because we never had the social status to be that way. So as we climbed ladders, we never looked down on people because then I'd be looking down on my cousins, aunts, grandfathers. My grandmother had an education of maybe kindergarten if that so I would never look down on somebody. It would be disrespectful to her. There are a lot of people who go through struggles in life and deal with addiction because they need a crutch or something to hang on to. And from a social standpoint, their pressures are temporarily relieved by whatever they're addicted to. But these personality traits are in all of us. We control it or hide it better than others. So if anything the class helped me to think about why is that person addicted? What situations make them that way? And where is their free will? Where did they give up their free will to not be in that situation and then why is it that way? It always made me question it from a standpoint of a resolution. Like figure out what the problem is and see if you can help them solve it as opposed to just having an opinion about their situation. Everyone has an opinion about everything but an opinion doesn't solve problems. You can have them if it allows you to think in a positive way so that you can make a positive interaction with that person. So addiction and social ills, yes those are problems and I see them. But when I see those things, I don't look at them at face value. I'm always behind the scene of…I'm always looking at what put that person in that situation, whether them or other people or other circumstances, etcetera so that either you don't make that mistake yourself or you can help them get out of it. And so by thinking about it that way, I'm not judging them. Me judging them for where they are is not a part of that. It's just not a part of that interaction. That makes sense?

**Interviewer**: Yeah. Alright so that was the last question so I want to thank you for everything you've shared with me today and I really appreciate your input to my research.

**Respondent**: Sure.

**Interviewer**: Is there anything else you would like to share?

**Respondent**: Um no. I think you get a good sense of it. Hopefully you go out and you touch lives better than you found them.

**Interviewer**: Yeah. Like I said thank you for your input. There's also a quantitative portion which is the survey. I'm not sure I told you about it.

**Respondent**: Yeah, I did the survey already.

**Interviewer**: Okay.

**Respondent**: Your email…when I got it I was like "oh yeah there's an online survey." I logged right in and did it immediately so that's been done.

**Interviewer**: Alright. Thank you. Any questions that you have, you can email me or call me back. Like I said thank you for your input, and I hope you have a wonderful day.

**Respondent**: Yeah, sure. And if your teacher wants to have a conversation and get more details, she can call me too.
**Interviewer**: Okay. Thank you.
**Respondent**: You're welcome. Have a good one.
**Interviewer**: You too.

**Appendix B**

**Field Notes Summary**

Collecting data for research purposes was a new experience for me. Rejection was a genuine fear when approaching potential participants for both the qualitative and the quantitative portions of the research. However, there was more fear when contacting potential qualitative respondents as I was aware that they were all most likely older and perhaps more educated than me. I also understood that because the potential participants did not know me, and the initial email was rather lengthy, there was a significant chance that many people would not reply or even read the email in its entirety. This fear was not unwarranted as I sent sixty-nine emails to potential participants on October 2, 2014 and I only received a response from two of the recipients that day. Neither of the men who replied to the initial email was included in the research as they both ceased contact with me after only one response. I did not receive another response to the initial email until October 13, 2014. After more than a week of email exchanges to obtain the woman's address so that I could send her a consent form, we began to discuss her preferred method and time for the interview. She then stopped responding. This pattern of expressing initial interest and then ceasing contact occurred six more times before I completed data collection in January 2015.

November was a much more productive month as I was able to interview four of the nine people I ultimately interviewed before the month was over. All respondents opted to do the interviews via telephone as opposed to video chat. The first interview occurred on November 7, 2014. This was one of my most challenging interviews for several reasons. The most significant reason for my difficulty with this interview was my lack of familiarity with the qualitative protocol. Although I had read it several times, I had never read it aloud or used it to interview anyone for practice before the first interview. For this reason, I stuttered and sounded unsure of myself for most of the interview. The second reason for difficulty occurred later in the interview. As Deborah, the first respondent, was beginning to sound more comfortable with my line of questioning and the direction of the discussion, I asked her to tell me about the person who had the biggest impact on her life. While answering, she cried which caught me entirely off guard. While I scrambled for a response, Deborah began telling me about her daughter's father who was killed on the day of her undergraduate graduation. Sensing that the discussion may have become too overwhelming for her, I apologized for prying and suggested that we move on to the next section of the interview. However, she was eventually able to stop crying and continue the interview. The rest of the interview followed without incident. Deborah was the only respondent to cry during the interviews.

Although the first interview gave me experience reading the questions aloud, I was still uncomfortable asking respondents to disclose their personal information. I began asking the questions in a way that made it seem like the questions did not belong to me. For example, instead of asking the respondent to tell me about their career, I said, "it's asking about your present job and/or career path." I conducted the interview this way for both the second and third respondents. In hindsight, I understand that the ideal interview should have transpired as more of a conversation than the question and answer dynamic I started. I also understand that conducting the interview this way may have made respondents hesitant to share more than what the question asked in fear of oversharing.

As the researcher, I should have encouraged the respondents to share as much as possible when answering. Although I did not do that with Emily and Rita, the second and third interview respondents respectively, I was still able to gather valuable information. Deborah, Emily, nor Rita considered their

social justice teacher a personal mentor, but all three women admitted that the class itself was empowering and had a huge impact on their lives. All three women considered their experiences in social justice class as their reason for wanting to "give back" and "help the next generation." Deborah informed me that her desire to service the community became stronger as a result of taking social justice. She now leads a troop of girl scouts and encourages them to find ways to help their community. After completing her undergraduate degree, Emily joined the United Nations as a humanitarian aid in Germany. She now mentors female students at her alma mater Cornell University. Rita, the third respondent, provided me with the least information about her life. However, she did disclose to me that she participates in community service at least 2-3 times a week by serving food to the less fortunate at her neighborhood church.

 I consider the fourth interview with Harold the most interesting and successful. He was the first male respondent and had the longest interview duration of an hour and twenty-nine minutes. By the time this interview was conducted, I was significantly more comfortable with speaking to respondents. Harold did not answer the phone when I called at our scheduled time of 6 pm so I left a voicemail. He returned my call at 7:33 pm, apologized for missing my call, and informed me that he had just woken up from a nap as he had been volunteering all day. Although his voice remained unemotional for the entirety of the interview, Harold disclosed highly personal information. He admitted that he was eventually expelled from Archbishop Carroll high school, the school that offered the social justice class that all of the respondents were required to take. For this reason, he was the only respondent who did not graduate from this school. Despite his expulsion, I believe that Harold benefitted from the social justice class the most of all the respondents.

 Harold revealed the most stressful experiences of his life but managed to stay optimistic about each event. He disclosed that both his mother and father had been incarcerated when he was born. His mother served jail time until about a year ago while his father was sentenced to life in prison for murder without the possibility of parole. Because of his parents' incarceration, Harold and his siblings were raised by his maternal and paternal grandmothers. During his early teenage years, Harold served time in a juvenile detention center. His older brother who he considered his protector was killed during this time. After being released, he was accepted into Archbishop Carroll high school. While at Carroll, he was tasked with creating a collage that represented unity as an assignment for his social justice class. Although he says he had never worked harder on any assignment before, he received a failing grade as his teacher and principal believed the collage represented gang culture. Not long after this experience, Harold was expelled from Carroll for a physical altercation. After high school, he experienced the death of his younger cousin and one of his brothers was paralyzed and jailed for twelve years. Although the aforementioned events are tragic, Harold found a way to make each negative event into a positive learning experience.

 After Harold's paternal grandmother received news of her son's life sentence, she began organizing free bus trips to prisons so that Harold, along with other children of incarcerated parents, could remain in contact with their parents. Harold continues to work with his grandmother in organizing these bus trips while also making appeals on his father's behalf. He admits that although he and his mother lack the mother-son bond that is the norm in most families, he has continued to support her progress. He does not judge either of his parents for their past decisions. Harold has used every negative experience, including his time in a juvenile detention center, as well as the empowerment he believes he received at Carroll to cultivate his leadership skills and create opportunities for change within his community.

 The previous four respondents did not consider their social justice teachers as personal mentors, but Christopher, Karen and Lauren, three subsequent interview respondents, loved their social justice teacher, Ms. Martin, and considered her one of their best mentors. All three respondents cherished the close relationship they shared with Ms. Martin and agreed that she and the class had an immediate effect on their lives. Ms. Martin was able to help both Christopher and Karen with personal matters during their attendance at Carroll. Christopher lost his father due to a car accident during his freshman year. He recounted how all of the other students asked questions and pried for answers but Ms. Martin simply gave

him a hug. He considers her small act of kindness the best and most important response by anyone at that time. She also encouraged him to start writing in a journal which he still has today. Christopher credits Ms. Martin for teaching him that he can create change in his community. Karen tragically lost her mother due to a vicious murder during her teenage years. Ms. Martin not only attended the funeral with Karen but she taught her to forgive her mother's killer the way Jesus forgave his enemies. Karen credits Ms. Martin as the reason she has been working towards becoming a teacher.

Ms. Martin was also able to help Lauren in her time of need. During her childhood, Lauren's mother abused drugs and was physically and verbally abusive to her children. Lauren credits Ms. Martin with teaching her that "hurt people hurt people" and that her mother's behavior was a result of her disease (addiction). Like Christopher, she believes that Ms. Martin and the class taught her the compassion that she has today. Lauren's interview was the most difficult, not because of content, but because of technical difficulties. After interviewing Lauren via phone for fifty-eight minutes, the device I was using to record the conversation froze and I was unable to save the recording. Fortunately, Lauren agreed to do another interview a few days later. Unfortunately, the subsequent interview was only twenty-three minutes long. I opted to skip the more personal questions about her childhood, which seemed to make her very uncomfortable during the first interview. I instead focused more on her experiences with Ms. Martin and the class.

One of the interviews (the fifth interview with John) was excluded because he was an outlier compared to other respondents. However, I believe he is worth mentioning because his interview though different in many aspects ends with the conviction that the social justice course was extremely empowering, a belief shared by all of the respondents. As a Haitian born immigrant, John was the only respondent who did not grow up in the D.C. area. He attended boarding school in Haiti until his early teenage years. He moved to the United States for junior high school and then attended Carroll for high school. John was the only respondent to take the social justice course with the late founder of the course, Robert Hoderny. He was also the oldest respondent, graduating in 1987 before the school was coed. I believe it is worth noting that John was the only respondent who was immediately forthcoming when asked about his current job. He worked full time to support himself, his wife, and three kids while he attended medical school; he is now a medical doctor. Of all of the respondents, he seems to be the most successful in his career but this could be a result of his older age. He credits his experiences in social justice for his sense of compassion and empowerment and teaching him not to judge others.

Of the eight interview respondents, none had anything negative to say about the school or the social justice class. Every respondent suggested they felt more powerful after taking the course. Based on their descriptions of their jobs and volunteer work, every respondent has chosen a path that was heavily influenced by the experiences they had at Carroll. Although the social justice teachers were not seen as personal mentors to every student, the respondents all agree that their respective teachers were certainly mentors in their own right. Regardless of the teacher's title as mentor, the class definitely had a long and lasting impact on every respondent's levels of empowerment, career paths, volunteer practices, and ways of life.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alliance for Excellent Education. (2011, November). The high cost of high school dropouts: What the nation pays for inadequate high schools. Retrieved March 17, 2015, from http://all4ed.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/HighCost.pdf

Biddix, J. (2009, July 20). Instrument, Validity, Reliability. Retrieved March 28, 2015, from https://researchrundowns.wordpress.com/quantitative-methods/instrument-validity-reliability/

Bogat, G. A., & Liang, B. (2005). Gender in mentoring relationships. In D. L. DuBois & M. J. Karcher (Eds.), *Handbook of Youth Mentoring* (pp. 205–217). California: Sage Publications, Inc.

Christens, B. D., Collura, J. J., & Tahir, F. (2013). Critical hopefulness: A person-centered analysis of the intersection of cognitive and emotional empowerment. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *52*, 170–184. doi:10.1007/s10464-013-9586-2

Corrigan, P. W. (2006). Impact on consumer-operated services on empowerment and recovery of people with psychiatric disabilities. *Psychiatric Services*, *57*(10), 1493–1496. doi:10.1176/appi.ps.57.10.1493

Cooper, S. (n.d.). Jack Mezirow and Transformational Learning Theory. Retrieved April 1, 2015, from http://www.lifecircles-inc.com/Learningtheories/humanist/mezirow.html

Corrigan, P. W., Giffort, D., Rashid, F., Leary, M., & Okeke, I. (1999). Recovery as a psychological construct. *Community Mental Health Journal*, *35*(3), 231–239. doi:10.1023/A:1018741302682

Dallos, R., & Comley-Ross, P. (2005). Young people's experience of mentoring: Building trust and attachments. *Clinical and Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, *10*(3), 369–383. doi:10.1177/1359104505053755

Dang, M. T., & Miller, E. (2013). Characteristics of natural mentoring relationships from the perspectives of homeless youth. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing*, *26*(4), 246–253. doi:10.1111/jcap.12038

DeSecottier, L. R. (1998). *Non-parental adults in the lives of Mexican-American and Anglo-American adolescents: A comparative study*. (Doctoral dissertation). Texas Tech University, Texas, United States.

DuBois, D. L., & Karcher, M. J. (2005). Youth mentoring: Theory, research and practice. In D. L. DuBois & M. J. Karcher (Eds.), *Handbook of Youth Mentoring* (pp. 2–11). California: Sage Publications, Inc.

DuBois, D. L., & Silverthorn, N. (2005). Characteristics of natural mentoring relationships and adolescent adjustment: Evidence from a national study. *The Journal of Primary Prevention*, *26*(2), 69–92. doi:10.1007/s10935-005-1832-4

Eby, L. T., Allen, T. D., Evans, S. C., Ng, T., & DuBois, D. L. (2008). Does mentoring matter? A multidisciplinary meta-analysis comparing mentored and non-mentored individuals. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *72*(2), 254–267. doi:10.1016/j.jvb.2007.04.005

Gray, C. (2011). *Measuring the impact of a mentoring program: Preparing African American males for beyond high school* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from Rowan Open Access Repository: Electronic Thesis and Dissertations

Hurd, N., & Sellers, R. M. (2013). Black adolescents' relationships with natural mentors: Associations with academic engagement via social and emotional development. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *19*(1), 76–85. doi:10.1037/a0031095

Hurd, N. M., & Zimmerman, M. A. (2014). An analysis of natural mentoring relationship profiles and associations with mentees' mental health: Considering links via support from important others. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *53*(1-2), 25–36. doi:10.1007/s10464-013-9598-y

Keating, L. M., Tomishima, M. A., Foster, S., & Alessandri, M. (2002). The effects of mentoring program on at-risk youth. *Adolescence*, *37*(148), 717–734.

Miller, J. M., Barnes, J. C., Miller, H. V., & McKinnon, L. (2012). Exploring the link between mentoring program structure and success rates: Results from a national survey. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, *38*, 439–456. doi:10.1007/s12103-012-9188-9

National Dropout Prevention Center/Network. (2015). Mentoring/Tutoring. Retrieved March 17, 2015, from http://www.dropoutprevention.org/effective-strategies/mentoring/tutoring

O'Connor, C. (1997). Dispositions toward (collective) struggle and educational resilience in the inner city: a case analysis of six African-American high school students. *American Educational Research Journal*, *34*(4), 593–629. doi:10.3102/00028312034004593

Rogers, E. S., Chamberlin, J., Ellison, M. L., & Crean, T. (1997). A consumer-constructed scale to measure empowerment among users of mental health services. *Psychiatric Services*, *48*(8), 1042–1047.

Royse, D. (1998). Mentoring high-risk minority youth: Evaluation of the brothers project. *Adolescence*, *33*(129), 145–158.

Scott, H. (2009). What is Grounded Theory? - Grounded Theory Online; supporting GT researchers. Retrieved March 28, 2015, from http://www.groundedtheoryonline.com/what-is-grounded-theory

Tengland, P.-A. (2007). Empowerment: A goal or a means for health promotion? *Medicine, Health Care and Philosophy*, *10*, 197–207. doi:10.1007/s11019-006-9027-1

Tourigny, M., Hebert, M., Daigneault, I., & Claude, S. (2005). Efficacy of a group therapy for sexually abused adolescent girls. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, *14*(4), 71–936. doi:10.1300/J070v14n04_04

# ACADEMIC VITA

Ebony Ford
elf5130@psu.edu

---

**Education:** **B.A. in Psychology** **May 2015**
The Pennsylvania State University, Media, PA

**Work Experience:** **Camp Counselor**
**Summer 2009**
*Neighborhood Youth Achievement Program*
- Assisted campers in developmental activities

**Camp Counselor** **Summer 2012/2013**
*Media Youth Center*
- Coordinated physical activities for campers
- Encouraged peacemaking among campers
- Oversaw campers on field trips
- Facilitated sign-in and sign-out process for parents

**Research Intern**
*Penn State Brandywine* **June 2014 – January 2015**
- Performed undergraduate research
- Managed inventory
- Executed transactions on behalf of the campus honors program

**Volunteer:** **Co-facilitator** **December 2014- present**
*Sobriety Through Outpatient*
- Conducted group therapy for adjudicated adolescents

**Honors/Awards:** Published in Penn State's Best of Freshman Writing, 2012
Schreyer Honors Program, 2013-present
Cooper Honors Program, 2011-2013
Superior Academic Achievement, 2011-2015
Academic All-Conference Award 2011-2015
USCAA National All-Academic Team, 2013 and 2014
Outstanding Contribution to Penn State Athletics Award, 2014

**Activities:** Women's Varsity Basketball, 2011-present