Power Relations and Context: How University Student Mentors Navigated the Mentor-Mentee

Relationship

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Abstract

This thesis is a qualitative case study that investigates a small number of mentoring relationships between volunteer mentors (university students) and mentees (elementary school children) in a program for students deemed to be 'at risk' of dropping out of school. Responding to a growing scholarly critique that contends that much literature on mentoring relationships is frequently disconnected from attending to power and contexts in which they are located, this study analyses mentoring relationships at individual, institutional and structural levels. First, the study uses Foucauldian discourse analysis to expose power struggles between competing neoliberal and social justice discourses that manifest themselves in a variety of practices, events and strategies that can be found in the program. Then, this study offers insight into ways that mentors navigate dyadic mentoring relationships. It seeks to explore how they perpetuated and exercised their agency to resist ambiguous or contradictory impositions from the program on them, their mentees and the mentor-mentee relationship as a result of power struggles. The data consist of semi-structured interviews with the program staff and mentors and analysis of program and policy documents explicitly identified in these interviews. This study is expected to contribute to better understanding mentor-mentee power dynamics that have been acknowledged as being far more complex in the theoretical research on mentoring and to help inform further studies on this topic.

Résumé

Cette mémoire est une étude de cas qualitative qui examine un petit nombre de relations de mentorat entre des mentors bénévoles (étudiants universitaires) et des mentorés (enfants du primaire) dans un programme destiné aux étudiants considérés comme "à risque" de décrochage scolaire. En réponse à une critique de plus en plus répandue dans les milieux universitaires, qui soutient que la plupart des documents sur les relations de mentorat sont souvent déconnectés du contexte dans lequel ils se trouvent, cette étude analyse les relations de mentorat aux niveaux individuel, institutionnel et structurel. Tout d'abord, l'étude utilise l'analyse du discours foucaldien pour exposer les luttes de pouvoir entre les discours néolibéraux et de justice sociale concurrents qui se manifestent dans une variété de pratiques, d'événements et de stratégies que l'on peut trouver dans le programme. Ensuite, cette étude offre un aperçu des façons dont les mentors naviguent dans les relations dyadiques de mentorat. Elle cherche à explorer comment ils perpétuent et exercent leur action pour résister aux impositions ambiguës ou contradictoires du programme sur eux, leurs mentorés et la relation mentor-mentoré à la suite de luttes de pouvoir. Les données consistent en des entretiens semi-structurés avec le personnel du programme et les mentors et en une analyse des documents du programme et des politiques explicitement identifiées dans les entretiens. Cette étude devrait contribuer à une meilleure compréhension de la dynamique du pouvoir entre le mentor et le mentoré, reconnue comme étant beaucoup plus complexe dans la recherche théorique sur le mentorat, et aider à informer d'autres études sur ce sujet.

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Chapter I Introduction

1.1 Point of departure and research questions

The origins of this study arise from a practicum in one of my graduate-level courses. I signed up for a youth-mentoring program to meet the course requirements, passionate about the equity goal this program claims to strive for and its long-term commitment to children of lower socio-economic status. I was inspired by this program's claim that small is beautiful and believed that my connection with my mentee would ultimately contribute to some positive changes at least for her. When my relationship with my mentee did not show much progress, I tried harder to make it work. Until my mentee yelled at me that "you could not make me do this", and I came to question whether oppression may be woven into my practices as a mentor in our interactions, in spite of good intentions. However, it seemed that my perceptions of a power differential between my mentee and I did not make our relationship progress toward the end I desired. I found that our interactions were at my mentee's mercy. If she was not willing to engage in some program-planned routine activities, I had to give in and do something she preferred that was usually irrelevant to this program. I felt that I lacked power over my mentee and kept using ineffective techniques in dealing with her, thus reducing their actual influence. I shared these experiences and emotions in my class discussion and reflection writings. In fact, this process was uncomfortable, since I was wondering whether my reflection was antisocial. Fortunately, after that, I gained the support from the course instructor (now my supervisor) to collect my fragmentary thoughts and focus my inquiry on the power dynamics within the mentor-mentee relationship.

An examination of literature about youth mentoring reveals that most studies were conducted on the premise that mentoring is an effective intervention for different categories of

youth (DuBois & Karcher, 2013; DuBois, Portillo, Rhodes, Silverthorn, & Valentine, 2011; Keller, 2005). A wealth of studies positively appraise mentoring relationships and pay more attention to identifying a wide range of attributes to contribute to a successful mentor-mentee relationship desired by the program (Herrera, Grossman, Kauh, Feldman, & McMaken, 2007; Parra, DuBois, Neville, Pugh-Lilly, & Povinelli, 2002). However, this tendency to disseminate best practices in mentoring planning and implementation to masses of practitioners (Pfund, Byars-Winston, Branchaw, Hurtado, & Eagan, 2016) has been increasingly critiqued. In recent years, some emerging research has argued that not all mentoring relationships are effective and that they can do more harm than good to a child's soul (Rhodes & DuBois, 2006). Some scholars have advocated more research to expose unequal power relationships between the mentor and mentee (Darwin, 2000). Other researchers (e.g., Colley, 2003b; Keller & Blakeslee, 2014; Weiston-Serdan, 2017) are critical of research that perceives youth mentoring as a dyadic relationship or human bond without adequately considering questions of context and that fails to situate the dyad in relation to institutionalized and social inequities and oppressions. On this basis, I became interested in the contention that earlier research on mentoring relationships did not adequately reflect an awareness of the simultaneous effects of power and context.

Therefore, to expose the dysfunctional power issues in the mentoring relationship and further interrogate the context in which youth mentoring is located, two research questions were developed to guide this study: 1) How do mentors perceive their roles during the process of mentoring? 2) In what ways do mentors carry these perspectives into their mentoring practices and then influence their relationship with their mentees? 3) How do wider power relations influence mentors' relationships with their mentees through the institutional context and broader socio-economic and political context in which these relationships are located?

1.2 Research overview, method and purpose

This study is conducted in a mentoring program I anonymize as Homework Space (HS). This is a school-based program initiated by one local school board under one local initiative for school children who are classified as disadvantaged and at-risk of dropping out of school in Montreal. In partnership with a local university, it offers the option of one-to-one mentoring by university students. It is designed for university students to serve the community while learning from it. This study's main focus explores how mentors navigate their mentoring relationships after taking into consideration the contexts external to the mentoring dyad and the power relations that constitute such contexts.

This study is a qualitative case study. I mainly draw on Merriam's (1998) and Yin's (2011) approach to case study design and some other researchers' elaboration of Yin's approach. The fundamental reason why this study adopts a case study design is to generate a holistic view of the mentoring process and relationship (Wolcott, 1994) in the context of mentors' personal life stories and social situations and to engage theories about power in the writing process, which is desired in the literature of mentoring (Hillman, 2016).

Rather than regarding power and context as two separate entities, this study views them as intertwined, but "in particular ways and specific, identifiable effects" (Ahonen, Tienari, Meriläinen, & Pullen, 2014, p. 264). I use Foucauldian discourse analysis to interpret program staff interviews and documents provided by them as discourses not only to contextualize this mentoring program in a particular socio-political and cultural setting, but also to expose power struggles between competing neoliberal and social justice discourses that manifest themselves in a variety of practices, events and strategies that can be found in this mentoring program. Instead of directly demonstrating what roles are imposed on mentors as a result of power struggle in the

mentor-mentee relationship and this program, this thesis uses a narrative approach as both an inquiry and writing tool to engage with mentors to construct how they navigated the mentor-mentee relationship through revealing how mentors made sense of their roles, practices and responsibilities. In doing so, this thesis invites the reader to experience the process of those mentor-mentee relationships for themselves, the realities of mentoring in practice. More importantly, this is to better prepare the reader for the further theoretical analysis of in what way these mentors perpetuated, responded to or rejected the ambiguous or contradictory impositions from the program on them, their mentees and the mentor-mentee relationship as a result of power struggles.

This study has three goals. One is to seek to provide an insight into what may otherwise be the overlooked significance of power in the field of mentoring, especially concerning the mentor-mentee relationship, compared with previous research's sole focus on the oppressive side of power. The second is to critically interrogate the effects of the HS program's use of social justice discourse to prescribe the democratic learning outcomes on both mentors and mentees. The third is to give an account of the mentoring relationship from non-white mentors to enrich the current research on the mentor-mentee relationship. Despite the scholarly critique of using mentoring to impose white middle class values on young mentees (Albright, Hurd, & Hussain, 2017), much literature on mentoring still only attends to the experiences of white mentors (Liang & West, 2007). The mentors I recruited for this study are all international students from three Asian countries: China, India and Iran. My own location as an international student made it easier for me to approach other international students than locals. Through engaging these international student mentors from Asia to co-construct and make meaning of their own

mentoring experiences, roles, relationships and perceptions, this case study aims to place non-dominant and neglected knowledges at the heart of the research agenda (D. E. Smith, 2001).

1.3 Chapter summaries

This thesis consists of six chapters. Following this introductory chapter, Chapter II provides a context and theoretical framework for this study. This chapter first draws on Gallie's (1956, p. 96) "historical" and "logical" senses to review the development and conceptualization of youth mentoring with the emphasis on formal mentoring programs for youth. Next, it provides an overview of research on the youth mentoring relationship and a critique of the current literature. It also introduces a number of power theories that inform this study and their application in the research into mentoring relationships. This chapter also maps out the landscape of the mentoring program explored in this study.

Chapter III describes the methodological approach of this study. It discusses the process of building my case study design based on Merriam's (1998) and Yin's (2011) approaches to case study design and other researchers' elaborations of Yin's approach in their research contexts. This chapter demonstrates how I bind my case and determine the type of my case study. It continues to reflect on my own positioning as both a researcher and a former mentor in the program which I am studying. It ends with my research methods with regards to participant recruitment, research ethics in terms of consent, confidentiality and anonymity, data collection, data analysis and credibility and trustworthiness of research.

Chapter IV shares the first part of my findings, presenting the results of Foucauldian discourse analysis of a combination of data from interviews with program staff and private and public documents provided or identified by the program staff. Through revealing competing discourses that underpin this program, this chapter seeks to map out how wider power struggles

between competing discourses manifested themselves on this program and the way it has evolved.

Chapter V presents the second part of my findings. It narrates and comments on mentors' stories to demonstrate how they navigated the relationships with their mentees. In doing so, it discusses: how university volunteers perceived their own roles and those of their mentees throughout the process of mentoring; in what way mentors carried such perceptions into their practices; the difficulties and achievements they encountered; the impact of the program and societal factors they sensed working upon their relationships.

Chapter VI draws on Foucault's notions of power/discourse to give a theoretical analysis of how all mentors and mentees are positioned in a web of power relations in a program context and social terrain underpinned by competing neoliberal and social justice discourses and in what ways they problematized, resisted and even overrode these discourses to build new roles and practices or perpetuated them.

Chapter VII, the concluding chapter, outlines the research findings and their implications. It also discusses the limitations of the study and makes recommendations for future studies in this field and on this topic.

Chapter II Theory and context

This chapter will 1) review the development and conceptualization of youth mentoring with the emphasis on formal mentoring programs for youth; 2) provide an overview of research on mentoring relationships; 3) introduce the theories that frame this study; 4) map the landscape of the mentoring program explored in this study.

2.1 The development and conceptualization of mentoring

Mentoring, adopted by a variety of professions for a long time, has been studied from a number of perspectives (DuBois & Karcher, 2013). Within the existing literature, there are a wide range of definitions of mentoring (e.g., Anderson & Shannon, 1988; Colley, 2002; Roberts, 2000). However, there is no universal consensus, and some researchers believe that this lack of clarity threatens the validity of research findings about mentoring (Benishek, Bieschke, Park, & Slattery, 2004). Some of them (e.g., Chao, 1998; Roberts, 2000) even doubt whether these articles address the same thing without a consensus on the lexical definition of mentoring. This ongoing lack of definitional clarity also plagues the development of mentoring practices (Eby, Rhodes, & Allen, 2007). Therefore, in my analysis of mentoring relationships, I will draw upon the "historical" and "logical" senses proposed by Gallie (1956, p. 196) to review the "essentially contested concept" of youth mentoring. "Historical sense" signifies the incorporation of some knowledge of contexts and conditions which produce the use of the concept and of the development it has undergone (Gallie, 1956). The historical review will consider youth mentoring development in the context of North America, given that there are relatively few studies specifically on youth mentoring practices in Canada. "Logical" sense is more commonly used to refer to lexical definition, that is to state the rule which governs the use of the concept (Gallie, 1956). When it includes a value judgement about the inherently beneficial nature of

mentoring, some scholars (e.g., Colley, 2001) have emphasized the importance of connecting these two perspectives.

2.1.1 Historical development

Many studies trace the roots of mentoring to Homer's epic tale, *The Odyssey* (Anderson & Shannon, 1988; Baker & Maguire, 2005; Colley, 2002). The term "mentor" is derived from the character "Mentor", who was a trusted friend of Odysseus, the king of Ithaca. When Odysseus went to fight in the Trojan War, he entrusted the care of the kingdom and his infant son, Telemachus, to Mentor. In this situation, Mentor had to take on many roles (father, teacher, friend, advisor, etc.) to compensate for Odysseus' absence. Alternatively, some scholars (DuBois & Karcher, 2013) have gained another perspective about the origin of mentoring, stating that "the concept of mentoring may have been an important factor in the earliest beginnings of the human species" (p. 3). There exists evidence, for example, that early evolutionary conditions favoured the development of prosocial motivations to be helpful not only to one's genetic relatives, but also to other group members (Bowles, 2006). Allo-parenting, a form of parental love provided by some individuals who are not a child's biological parents, is still documented as a salient and beneficial practice in less modernized hunter-gatherer societies today (Diamond, 2013). Such considerations are believed to suggest that the inclination to mentor may be part of human beings' DNA (DuBois & Karcher, 2013). Similar forms of mentoring and informal care have been recorded to be common throughout different historical periods and within different communities across the world to "transmit culture, knowledge, skills and support to young people" (Schwartz & Rhodes, 2016, p. 150).

In the late 19th century, the modern formal youth mentoring programs emerged in North America, mainly the U.S (A. Miller, 2004; Schwartz & Rhodes, 2016). The displacement

associated with industrialization, immigration and urbanization caused many children and their families to live in impoverished and stressful circumstances (Keller, 2005). Mounting concern over the growing number of children born into such conditions during this period led to the creation of a wide range of social service programs mainly for urban, low-income youth (Schwartz & Rhodes, 2016). Freedman (1995) suggested that the voluntary *Friendly Visiting* movement that emerged during this era was the root of contemporary youth mentoring. It brought middle class women volunteers to visit poor families, to provide an example of appropriate behaviours, activities and values and to rescue children from perceived poor parenting (Freedman, 1995). However, this measure came to an end due to the intrinsic difficulty of the task, the overwhelming nature of economic hardship and the shortage of volunteers and was eventually incorporated into the emerging profession of social work (Lubove, 1965).

Only a few years later, the first planned youth mentoring program, Big Brothers/Big Sisters (BBBS) of America emerged and was established in New York in 1905 (Beiswinger, 1985; Schwartz & Rhodes, 2016). It aimed to appeal to business and civic leaders as earnest big brothers to befriend youth who suffered the ravage of poverty, exploitation, crime and neglect and were otherwise destined for the reformatory (Baker & Maguire, 2005; Beiswinger, 1985). Ten years after that, BBBS started in Canada. Some scholars suggest that the rationale behind the BBBS mentoring movement was "progressive" (Schwartz & Rhodes, 2016, p. 151) in the context of the early 1900s, since it reflected a departure from the punitive court system that treated children as adults to a more compassionate view that shifts the blame for poor children's outcomes to the family and the community. The prototypical paradigm is characterized by one-to-one relationships between economically disadvantaged youth of colour and a white middle-

class volunteer (Freedman, 1995; Liang & West, 2007), which is still being reflected commonly in present mentoring intervention models.

In the early 1990s, the development of applied social sciences, growing government funding to address social problems and more professionalized social services generated an upsurge of intervention models targeting youth populations vulnerable to poor outcomes, such as low income, and living in single-parent homes in the U.S (Keller, 2005). These interventions mostly adopted a prevention strategy to reduce risk factors associated with specific problem behaviours (Catalano, Hawkins, Berglund, Pollard, & Arthur, 2002) and/or to reinforce protective factors that can be defined as individual or environmental safeguards that can buffer the influences of stressful life events, risks or hazards and promote adaptation and competence (Keller, 2007b; Rutter, 1987). Against this backdrop, the wave of mentoring resurged and spread rapidly across the US as "a tool to address longstanding public and governmental concern about negative outcomes experienced by disadvantaged and at-risk children and young people" (A. Miller, 2004, p. 5). This trend of mentoring developed, slightly later, with similar fervour in Canada. According to Peer Resources Network (Carr, 1999), a Web-based organization that once had the most extensive mentoring database in North America, an upsurge of interest in mass-mentoring for youth deemed to be 'at-risk' in Canada occurred in the latter half of the 1990s as well. This form of mentoring has also been embraced by policy-makers in Canada as a central feature of initiatives such as the influential *Stay-in-School* program. This was launched in 1992 and offered a great number of prevention-oriented mentoring programs to tackle the problem of the rising dropout rate from high school across Canada, serving 130,000 students until it ended in 1995 (A. Miller, 2004).

In 1995, the field of youth mentoring took a leap forward with the release of Public/Private Ventures' landmark evaluation of BBBS mentoring programs in the US (Tierney, Grossman, & Resch, 1999). This report claimed to yield "surprisingly robust" findings (Tierney et al., 1999, p. 31), which were soon accepted by researchers and practitioners in the field of youth mentoring as solid evidence to prove that mentoring benefited youth socially (Cavell, Elledge, Malcolm, Faith, & Hughes, 2009; Grossman & Tierney, 1998). This study became an important catalyst to spawn unprecedented growth in the number of mentoring programs for youth but also in their diversity in the US (Rhodes & DuBois, 2006). More importantly, Freedman (1995) argued that since then, mentoring programs were not merely designed as "interventions to address specific risk or problem behaviors" (p.6). Instead, they were seen more as "one component of a government sponsored comprehensive youth development strategy" (p.6), with the philosophical shift of researchers and practitioners in the youth-service sector from seeing youth as problems to be managed to viewing them as resources to be developed ((Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Lewin-Bizan, Bowers, & Lerner, 2010; Roth, Brooks-Gunn, Murray, & Foster, 1998; Scales, Benson, & Mannes, 2006).

In contrast to earlier mentoring practices with a narrow focus on risky behaviours, the framework of positive youth development (PYD) has developed and provided a new direction in mentoring adolescents deemed to be 'at risk' since the beginning of the 21st century (Tolan, Henry, Schoeny, Lovegrove, & Nichols, 2014). PYD-informed mentoring believes that youth who have high levels of PYD, characterized by five key developmental assets (5Cs): competence (social, academic, and/or cognitive skills); confidence (positive self-worth, self-efficacy); connection (positive bonds with people and/or institutions); character (sense of morality and integrity); and care and compassion (sense of sympathy and empathy for others) can exhibit a

low level of delinquency, substance use and depressive symptoms over time (Phelps et al., 2007). Meanwhile, some youth mentoring initiatives have been prompted by the desire to address community-level concerns, while those used to redress issues of youth already engaged in activities deemed to be delinquent still exist (Keller, 2007b). Alongside this, independent mentoring schemes have proliferated across the US ranging from schools to various youth service organizations (Rhodes & DuBois, 2006). More alternative approaches have been increasingly implemented in youth mentoring, which represents a significant departure from the traditional model where mentors and youth are paired through a formal mechanism and interact with each other on a one-on-one basis. These approaches include, but are not limited to, those geared toward encouraging mentoring relationships through more informal and indirect mechanisms, such as improvements in youth-serving organizations, school reform, and community capacity building; group mentoring; peer mentoring; e-mentoring programs in which mentors and youth communicate over the Internet; youth-initiated mentoring in which youth select adults from within their existing social networks to serve as mentors (DuBois & Karcher, 2005; Rhodes & DuBois, 2006; Schwartz, Rhodes, Spencer, & Grossman, 2013; Sipe, 2005). The developmental pattern toward more flexible forms of mentoring and serving multiple purposes can also be found in existing mentoring practices in Canada (see peer mentoring in Coyne-Foresi, Crooks, Chiodo, Nowicki, and Dare (2019); group mentoring in J. M. Pryce, Kelly, and Lawinger (2019)). Especially in Alberta and Ontario, province-wide partnerships have been formed to support the development of new mentoring programs and to increase communication and collaborations among different types of youth-serving organizations (Alberta Mentoring Partnership, 2020; Ontario Mentoring Coalition, 2014).

In reviewing the development of youth mentoring in North America, we can observe that the mentoring framework and goals have seemingly experienced a transition from aiming to deter risky youth behaviours to a strategy for promoting youth development (DuBois & Karcher, 2005).

2.1.2 Evolving theories and definitions of youth mentoring

Youth mentoring practices, and the paradigms through which these are understood, have developed over time, which has also resulted in the lack of a single precise definition or theory of mentoring. I will try to pin down the paradigms through which youth mentoring has been analyzed. Most of the earlier constructed notions of youth mentoring came from a functionalist paradigm (where the task is to yield efficacy) and were then challenged and reconstructed by a radical humanist paradigm.

2.1.2.1 Functionalist paradigm

The traditional definitions of planned youth mentoring concern the functions that derive from a caring and supportive relationship between a youth and a nonparental, as Rhodes and DuBois (2006) suggest, the functions of mentors. Since youth mentoring is adopted as one of the most commonly-used strategies to prevent delinquency or other problem behaviour (Grossman, Garry, & United States. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1997), its definitions have flexibility to adapt mentoring to achieve important prevention and treatment goals and to fit a certain population (e.g., juvenile offenders or youth at risk of juvenile delinquency, academically 'at-risk' students, etc.). These goals are what Colley (2003a) categorizes as "soft outcomes" and "harder targets" (p.524). Soft outcomes are related to emotional and psychosocial functions, such as increased self-esteem, higher aspirations, and positive identity development (Colley, 2003a). Harder targets, referred to those required by

funding agencies, are mainly instrumental, including educational goals (e.g., school-related behaviour and academic progress), social goals (e.g., the reduction of criminal offending and substance abuse) and employment-related goals (e.g., entry to the labour market or training programs) (Colley, 2003a; DuBois, Holloway, Valentine, & Cooper, 2002; McPartland & Nettles, 1991). Specifically, in school-based youth mentoring targeting students categorized as academically at-risk, mentoring is largely defined as "provid[ing] a context for the revision of negative representations of self, parents, peers, teachers, and school, thus preventing school maladjustment, failure, and dropout" (Britner, Balcazar, Blechman, Blinn-Pike, & Larose, 2006, p. 757).

As a more recent view that accentuates the positive aspects of youth development and health emerges among youth policy makers, programmers and practitioners, some strength-oriented theories of children and adolescent development have lent themselves to defining youth mentoring and rejected the early deficit-based view of youth mentoring (Noam, Malti, & Karcher, 2013). Such an asset-based view toward young people, believing that simply preventing problems is not enough to prepare youth for adulthood (Roth et al., 1998), emphasizes the importance of helping youth achieve their full potential and fulfilling the conditions that contribute to youth health and well-being. For example, MENTOR, a leading and unifying champion for supporting the mentoring field for nearly 25 years in U.S, gives a definition of youth mentoring that emphasizes "bringing young people together with caring individuals who offer guidance, support, and encouragement aimed at developing the competence and character of the mentee" (Garringer, Kupersmidt, Rhodes, Stelter, & Tai, 2015, p. 9). DuBois et al. (2011) utilize the following definition of a mentoring program to guide their meta-analysis: "a program or intervention that is intended to promote positive youth outcomes via relationships between

young persons (18-years-old and younger) and specific non-parental adults (or older youth) who are acting in a non-professional helping capacity" (p. 25).

No matter what mentoring is used to achieve, to prevent youth problem behaviours or to support positive youth development, these definitions could still be seen to be underpinned by the functionalist perspective that stresses what mentoring/mentors can do. Many benefits deriving from mentoring have been found within these definitions. However, a wealth of definitive and conceptual frameworks within the functionalist framework reducing understanding of mentoring relationships to the good deeds of dyadic interactions will still lead practitioners and researchers to blame mentors when the relationships do not work out as expected (Colley, 2003b).

2.1.2.2 Radical humanist perspective

After acknowledging some problems inherent in functionalist-informed definitions of mentoring, some scholars applied radical humanist conceptions to highlight contests over meaning and to strive to expose unequal and often dysfunctional and exploitative power relations in mentoring (Darwin, 2000). On the surface, mentoring is an empowering process that foregrounds social justice to reduce social inequity (Darwin, 2000). However, a radical humanist perspective seeks to dig below the surface and examine power relations inherent in the context of workplace mentoring. Therefore, a wealth of theories of empowerment that are critical about and mindful of "uses and abuses of power and are steeped in nonauthoritative dynamics, progressive learning and open solutions" (Mullen, 2012, p. 15) were awakened to analyze mentoring that goes well beyond notions of efficiency implied in a functionalist perspective.

Although only implicitly, this perspective has also penetrated the field of youth mentoring (Weiston-Serdan, 2017). The first critical analysis of mentoring and context can be

traced back to Colley's (2003b) theoretical discussion of *engagement mentoring*, a term she coined to refer to the form of mentoring that targets young people at risk of disengaging or already being disengaged from formal schemes of education, employment or training in the US in the early 1990s and which later spread to Canada, Britain, Australia and other Anglophone countries. Colley (2003b) applied Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and field and Marxist feminist theories to give a new and critical definition that views mentoring as a process of emotional labour that seeks to work upon and reform the disposition of both the mentor and mentee, to produce and reproduce habitus in a form determined by the needs of dominant groupings, rather than by the needs or desires of mentees and mentors themselves. This redefinition requires an understanding of the contextual field to see how social inequities are covertly produced and reproduced in dyadic relationships. This is also confirmed in Hillman's (2016) understanding of youth mentoring. He contends that mentoring interacts with political, social and cultural norms to prescribe and shape youth into productive and healthy adults who are equipped with the skills and knowledge promoted by neoliberal ideals. More recently, Weiston-Serdan (2017) developed a praxis called *critical mentoring*, which further states that mentoring becomes much more about interrogating context and needs to be understood based on a critical analysis of that context. It requires that the mentoring process should be informed by critical theories to "speak directly to context" (p.15). That is, researchers and practitioners should first understand the complexities and nuances of youth marginalization: persistent and systematic destruction of families and communities and the state-sanctioned and other forces that have consistently undermined the development of particular youth. Then, mentoring can be more possibly treated as "a strategy capable of addressing the marginalization and minoritization of young people" (p.2). Although some of the aforementioned work has offered alternative understandings of youth mentoring

rather than giving a precise definition, all of these scholars have pointed out that mentoring, at times, goes against the original and fundamental goals of dissolution of the power hierarchies and promotion of wellness among those marginalized.

This review of critical scholarship suggests that the mentoring of young people is an inherently complex phenomenon with a range of significant processes that occur at the multiple levels of individual youth and their mentors, and other interpersonal systems, programs, and the larger policy context. Thus, a careful and critical consideration of youth mentoring is needed to capture this complexity (Rhodes & DuBois, 2006) when we are studying any component of youth mentoring, such as mentor-mentee relationships in this study.

2.2 Researching the youth mentoring relationship

The need for research on mentoring has been asserted mainly by funding agencies, with the aim to create evidence-based practices (Pfund et al., 2016). Given that mentoring relationships have been commonly assumed as the core of youth mentoring (Cavell & Elledge, 2005; Rhodes & DuBois, 2008; Rhodes, Liang, & Spencer, 2009), research into mentoring relationships has been put at the forefront. A review of literature on this aspect of mentoring reveals three major tendencies.

First, influenced by functionalist-informed assumptions of mentoring which aim to make mentoring as effective as possible, a large body of research tended to corroborate anecdotal reports of mentoring relationships by identifying the protective qualities of mentoring relationships for youth (Rhodes, Spencer, Keller, Liang, & Noam, 2006). These studies were committed to measuring some specific mentoring relationship qualities, such as feelings of emotional closeness and intimacy (Parra et al., 2002), emotional and instrumental support received from the mentor (Herrera et al., 2007), and examining how they affect the outcomes of

mentored youth. However, such a simplistic causal link between the quality of the match and youth outcomes has been increasingly challenged, especially after some meta-analyses of outcome research on youth mentoring programs (DuBois et al., 2002; Eby, Allen, Evans, Ng, & DuBois, 2008) found that improvements associated with a one-to-one mentoring relationship on the youth who received mentoring were modest at best. In fact, the effects are likely to vary according to the modes of the mentoring relationship (e.g., dyads, dual or multi-mentored, peer) (Rhodes et al., 2006). In addition, quantitative psychological questionnaires, frequently adopted by such studies, relied on a global index or a few atheoretical dimensions (Eby et al., 2008; Rhodes et al., 2006). Although these measures have identified some specific qualities that account for successful mentoring relationships, more theoretically grounded and validated measures are called for to accurately assess the quality and effectiveness of mentoring relationships (Pfund et al., 2016).

Second, some researchers sought to have a more accurate and systematic understanding of the process and development of mentoring relationships. They explained that previous studies concerning how individuals might benefit from mentoring necessarily began with the assumption that a certain type of relationship exists between the youth and mentor (Rhodes, 2009) and pointed out an incommensurate lack of attention to the development of mentoring relationships themselves in such studies (Keller, 2005). Thereafter, more longitudinal qualitative studies emerged and relied on the perspectives of mentors, program staff, and mentees on fewer occasions to shed light on the relational process in mentor-mentee relationships to produce more effective mentoring research and practices (for example, Liang, Spencer, Brogan, & Corral, 2008; J. Pryce & Keller, 2012; C. A. Smith, Newman-Thomas, & Stormont, 2015). Some of these studies have a new, albeit not major finding that mentoring relationships are not developing

in the vacuum and not solely subject to dyadic interactions. Some subsequent attention has been paid to exploring how the wider influences, such as parental involvement (e.g., Spencer & Basualdo-Delmonico, 2014; Spencer, Basualdo-Delmonico, & Lewis, 2011), program staff (e.g., Keller, 2007a), or the combination of both, as Spencer, Gowdy, Drew, McCormack, and Keller's (2020) newest study indicates, may condition the development of mentoring relationships.

These more process-oriented studies can redress the weakness of the first trend of research that are primarily cross-sectional in design and facilitate greater accuracy in reporting on mentoring relationships as well as more rigorous (i.e. less retrospective) examination of their contributions to outcomes. (Parra et al., 2002). In addition, compared with the previous research that largely focused on the mentor-mentee dyad, this trend of studies has gradually taken mentees' immediate context (i.e., family and agency) into account.

Third, after acknowledging the absence of empirical studies associated with negative cases of relationships in the second trend of research, a small number of studies have focused on exposing some poorly implemented relationships and examined factors that may result in the mentor-mentee relationship failure (Spencer, 2007). Increasingly, issues of power have been recognized as one significant factor that influences the mentoring relationship (Keller & Pryce, 2010; Rhodes et al., 2009). The most comprehensive analysis is found in Colley's (2003b) study concerning mentoring relationships in the engagement mentoring scheme, where she gave a detailed and critical analysis of power dynamics associated with gender and class playing out in mentor-youth relationships. Her study applies a number of theories of power to gain a clear understanding how it works in mentoring relationships. It reveals that there are two layers of power: one internal to the relationship, between the mentor and mentee, the other external to the relationship that reflects both the power dynamics of the agency and the societal contexts in

which the mentor and mentee are positioned. Here, the interplay of agency and structure is explicitly demonstrated in her analysis. More recently, Schippers (2008) explored the complicated and dynamic relationship between structural and interpersonal power through observing the interactions between middle school girls and their mentors across race, gender and age. This study indicates that structural inequity is not necessarily reproduced in everyday life but not overridden either. Mentors and mentees could establish new meanings for their interpersonal power without touching on the structural inequity. Such discussions have touched on the issues of structural inequity embedded in dyadic relationships or the complexity of the intrapersonal power between the mentor and mentee, which makes it more possible to expand the reach of youth mentoring from simply redressing problems of youth deemed to be 'at risk' to potentially fulfilling their needs and ultimately making a contribution to the world beyond the self (Albright et al., 2017). Therefore, more democratic ideas that have shown a new direction for the definitive work of youth mentoring are needed to guide studies in this field to further capitalize on youths' strengths and advance mentoring practices.

After a critical reflection on power relations and their influences on the mentor-mentee relationship, this study aims to extend the previously limited discussions about the relationship between mentors and young people. Traditionally, in the context of workplace or academic mentoring where the power issue has been studied for longer, a mentor, within the existing power relations, is rather assumed to be a person who knows what is best for the other, has superior knowledge and skills and is perceived as somewhat paternalistic in mentor-mentee interactions (Brinson & Kottler, 1993). However, as the frameworks and goals of youth mentoring have broadened from redressing problems, promoting youth's personal and positive development to more recently engaging youth to making a difference in a variety of settings

around them, the traditional view that sees mentors as greatly superior may be challenged in the field of youth mentoring. This study seeks to offer practitioners and policy makers insight into the power dynamics of the mentor-mentee relationship after situating them in the institutional and socio-economic and political contexts, especially in relations to the wider power relations not only through the institutional context of planned mentoring, but also through less visible relations of social, economic and political power. Specifically, it will explore how mentors are subject to the roles this program imposed on them in the name of empowerment or exercise their agentic power to resist such impositions from the program on them, their mentees and their relationships and establish new roles and relationships. In this way, this study seeks to contribute to discussions about the interplay of agency and structural inequity in mentoring relationships after contextualizing the mentoring program and relationships.

2.3 Power theories and mentoring relationships

After an increasing number of researchers acknowledged that the nature of mentoring is still elusive and uncritical, they then suggest that there is more to mentoring than giving advice (Darwin, 2000). Thereafter, more attention is paid to exploring some of the deeper dynamics of mentoring relationships through a great variety of theoretical lenses (McAuley, 2003).

2.3.1 The definitions of power from different perspectives

Power has a multitude of definitions and a variety of perspectives have been used to define it. To avoid the same definitional quagmire of mentoring (Hagerty, 1986), it is helpful to review the current conceptualization of power.

There is a trend to extend notions of personal power into the social domain (Overbeck & Park, 2001). Some scholars (e.g., Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989) classify concepts of power into three categories. The first category defines power from an individual perspective as an

individual's ability, or perceived ability, to influence others or change others' behaviours (i.e., Dahl, 1957; Weber, 2009). This category of power is an example of overt power and can be analyzed after examination of a series of discrete decisions. The individual who prevails in the decision-making is identified as having more power. The second category of power takes an organizational perspective that power is a property of the structure of the organization and position, and involves control over persons, information, and resources (Hinings, Hickson, Pennings, & Schneck, 1974; Pfeffer, 1981). Finally, under a sociopolitical perspective, power is viewed as the cause and outcome of racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, and other forms of group oppression in society (J. M. Jones, 1997). This category is elaborated in Lukes's (2004) hegemonic view of power. He states that hegemonic power can be used to induce people to want things "opposed to what would benefit them and to fail to want what they would, but for such power, recognize to be in their real interests" (p. 64). Gould (1994) also gives an explicit description how hegemonic power leads to tactical concessions which result in cosmetic policies and reform in order to appease and maintain equilibrium. This way is more likely to expose latent conflicts (Lukes, 2004). These perspectives on power reflect individual, organizational and societal levels of analysis. Ragins and Sundstrom (1989) view these levels to be interrelated: events at any one level influence and get influenced by other levels.

The premise of this study is that mentoring relationships do not occur in a vacuum. The power analysis thereof is becoming more complex as more researchers acknowledge the complexity of mentoring relationships. Next, two trends of power analysis in mentoring relationships based on reviews of the wider body of mentoring literature will be presented and examined.

2.3.2 Power as a property in mentoring relationships

Power as property is mainly a debate between the *power over* view and *power to* view (Haugaard, 2012), when applied to the practice of mentoring. Early mentoring practice was presented by some psychological studies (Levinson & Darrow, 1979) in this field as a means of passing the baton of knowledge and experience from one generation to the other. The less experienced mentee can be empowered by a transfer of power from the mentor. In this case, power manifests itself as a possession or commodity: an acquisition of power by one individual corresponds to the loss of power by another (Colley, 2001; Parsons, 1960). Therefore, power is seen as a zero-sum game within the mentoring relationship, which is the core of the *power over* view (Haugaard, 2012). Accordingly, the ideal of such mentoring is interpreted as "a relationship where a power is handed over willingly" (Colley, 2001, p. 193) from the mentor to the mentee. Negative outcomes will be revealed when the mentor withholds the power, which is viewed as domination. Based on this view of power, dominance is usually characterized by the mentor having the ability to prevail over the mentee in the process of decision making and making the mentee do something which they would not otherwise have done (Colley, 2001).

However, the zero-sum view of power is found to be inadequate for the power analysis of currently existing mentoring relationships in the context of nurse and teacher initial education (Gay & Stephenson, 1998; Loizou, 2011; Yarrow, Millwater, & Fraser, 1997). This strand of literature highlights the unequal power differential between the mentor and mentee and warns that attention must be paid to the encroachment of powerful institutional interests within supposedly dyadic mentoring relationships, as shown in Schippers's (2008) study. Some researchers (e.g., Colley, 2001) portray the ideal of such mentoring as a reciprocal process in which power is reproduced in the mentee and enhanced in the mentor. According to Colley

(2001), this form of power comes from collaborative mutual reflection by both mentor and mentee, acknowledging the insights of the novice as being of equal value to that of the experienced practitioner. Both parties of one relationship can be in co-operation to enhance the joint power over third parties (Mann, 2013). Power, in this sense, different from the zero-sum one, is presented as the positive-sum one (Haugaard, 2012) in which one party does not gain at the expense of the other. Rather, the power of both is expanded. This *power to* view not only discusses mentoring relationship at the dyadic level, but also incorporates interests external to the dyad as they impact within it, in particular those from the organizational level (Colley, 2001).

However, this analysis of power as property*,* whether viewed as *power over* or *power to,* fails to take macro-structural influences on the organization and on mentoring relationships into account.

2.3.3 Power as a set of relations in mentoring relationships

Apart from perceiving power as a property which can be shared or equalized, another trend in studying mentoring sees power as relational, which may address unsolved problems in the previous trend. Foucault's analysis of power relations can be one representative.

Rather than viewing power as a capacity (e.g. Dahl, 1957; French & Raven, 1959; Hobbes, 1962), Foucault sees power as relationally based and contends that power is best perceived through examining its effects. He claims "power is everywhere" (Foucault, Martin, Gutman, & Hutton, 1988, p. 12) and is inherent to relationships, institutional forms, and societal structures, not being constrained to operating within class structures (Marx, 2008) or forms of organization such as the bureaucracy (Weber, 1978). Power relations are not simply negative, but can be productive because they imply resistance. According to Foucault (1990), "there is no power that is exercised without a sense of aims and objectives" (p.95). Foucault (2002) considers

discourse as a sequence of signs that assign meaning to and among objects, subjects, and statements (Hall, 1997). It can be linked to power through rules of inclusion and exclusion to construct not only the truths of our times but also how, where, and who is privileged to speak to them (Foucault, 2002). Discourse also influences how ideas are put into practices and used to regulate the conduct of others (Hall, 1997). Therefore, discourse shapes the society and at the same time is shaped by it. In the literature of youth mentoring, Colley (2003b) once identified informal discourses that pervaded the program scheme to show a number of unanticipated consequences for the progress of the mentoring relationships. More recently, Hillman (2016) critically analyzed how multiple elements of youth mentorship discourse in North America supporting the inculcation of youth with neoliberal values such as competition, entrepreneurism, and self-regulation. These results revealed that values and ethics promoted in youth mentoring discourse were originated from a deeper social and political source than the written materials found within individual programs or interviews with program staff. Therefore, inspired by these works, this study will also adopt discourse analysis to map out the power relations in which the HS program is located.

2.4 The landscape of the study

An examination of existing research has emphasized the importance of mapping out the context of mentoring programs, which can greatly contribute to a more accurate understanding and explanation of what happens within paired mentor and mentee relationships. Therefore, this section will carefully describe the local and institutional contexts where the program is conducted or influenced to prepare for the later critical analysis of context.

2.4.1 Dropout and initiatives for student retainment in Montreal

According to the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur (MEES)

(2019), Montreal's high school dropout rate was 15.9% in 2016, higher than the average high

school dropout rate of Quebec as a whole (14.6%). Meanwhile, the high school graduation rate in

Quebec has long been lower than the overall high school graduation rate in Canada. The state of

high school graduation is still of concern, despite the notable improvement in the dropout rate in

Montreal, compared with the dropout rate of 24.6% in 2009 (MEES, 2019).

The high dropout rate in Quebec and Montreal is a more complex issue, compared with

other provinces in Canada. *Montreal Hooked to School (MHS)* (2019), an initiative funded by the

Quebec government to mobilize partnerships to promote school perseverance among youth, has

identified some reasons to explain what caused this complexity in Montreal. The first and most

worrisome reason associated with the high dropout rate is widespread poverty in Montreal.

According to the 2011 National Household Survey, Montreal has the highest proportion of

underprivileged neighbourhoods of any Canadian city. Of the 478 low-income neighbourhoods

in Canada, 35.8% are in Montreal (compared to 15.7% in Toronto and 7.1% in Vancouver). The

second reason is identified as the rising proportion of students with immigrant backgrounds. This

reached 62.6% in 2018. Some studies assert that immigrant-origin students do not, in general,

face a high risk of school failure in Quebec education system (Bakhshaei, Georgiou, & Mc

Andrew, 2016). However, they also state significant variations could be found among different

subgroups of students in Quebec, which may make it more challenging to guarantee all students

equal opportunity to succeed in their academic pursuits.

After acknowledging the importance of education for Quebec's social enrichment and

economic development, the government, school boards and schools have collaborated to help

young Montrealers stay in school. To date, joint Quebec-wide actions concerning young people involving more partners have been mobilized to further promote school perseverance in Montreal and other areas of Quebec (Ministère de l'Éducation du Loisir et du Sport [MELS], 2009).

2.4.2 Overview of the program

The HS program in this study is a school-based after-school mentoring program in Montreal, Quebec. It was co-launched and is co-owned by one local English-speaking research university and one local English school board to connect university student volunteers to some elementary school students in underprivileged neighbourhoods of Montreal. These children are selected and included in this program because they lack resources to finish their homework at home, find difficulty fitting into school life or possibly lack role models in their immediate environments. HS, along with two other community outreach programs had been under the administration of a university equity and diversity office until 2018. In 2019, they were moved to the Enrolment Office as a part of a new department. This program has been funded by a private charitable foundation through the university for nine consecutive years. This grant is to support community-based initiatives that align with values of equity in the fields of education, health, social welfare, cultural and environmental conservation. It has also been sponsored through the school board each year by *The Réseau réussite Montréal*, mandated under the Quebec provincial government's comprehensive call of *I care about school! All together for student success* (MELS, 2009)*,* as one action to reduce dropout rate and promote school perseverance on the island of Montreal.

This mentoring program, running from early October to early December in fall semesters and from late January to Early April in winter semesters, takes place in weekly sessions for 1.5 hours after school. It offers three different time options for university students to volunteer. This

mentoring program is ideally one-to-one, with one mentor matched with one elementary school student within the school setting. Along with the homework help, this program aims to achieve children's social-emotional development promoted by Cohen and colleagues (2005). Social-emotional development "stresses children's experience, expression, and management of emotions and the ability to establish positive and rewarding relationships with others" (Cohen et al, 2005, as cited in Program guide and reflection log, p.3). After the first 45-minute homework session where mentors offer homework help, the second 45-minute session supplies either a *Creative Challenge* or a community workshop. *Creative Challenges* are activities mainly designed and coordinated by the onsite program coordinator to encourage collaborative learning of the mentor-mentee and to help mentees learn new skills. Community workshops are offered by the university or Montreal-based educators and community members who are invited to provide activities around various themes, such as science, arts and social justice. The importance of establishing positive and rewarding mentor-mentee relationships is emphasized throughout the whole process and believed to be central to children's learning and development.

The HS program staff consists of two co-founders who oversee and manage the program and three part-time university student program coordinators who conduct day-to-day and on-site operations. One co-founder works at the university and is responsible for coordinating and planning the HS and other community engagement programs within the university. The other co-founder is from the school board. His job responsibility includes coordinating the schools involved and providing supports and trainings to ensure the smooth operation of this program.

In a nutshell, this program is not only a policy-driven strategy for decreasing the school dropout rate, but also a part of the university's community engagement endeavour. To explicitly map out the program context and the community-university interaction is helpful in order to

observe the administrative complexities of managing relationships described by Rhode and Dubois (2006) in school-based mentoring programs.

2.4.3 The school and the neighbourhood

The elementary school (referred to as 'School X' in this thesis) in this study is an early French immersion school of an English school board, which means that some subjects are taught in French to expose Anglophone students to French Language and Culture. It is also a Community Learning Centre (CLC) school which has community partners to offer workshops and activities designated to enhance students' development and family support. Quebec's MEES intends that such community-school connections will help an English-speaking minority better incorporate into their community where Anglophones make up a small percentage of the population.

This school was on the brink of closing down in 2018 due to decreasing population and enrolment. After being saved by efforts of different parties, it was still forced to shut down after a pipeline burst, causing a major flood in January 2019. Since then, School X's students have been moved to a building of another English elementary school within the same neighbourhood. Thus, mentoring provided by the HS program to students at School X took place in the other elementary school, rather than at School X itself.

The school is located in Borough Y in Montreal. Borough Y is highly bilingual, where two-thirds of the population can speak both French and English (Statistics Canada, 2016). Only 10% of the population are unilingual English speakers while around 20% speak French only. 11.38% of children under 18 have mothers without a diploma, certificate or degree. 17.14% of families are below the after-tax low income cut-off and 30.04% of families are single-parent in Borough Y (Blanchard, 2017). These three indicators plus one more indicator, families in which

neither parent works full time, are considered and given weight by the Comité de gestion de la

taxe scolaire de l'île de Montréal (CGTSIM), to calculate the level of underprivilege and map

The Poverty Map of Families with Children Under the Age of 18 on the island of Montreal

(Grenier, 2018). That map observes a higher presence of poverty in Borough Y, across many

areas of the borough except in the southern part. This presence of poverty is revealed to have a

significant impact on the composition of the educational environment (Grenier, 2018). For

example, public schools in underprivileged areas will have more underprivileged students. This

urban socio-economic fabric has also affected the distribution of funds from CGTSIM to support

school boards on the island of Montreal to implement educational catch-up measures in these

underprivileged areas, including Borough Y. Since 2017, the whole area of Borough Y has been

targeted by *MHS* (2019) to intervene in order to improve school perseverance.

Chapter III Methodology

I will start this chapter by outlining formulations of qualitative case study methodology mainly developed by Merriam (1998), on case study research in the field of education. In establishing the methodology of this study, I have also drawn from Yin's (2011) approach to case study design and other researchers' elaborations of Yin's approach in their research contexts. I will discuss the main tenets of qualitative case study methodology, exploring how it is ideal for my research. Then, I will demonstrate the process of building my case study design, where I will explicitly present how I have bound my case and determined the type of my case study. I continue to reflect on my own positioning as both a researcher and a former mentor in the program which I am studying, which is one important element of building my methodology. In the latter sections of the chapter, I will describe my research methods with regards to participant recruitment, research ethics in terms of consent, confidentiality and anonymity, data collection, data analysis and credibility and trustworthiness of the research.

3.1 Case studies in education

A qualitative case study facilitates the exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources. Here, according to Yin (2011), the case study design can be considered when 1) the focus of the study is to answer "how" or "why" questions; 2) contextual factors need to be covered between the context and phenomenon. Therefore, to better understand mentor-mentee dyadic relationships, case studies can be used to explore them and the multi-level contexts where they occur and develop. Another key advantage is that case studies are open to use of theory and conceptual categories that guide research and analysis. Therefore, case studies can provide an opportunity to engage power theories which are presented in Chapter II.

3.2 Case study design

However, a case is usually loosely designed, and a great number of design choices are required to be made (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Therefore, my research combines both Merriam's (1998) and Yin's (2011) case study design to demonstrate how I build my case study design, including how I bind the case and determine the type of case study, which are two important steps in both Merriam's and Yin's approaches to case studies.

3.2.1 Binding the case

In a case study, it is important to make it clear what "case" refers to as the unit of analysis (Stake, 2005). In this study, the case refers to mentor-mentee relationships. Delineating and determining the case can help researchers understand what their case will not be (Baxter & Jack, 2008). It seems paradoxical, but this can help me avoid framing a question that is too broad to answer. According to Yin (2011) and Stake (2005), placing boundaries on a case can prevent such an explosion from occurring and ensure that my study is reasonable in scope. In my case study, mentor-mentee relationships are explored from the mentor's perspective. "Wider power relations" in my research question also need to be modified more clearly; they specifically refer to those hooked to the institutional and socio-economic and political context of this program. At the same time, I need to make clear where these mentor-mentee relationships are located and how long they will last. Here, I conduct a case study focusing on mentor-mentee relationships in one school-based mentoring program based in Montreal, lasting one school term.

3.2.2 Determining the type of case study and study design

It is very important to select the type of case study design because whether the overall study goal can be achieved is dependent on the selection of my case study type. I determined the type of my case study, based on Merriam's (1998) description of types of case study.

Considering that my goal is to comprehensively understand power dynamics of mentor-mentee relationships from multiple perspectives, I adopt Merriam's (1998) heuristic case study to attempt the discovery of new meanings and to extend readers' experience. Previously unknown relationships can be expected to emerge from case studies, leading to a rethinking of the phenomenon being studied. Merriam (1998) also describes research design borrowed from other disciplines and often used in educational research, which contributes to shaping the research design of my case study. My research design has incorporated what Merriam (1998) describes as psychological, ethnographic and sociological case study design elements. Psychological case study design can help my case study address the individual level: how mentors view their roles and those of their mentees. Then ethnographic and sociological case study elements can work together to help answer the second question in this study by investigating the institutional setting and studying how macro-level power dynamics were transmitted through and to individual actors and the interactions between them. In addition, I have also considered the necessary number of cases to study for my project. Considering that different mentor-mentee dyads may have different forms of power dynamics, influenced by wider power relations to different extents, I conduct a holistic case study, within which several sub-units are situated, to delve into what different mentor-mentee dyads experience in one setting in order to better illustrate this case.

3.3 The ethics of research: participant recruitment

Merriam (1998) contends that the number and representativeness of participants is not the major consideration in case studies. Rather, the potential of each person to contribute to the development of insights and understanding of the phenomenon is crucial (Merriam, 1998). Therefore, firstly, to have a holistic picture of the mentoring program of the study, the experiences and perceptions of people located in different positions within this mentoring

program need to be included. Apart from mentors, this study also involves major program staff, i.e., program co-founders and a program coordinator. Secondly, considering my focus on the individual-level interactions between mentor and mentee as well, four mentors have been involved to give an account of their experiences and feelings. I initially planned to include both co-founders and the program coordinator in my study. However, the COVID-19 pandemic caused uncertainty in the daily work of the co-founder who works in the school board and made it too difficult to conduct our interview. Thus, there are six participants in total in this study: four mentors, the program co-founder from the university side and one program coordinator.

I recruited mentors who volunteered at School X. I chose this school because my previous voluntary experience here has made me more familiar with its environment than other schools in this program. As proposed by Merriam (1998), I began recruitment from the key person, the program coordinator who connects almost all people involved in this mentoring program. Because I knew her, I had an informal discussion with her to invite her to participate in this study. She introduced me to the program co-founder, who works as the community outreach coordinator within the university, and I invited him to participate in my study. As for mentor recruitment, I briefly introduced my study after the in-school orientation where mentors met their mentees for the first time and then individually talked with some of them who showed interest in this study and approached me. At the same time, I also got to know some mentors who showed persistence in this program from the program coordinator and then personally reached out to them. At last, I included four mentors in my study: two are new mentors, two are returning mentors.

3.4 The ethics of research: consent, confidentiality, anonymity

I started recruiting participants after this study received ethical approval from the university Research Ethics Board. I sought informed consent from all research participants. Informed consent forms provided for mentors (See Appendix A) and program staff members (See Appendix B) are different, but all of them outline the purpose and structure of my research in more detail, explain what participation would entail, and inform participants that they can withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. Measures to protect all participants' confidentiality and anonymity during and after the study are also explained explicitly in the consent forms. Considering that identifying some organizations or participants may expose the identity of other participants who do not want to be identified, no option of being identified is given and all participants and organizations are anonymous. In addition, all participants were notified about the possibility of being identified by others in the program. While program staff involved are anonymized and their position titles are modified, it is still possible for them to be identified by other people in this program due to their unique job responsibilities. Given the small number of mentors involved in this program, they were also informed of the possibility that program staff might know that they participated in this study, but program staff would not be told what they said.

After getting the oral assent from my respondents to participate in this study, I brought two copies of the research consent form and asked them to sign when we met in our first interview and before our interview officially started. One was for their records. At the start of each interview, I explained the focus of my study and the interview and described my standpoints as both a student researcher and a former mentor in this program. I also reminded the

participant that she/he could choose not to answer questions that made him/her feel

uncomfortable and that they could end the interview at any time.

3.5 Data collection

Both Merriam (1998) and Yin (2011) agree that it is incumbent upon case study

researchers to draw their data from multiple sources to capture the case under study in its

complexity and entirety (Yazan, 2015). However, this study is based more on Merriam's (1998)

suggestion for its focus on exclusive use of qualitative data. I used semi-structured interviews

and documents as two ways to collect data.

3.5.1 Semi-structured interviews

In a case study, Merriam (1998) has explained the importance of the use of interviews

especially when we cannot observe feelings or how people interpret the world around them. In

this study, semi-structured interviews were used to interview all participants, which allows more

flexibility than highly structured interviews but is more predictable than open-ended interviews

for a novice researcher (Merriam, 1998). Before conducting formal interviews with research

participants, I conducted a pilot interview with my peers, to practice interviewing and try out

these interview questions to ascertain whether they are clear or need rewording. All interviews

were audio recorded, and no compensation was offered.

3.5.1.1 With mentors

Semi-structured interviews were used to explore mentors' perceptions of themselves,

their mentees and program activities or decisions, and how such perceptions influenced their

mentoring practices and relationships with their mentees. I included four mentors, Qingying, Jia,

Eddie, and Gina[1] in this study. They are all international undergraduate students from ethnic

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[1] All names mentioned in this thesis are pseudonyms for confidentiality.

minority backgrounds in Canada. Qingying and Jia were both new mentors and are from China; Eddie and Gina were returning mentors, respectively from Iran and India. All mentors were interviewed individually on two occasions during their involvement in the HS mentoring program of the 2020 school winter term. Each interview with mentors lasted around 40-50 minutes. These interviews did not take place during the mentoring sessions so did not interfere with mentors' routine interactions with their mentees. The first round of interviews with mentor participants were all planned on campus at a location of their choice, either in the library or a café near the campus. The first round of interviews took place between the second and fourth weeks of the HS mentoring program. However, due to the outbreak of COVID-19 in early March, the second round of interviews was conducted online through Zoom or Skype, in late April and early May 2020.

3.5.1.2 With program coordinator and program co-founders

Semi-structured interviews were initially planned with two program co-founders and the program coordinator, who are involved in program planning, organizing, and implementing as well as working with both mentors and mentees. The main goal of these interviews is to describe the institutional context and power hierarchy within HS. Foucault's analysis of power/knowledge suggests that power can be sustained through a medium of interconnecting and interdependent discourses (Preece, 2006). Discourse here cannot be simply conceptualized as ways of speaking and writing. Rather, discourses are bound up with institutional practices which may be shared by a community of people, such as activities and ways of organizing, regulating and administering (Preece, 2006). All people who use discourse consciously or unconsciously manifest their power. In this way, I can link power relations to discursive formation. By analyzing their routine activities and decision-making in this program, I can ascertain the ways in which these staff

members exercise their power to position both mentors and mentees and explore how their exercise of power can contribute to institutional power hierarchy. At the same time, people can not only use discourses to express domination but also show being dominated consciously or unconsciously (Van Dijk, 2006). Therefore, interviews with staff members can reflect wider power relations accountable for their discourses and this program. All interviews with program staff were scheduled halfway through the process of the HS mentoring program, with the aim to collect rich descriptions concerning their involvement in mentor-mentee interaction but not to overburden the data collection and analysis at the end of this study. The interview with the program co-founder, Alex, from the university side was in his workplace and that with the program coordinator, Christine, was in a café she chose. Both interviews were conducted in mid-February 2020.

3.5.1.3 Documents

Even though the interviews with staff members reflect some elements of power relations and the wider socio-economic and political context where the program is located, I also collected documents to give a holistic picture of the socio-economic and political context where the program is located. Merriam (1998) explains that documents are not subject to the same limitations as interviews or observations in which people's cooperation is essential for collecting good data. Documents are a ready-made source of data for the case study (Merriam, 1998). More importantly, based on Foucault's research into power, knowledge, discourse, documents can be presented as the mechanism of power relations as I explained above, and which can be used for further analysis of power relations in this study.

Document collection includes personal documents and public records. Following Merriam (1998), personal documents refer to a paper trail which can reveal things that cannot be

observed and things that have taken place before the study begins here. It can also be used to reveal goals or decisions that might be unknown to some people (Patton, 1990). The private documents I was offered are the 2017-18 annual program report, a letter of gratitude from the school board, the presentation slides used in the program orientation, one unofficial interview script identifying the success factors of this program, and HS program guide and reflection log. In regard to public records, I first collected public information about this mentoring program, including its own webpage, Facebook page and advertising materials (mainly emails). Second, I collected provincial government-issued laws, policies, regulations, and institutional regulations explicitly identified by program staff members in their interviews or in the documents they provided that shape their decisions and behaviours in the program and the planning of this program. The reason for looking for laws, policies, and regulations is that various options promoted for educational reforms or alternatives to public schooling represent divergent social, ideological, economic and political interests (Wotherspoon, 2009). The following public documents have been identified, combined with interview data for further analysis: the open letter of *MHS*, and a final report on Indigenous Studies and Indigenous Education[2] issued by the university.

3.6 Subjectivity and positionality: insider/outsider knowledge, power, reflexivity

Acknowledgment and awareness of my insider/outsider positions is of particular importance throughout the study. The interpretive nature of knowledge produced by case studies and the collaborative approach to knowledge production has reminded me of the importance of scrutinizing my positions especially in the data gathering and analysis process. In particular, I found myself confronted with questions about subjectivity and the intersections between

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[2] The name of this report has been changed for confidentiality.

mentors' experiences, my life, the research process and the intended or unintended outcomes of research. Using reflexivity, I made sense of my positionality and assumptions during this research process. The focus of this study on mentor-mentee power dynamics made me more conscious of power issues related to my insider/outsider positions.

This study has its origins in my previous mentoring experience in this program and my feelings about my interactions with my mentee. Reflecting upon my experience has shaped the propositions that shape this case study and enabled me to have insider knowledge of contexts of this program and some aspects of mentor-mentee interactions. Case studies can be differentiated from other research design by their "interpretation in context" (Cronbach, 1975, p. 123). That is, the knowledge produced by case studies is more rooted in context, distinguishable from formal, abstract knowledge (Merriam, 1998). Therefore, my access to staff members and documents can better help me situate my research focus, mentoring relationships, and then achieve a holistic description and explanation of mentor-mentee relationships. My role as a former mentor can give me special access to people and documents involved in this program where I may be trusted more than an outsider researcher would be. At the same time, my previous experience as a former mentor and my knowledge of program activities and context can enable me to resonate and empathize with my participants, especially mentors (Merriam, 1998). I aimed to establish trust with these mentors through some of our shared experiences and to ensure that they felt comfortable to tell me anything they wanted during the interview process, especially what cannot be observed, e.g., their feelings about mentoring. These mentors expressed their experiences or some assumptions and treated me as one of them through identifying with my multiple roles and identities: mentor, an international student and Chinese. In addition, identifying myself as an insider may help with my interactions with my respondents, but I also found that there were

multiple instances that mentors made a comment that I did not explore further because as an insider, I understood what they meant. It wasn't until after I was reviewing the data that I realized that I could be affecting the authenticity of the data. Therefore, when I present findings, I have also indicated in what way I felt that I had influenced mentors' voices in expressing their experiences and assumptions and contributed to some shared understandings between me and mentors.

I also attended to my position as a researcher, which I sometimes found conflicting with the insider aspect of my positionality in this study. Particularly, I needed to understand and cope with the influences of my propositions on the study process as a student researcher. Developing propositions can place limits on the scope of the study and increase the feasibility of completing a research project (Baxter & Jack, 2008). However, my propositions may also produce biased knowledge. I kept using bell hooks' (2015) construct of margin and centre as descriptors of positionality to examine my relationships with mentor respondents in this study. As a student researcher from mainland China in Montreal, I have faced many instances of not belonging to the majority group in my daily experiences but unconsciously attempted to join those in the centre through my class and educational privilege. Therefore, I made extra efforts to scrutinize each word and moment that could reflect privilege. I tried to expose my assumptions that might reproduce an oppressive relationship on both mentees and mentors in this case. During the study process, I reflected and noted my feelings and thoughts in my field notes (i.e., during each interview and in the process of analyzing data) in an effort to keep an eye on my perceptions and to understand how my subjectivity works here (Cope, 2014). I also kept reminding myself of my privilege and status as a researcher to generate, analyze and make meaning of some specific data. I made a concerted effort to situate my critically informed commentary within a rich portrayal of

the respondents or thick description to provide the reader with a vicarious experience (Cousin, 2005). I also kept revisiting interview transcripts and tried to present my respondents' stories directly from these transcripts as much as possible.

As a researcher I was in a more powerful position in relation to the researched, but those being interviewed were also capable of exercising their own power to contribute to, steer, and withhold from the interview process that was a dynamic and value-laden social interaction (Collins, 1998). Especially when my questions touched on issues concerning conflicts, mentors would turn to other issues that they either felt they had more of a voice in or were more comfortable discussing. In this case, in order not to dampen their momentum to share, I would wait until they paused or finished their sharing and then steered our conversation into some issues that were more related to this study and provided more specific prompts to elicit their responses.

In sum, my position as both an insider and outsider can affect the research process. My bias cannot be eliminated in this study, but as Foley (2002) attests, using reflexivity can help this study articulate my research findings for the reader and produce stories that are more credible.

3.7 Credibility and trustworthiness

Credibility and trustworthiness are two important criteria used for evaluating the study results and I have adopted specific strategies to address these, including triangulation, member checking, and audit trail.

With triangulation, I used more methods of data collection to build the institutional, socio-economic, and political contexts in this study. I not only interviewed staff members, but also collected related documents as another source to try to reduce the limitations of either one of the methods (Denzin, 1989). Notably, Mathison (1988) points out that triangulation may produce

data that are inconsistent or contradictory. Therefore, instead of seeing triangulation as "a technological solution for ensuring validity" (Mathison, 1988, p. 15), I have paid more attention to developing a holistic understanding of the situation to construct my explanations in my case study. Member checking is another key strategy to maintain the trustworthiness of my research. I offered to send a full transcript of interview data to participants or the parts I would use for analysis and publication so that they could correct errors, present new facts which they might have missed in their interviews and clarify some parts which I had questions about. In addition, I also did informal member checking (George, 2017). I asked follow-up questions, paraphrased their responses in the interview process and gave an overview of their interviews at the end of each interview so that they could also correct my errors and provide extra explanations in some parts. As for the audit trail, a collection of materials and notes used in the research process that documents the researcher's feelings and assumptions (Cope, 2014), I invited my thesis supervisor to review my de-identified study materials, including interview transcripts, data analysis, and process notes, and drafts of the final report. After taking my supervisor's advice, I also asked a classmate in a graduate course to check whether my writing was as rigorous as possible.

3.8 Data entry and analysis

The data entry process involved full transcriptions of all interview recordings. All interview recordings were transcribed verbatim. I started from rough transcriptions to include all the words and other features of talk in these interviews, (e.g., whispered accounts, frequent or lengthy pauses, emphases). The interviews were re-transcribed after I added the contexts of the utterances in the interviews from my field notes about the interview situations and interactions (e.g., actions and non-verbal behaviours). Transcriptions of interview data allowed me to revisit

the terms, language, and viewpoints that recurred and were less obvious to me during the interviews (Given, 2008).

Merrian (1998) refers to the process of data analysis in this way: "making sense out of data involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read – it is the process of making meaning" (p.178). Because I needed to synthesize data to answer my research questions, grouping data is an important step to avoid confusion in the later analysis and interpretation process. Transcribed interview data from mentors were used to answer the first question and then worked together with a combination of transcribed interview data from staff members and documents to answer the second question.

Transcribed interview data from staff members and documents were analyzed for two goals: 1) to provide contextual materials: the institutional context of this program and socio-economic, political contexts; 2) to reflect power relations that shape both levels of contexts. I analyzed data informed by an understanding that discourse is a primary medium through which power is expressed and shaped (Foucault & Rabinow, 1997). I applied Willig's (2003) six-stage approach for Foucauldian Discourse Analysis to code and analyze public documents collected and interview transcripts. The six stages are explained as (in order): discursive constructions, discourses, action orientation, positioning (or subjects), practice and subjectivity (Willig, 2003). All analyses were at the level of content and these stages can be materialized into the following questions when I analyzed these coded data: In what ways is the discursive object constructed in the text? How can a discursive object that initially appears to be the same be constructed in quite different ways? In what contexts are the different constructions of the object being placed? What are the subject positions that the discourse offers? What is the relationship between discourse and

practice? (Willig, 2003) In this way, I tried to map out wider power relations by analyzing how aspects of socio-economic and political reality take effect within the program.

Then, I used narrative analysis as a strategy to interpret mentors' perspectives about the interactions between them and their mentees, which is the focus of this study. The reason I did not include them in the Foucauldian discourse analysis is that it may downplay the significance of mentors' agency in the construction, reproduction and transformation of discursive formations. It assumes that the intentions and actions of agents are subordinated to discourses that consist of determinate sets of rules and practices which account for the functioning and transformation of bodies of knowledge and the disciplinary technologies they support (Reed, 2000). In this way, the mentoring dyad's agency and freedom may be suppressed if the dyadic relationship and interaction is presupposed as wholly governed and shaped by the discourse, which I seek to avoid in this case study. Therefore, I used narrative analysis to engage them as agents to co-construct their own mentoring experiences. Narrative analysis is appropriate for the analysis of data which does not fall into a neat category (Josselson, 1995). Indeed, it interprets a story or conversation in which more attention is paid to the embedded meanings and evaluations of the speaker and their contexts (Josselson, 1995). In my case study, multiple sources of data and layers of context may be woven into each unit and its interpretation. Therefore, the use of narrative analysis can present a story of what happened between mentors and mentees, but more importantly it can help synthesize answers about how and why these things happen in a certain way.

I used the method of "emplotment" (Polkinghorne, 1991, 1995; Ricoeur, 1991) for data analysis. Emplotment aims to make a configuration in time, creating a whole out of a series of events (Johnson, 1993). Therefore, according to Johnson (1993), emplotment can provide an

ordering to transform these individual events into significant human actions, not only physically embodied actions but also mental and thinking actions, and into projects that have meaning. He states that the process of emplotment requires the identification of one or more plots in a story. Plot is described by Polkinghorne (1988) as "the logic or syntax of narrative discourse… a linguistic expression that produces meaning through temporal sequence and procession" (p.188). A plot is able to weave together a complex of events to make a single story and to take into account the social context in which the events take place.

In this type of analysis, I applied Emden's (1998) seven moves based on Polkinghorne's minimal guidance to establish a core story for each participant: 1) reading the full interview text several times within an extended time-frame to grasp its content; 2) deleting all interviewer questions and comments from the full interview transcripts; 3) deleting all words that detract from the key idea of each sentence or group of sentences uttered by the respondent; 4) reading the remaining text for sense; 5) repeating steps three and four several times, until satisfied that all key ideas are retained and extraneous information eliminated, returning to the full text as often as necessary for rechecking; 6) identifying fragments of constituent themes (subplots) from the ideas within the text; 7) moving fragments of themes together to create one coherent core story, or series of core stories. This procedure was to comb the data and ensure that no key meanings were lost. In the next stage I ascribed sense to a story through recognizing how an event and the plot interact. This was a back-and-forth process in which I identified emergent plots to weave together a complex of events and then revised the plot structure to best fit these events described by participants. Through moving back and forth, this analysis sought to avoid the imposition of a preconceived plot structure on an independent set of events. The results of the data analysis are presented in Chapter V.

I worked backwards chronologically to frame the outcome of each mentoring relationship, then selected data (e.g., contextual materials, critical events) based on their contribution to the plot and gave meanings to these data as contributors to my narrative goals (Polkinghorne, 1991, 1995). I aimed to keep track of the best fit possibilities between data and the emergent plot that I identified. This back-and-forth movement can ensure the weaving together of the complex events into a story and weed out irrelevant parts to demonstrate how mentors made sense of their experiences in relation to power and context.

<center>**Chapter IV Findings: discursive formation of mentoring**</center>

Willig's (2003) six-stage discourse analysis is used to analyze HS program staff members' semi-structured interview transcripts, and some coordinating texts available in the HS mentoring program (i.e., the program annual report of 2017-2018, advertising materials, program training slides, program guide and reflection log, letter of gratitude from the school board and one unofficial interview script identifying the program's success factors), and external texts or policies explicitly referred to within their interviews and documents (i.e., the open letter of *MHS,* the university's final report on Indigenous Studies and Indigenous Education). The analysis aims to understand the availability of discourses in the program and their possible implications for the practices of the youth mentoring programming. Therefore, I first identified three discourses, namely, normative youth development, volunteering and service administration, experiential learning. These discourses were determined through my back-and-forth examination of words, phrases, and metaphors used to characterize HS as well as recurring ways of talking about HS and such initiatives in the documents and interview transcripts. I then gave special attention to exploring how these discourses position individuals and institutions involved in the HS program, especially whether these enable or constrain them, and I attempted to demonstrate the relationship between the discourses and practices of individuals and institutions involved in the HS program.

4.1 Discourses underpinning the HS mentoring program

4.1.1 Discourse of normative youth development: mentoring as role modelling

The first discourse emerging from the texts was a discourse of normative youth development. Here, along with academic support, Alex, the program co-founder explained that this mentoring program aimed more to support young students' healthy development, especially

their socio-emotional development, by providing adult mentoring relationships for youth. Alex said "Homework Space" is a "misnomer" (Interview, February 20, 2020). By its nature, it aims more to provide children involved with emotional support and encouragement which they cannot get in their school and/or family for various reasons but is necessary for their adaption to the formal school environment.

> If they are feeling good about themselves, they are more open to learning. If you can build healthy relationships, you can create a safe space. You know, they're just not able to really function in a healthy way in the class environment… They just need extra support. For whatever reason, they're not getting as much at home. Anyhow, those kids are the ones that just need an encouraging adult to be there with them every week. (Alex, Interview, February 20, 2020)

The letter of gratitude from the school board also acknowledged the role models the university mentors provide for its school students. "Mentoring can allow them to reach their goals to one day be successful university students like their exceptional mentors" (Letter of gratitude from the school board, p.2).

Here, social-emotional development is embodied by five core competencies in this program: social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision making, self-awareness and self-management. Alex claimed that these competencies and this developmentally based youth programming is a research-informed and evidence-based practice that "youth who have a consistent encouraging adult in their life—other than a parent or teacher—can build the confidence and self-esteem necessary to support school success" (Unofficial interview script identifying the success factors of this program, p.1).

The HS program's five core competencies draw from the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)'s (2006) widely used framework of social emotional learning (SEL). This evidence-based SEL design was not generated solely from this program's own desire to more effectively engage young people with role models who will guide and teach them. Sukarieh and Tannock (2014) contend that these positive youth development models often promote neoliberal ideals, especially those pertaining to personal qualities of young citizens, such as self-responsibility. Specifically, the developmental assets desired by this program are also incorporated in the local-level initiative called *MHS* launched by *The Réseau Réussite Montréal*. This is "an organization which comes from the provincial government" (Alex, interview, February 20, 2020) and is the program's main funder. This regional initiative and organization aims to increase school perseverance and success in the vulnerable areas of Montreal identified by CGTSIM, one governmental institution that is a member of *MHS*, and ultimately to increase the graduation rate to the government's 2020 target set by MEES (MHS, 2019). *MHS* (2019) expects an increase in school graduation numbers to generate more trained workers to contribute to the local economy and labour market. In this sense, the HS program, funded and guided by this initiative is more directed to contribute to the government's desired economic ends (MHS, 2019) and to mould young students into citizens with characteristics to fit the current neoliberal labour market (e.g., self-management, responsible decision making). Thus, this mentoring program can be viewed as a youth development program to enclose young people in a normative framework infused with government-supported neoliberal ideals. As for mentors who have been the university students, they are assumed by this program to have these orientations and should model these qualities for their paired mentees.

Additionally, this program can be seen as an extended formal classroom to deliver the formal curriculum. This is shown through the program's provision of homework assistance and adoption of teaching and learning materials used in the formal class for supplementary academic activities. Even though in *Creative Challenges*, those activities are "tied to the curriculum" (Program guide and reflection log, p.2). As the following quotes demonstrate, the HS program attempted to introduce university students to supplement what teachers do: to help transfer prescribed curriculum knowledge to these young students and to instill the personal qualities and attributes this program desires in young people. "I mean bringing the student clubs to do workshops in the HS is important because the kids are learning something around science or something around the subject matter" (Alex, interview, February 20, 2020). "These challenges are designed to be fun, interactive and to be done together with your mentee to help hone their reading, writing and critical thinking skills" (Program guide and reflection log, p.2).

Here, it would be more appropriate to understand this construct as an attempt to ease the overburden on school teachers. This can be indicated by Alex's attempt to defend school teachers in the interview, such as saying that "they are busy" (Interview, February 20, 2020) and his emphasis on the importance of challenging mentors' tendency to blame teachers for students' academic failure. A closer analysis which brings in the school board's letter of gratitude could suggest that the image of overburdened teachers might be first transmitted by the school board and then accepted by the university-based program staff. The school board itself adopted this educational policy's deficit discourse to characterize these low-income children as "vulnerable" or "at-risk" (Letter of gratitude from the school board, p.2) and perpetuated the link between educational underachievement and children from such backgrounds without mention of the social, economic and political problems they endured. To be more exact, the school board

ascribed these students' school failure to their dysfunctional families and neighbourhoods which cannot offer adequate support and role models to inspire their children to achieve the academic success at school. Therefore, it created an impression that it was up to the school board and school that are in the community to do what these parents and children could not do. Constructing the university as "an outstanding community partner and a committed member" (Letter of gratitude from the school board, p.2), the school board attempted to invoke more commitment from the university to help raise the graduation rate in areas the school board serves and ease the burden on school teachers. We can see that program staff in the university have accepted this construct of the school board and offered more remediations targeting children and parents, besides the HS program, i.e., workshops for parents and an annual university visit for children involved in the HS program.

4.1.2 Discourse of volunteering and service administration: mentoring as giving back

The discourse of volunteering and service administration also emerged from inside the university as a whole and is constructed in different ways to dictate the institutional relations in this program. Voluntary mentoring is constructed as a long-term service to "help local underserved communities and make the university education more accessible to them" (Alex, interview, February 20, 2020) and placed under the theme of "giving back to Montreal neighbours" in this research university's promotional email. This discourse positions the university and its sub-unit responsible for the program operation as more capable service or resource providers which the poor neighbourhoods rely on to address some problems that are beyond their capacity to address. It also allows the university side to take up the position of a benefactor. The community, especially the school is positioned as the recipient expected to show appreciation, as indicated by the letter of gratitude from the school board on behalf of all parties

who have benefited from the university's support. The service nature also requires the university side to work effectively to achieve the partnered school's self-identified needs but avoid extra interference. Located in this discourse, Alex and Christine both tried to follow practices that were more expected by the school side as the following quote indicates:

We try to do one to one mentoring. Sometimes the school provides more children. There are more kids, because the schools want their kids to have the support available. And they're not gonna just abide by our strict numbers all the times... So we have to just kind of adapt ourselves to the culture of the schools and the needs of the students. (Alex, interview, February 20, 2020)

Simone [the community facilitator at School X in charge of all programs provided by partners outside of the school] was telling me one of their funders called *Hooked to Schools* is coming to observe the HS. So apparently that is one of the main funders. So she wants me to create some promotional materials for the HS, the work we do... (Christine, interview, February 24, 2020)

The nature of giving back also explains why this program training emphasizes some taboos for its volunteers and makes visible a safe boundary between them and their mentees to make sure that at least they did not do something that may be judged inappropriate by the school side (mainly no contact with mentees outside of the school and increasing awareness about some sensitive topics). Coupled with that, volunteers from the university are expected to adhere not only to the rules of this program, but also the regulations of the school where they volunteer and serve.

However, we can see from Alex's consistent use of "underserved" in the interview that the program staff simplified the problems the community confronted to lack of service, instead

of accepting such terms adopted by the school board as "vulnerable" that implied some other possible factors causing the vulnerability of these communities. This reflects that the university side pointed the finger of blame at those supposed to offer adequate educational services for the academic success of those children targeted by this program, i.e., the school board and school in this case. In addition, it also conveys an underlying message that as a public research-intensive university that needs funding from the government, it was aware of its accountability to the government and society, but tried not to work on local community issues from which it could not gain much merit to its advantage.

In fact, this discourse not only places both the school and the school board, located outside of the university campus, in an inferior position, but also marginalizes this program itself within this research university. Christine once indicated in the interview that recruiting volunteers was challenging because these university students were busy with other tasks they held to be more important, e.g., their homework or other part-time work. Alex, as the university representative who needed to interact with these communities, indirectly complained about the inadequate support from the university, stating that "I don't know what the university's stake in this program is, other than sort of it makes it look good that we exist. But in terms of helping us expand and evolve to this level where we can become, I don't think..." (Interview, February 20, 2020).

Perhaps this reflects the influence of neoliberalism on the management of higher education, emphasizing efficiencies, market-based allocation, individual free choice and external partnerships with private research and philanthropic sources (Lipman, 2011). Alex explained that this program is also partially supported by the university's allocation on an annual basis, which the university obtains from an external foundation devoted to supporting local practices to serve

vulnerable communities. However, this less lucrative program which cannot generate research-related prestige or bring in students with the strongest academic background for this research university cannot get more sustainable funding. Instead, the existence of this program is more helpful for the university to secure external funding from diverse sources. Moreover, the service nature of the HS program subjects itself to the university's government-desired institutional commitments to secure more funding. For example, since 2019, this program has been re-adjusted and funded by an additional foundation focusing on Indigenous communities to include two more Indigenous elementary schools near Montreal and moved into the Student Admissions Office. Such changes are explained by Alex for the university to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC)'s call to "[advance] the learning opportunities for Indigenous Peoples" (Final report on Indigenous Studies and Indigenous Education, p.1) and increase access to higher education.

4.1.3 Discourse of experiential and transformative learning: mentoring as social change?

Alex tended to construct involvement in the HS program as a community engaged learning opportunity and experiential learning to bring about social change. The program was incorporated by some professors into their courses especially in the Faculty of Education, such as *Social Studies Pedagogy, Language Art, Teaching Elementary Mathematics*, *Indigenous Education* (Program orientation slides, p.12), to provide a credit-bearing educational experience for their students. Although the nature of these teacher education courses was not made clear to Alex, the following analysis shows his attitude toward these alliances to co-achieve the social justice goal of this program. The program foregrounded the use of reflection central to the process of transformative learning to introduce the possibilities of "[bringing] about transformation to participants involved" (Alex, interview, February 20, 2020). Alex provided

training for volunteers about how the neoliberal restructuring of the economy impacted the situation of children and their family, especially how it influences labour and social assistance. In this way, Alex expected it to develop mentors' awareness of the disempowerment of young children who are members of oppressed groups and encourage university students to explore the systematic factors that caused the high school dropout in these communities.

> I mean it's just a chance for their students to learn outside the classroom. It's about experiential learning. It's about community engaged learning. It's about hearing different voices and developing more critical understanding, I think of... who have [sic] access to education and who doesn't and why not. Poverty is not a choice. (Alex, interview, February 20, 2020)

However, a closer analysis reveals an incoherence in the HS program training and the social justice goal it claimed to strive for. This program seemed satisfied with helping university students gain awareness of the systematic inequity imposed on these younger students. The program training and support did not further develop its university students' knowledge and strategies to raise their mentees' consciousness of the political, economic and social structures affecting their lives and did not help university student mentors examine their own identities either to prepare for a real change in the community. The ambiguous foregrounded transformative learning and reflection was more used as a prescription to reinforce mentors' moral responsibility to commit more. This program placed hope on the classroom to become a place for any possible change to happen, instead of initiatives in the wider community, as the following quote suggests:

> I hope that students by virtue of them being involved in the program, engaging with kids, building better relationships in different communities, they can have a

much more enlightened understanding I think of the state of the education and how education is not accessible to everybody. There is inequity in the education system and they bring it back to the university and their courses on their discussions with their peers and they have policy influences. It is moving forward, right?" (Alex, interview, February 20, 2020)

Apart from using academic discussion, Alex said that these students enrolled in abovementioned teacher education courses were also required to use reflective papers to have a critical examination of community issues. The goal of critical reflection was also desired by this program itself. Alex asserted that the reflection log he designed for this program was "a key component" (Interview, February 20, 2020) to make this program, which claimed to be inspired by Freire's work. The reflection log mainly consists of a *Weekly Mentor Reflection* that asks some factual and general questions: "what did you work on today?", "any progress and/or challenges worth noting?", "what do you want to work on next week?", "something you learned about your mentee?", "other comments? help you need?". Here, Alex presumed that all mentors could engage in a critical reflection on inequity issues from their interactions with their mentees on their own, at most with the help of the program-designed reflection log and five-minute reflection time at the end of each mentoring session. While mentors from those teacher education courses can do more, that is, to potentially address these concerns in class, other student mentors who are not included in these courses were seemingly left little or no space for this advocacy for any changes.

This program's adoption of transformative learning and reflection made it challenging to probe the neoliberal values in operation and their effects on this community engagement learning. Especially by using expansive definitions of transformation and reflection, the

boundary between developing prospective student teachers with a vision of social justice or training them with market-oriented skills and competencies can be obscured. It can be observed that this program adopts a more general and vaguer rhetoric to describe the community setting as "diverse" in the recruitment advertisement, refraining from labeling them as disadvantaged. Alex also shared that the reflection tools (reflection logs) and events (reflection dinner at the halfway point of the semester) were used to reinforce "some good practices" and "a certain being" (Interview, February 20, 2020). By capitalizing on these umbrella terms with a vague and expansive nature, this program can portray itself as being committed to pursuing social transformation and cultivate a sense of citizenship in these university students with social justice in mind. But by its nature, it is highly likely to be a market skills-based education opportunity for its students, as indicated by its emphasis on developing "employable skills" (Unofficial interview script identifying the success factors of this program, p.2). This construct of skills-based learning experience did not touch on social issues confronted by communities. Instead, it emphasized that the mentors who went to the school can acquire teaching or other employable skills through adapting to the school environment.

4.2 Mixing discourses and terrains

At first glance, the HS program appears to be a well-grounded youth-centred SEL program designed with emancipatory and activist intentions. But the program is located in a complex web of discourses and institutional relations and positioned to achieve different outcomes and goals expected by its stakeholders. A power play can be detected through untangling these discourses and discursive practices. This program starts from the neoliberal government's drive for more narrowly economic outcomes. In this case, this program can be viewed as being embedded within neoliberal values to shape mentees into neoliberal subjects

through introducing mentors to develop their skills and competencies desired by government-sponsored ideas. However, the HS program cannot be solely understood as a mirror of neoliberalism or as positioning all staff and volunteers involved as representatives of dominant neoliberal values and their effects. The program attempted to use transformative learning and reflection to resist the dominance of neoliberal values and their effects and work toward social change and justice. It believed the university setting which it is located in to be relatively independent of the government and to be ideal for achieving the goal of justice. Therefore, these contrasting and somehow competing discourses as a result of power struggles in wider institutional and socio-economic and political contexts have constituted a complicated context in which mentoring is occurring.

Nevertheless, it is also worth noting that the university itself has fallen prey to the expansion of neoliberalism (Lipman, 2011). Therefore, neoliberalism can easily infiltrate the vague and simplistic social justice discourse (represented by the simplistic construct of transformative learning and reflection) while making program staff believe that this program is doing good and ultimately working for transformation. This imbrication may not simply result in polarization between buying into or opting out of the roles and responsibilities this program imposed on the part of mentors. Contestation and struggle may be resolved by mentors in different ways within mentor-mentee relationships. The next chapter will provide narratives of mentor-mentee relationships from mentors' perspective to present the complexity of their roles and assumptions in navigating the mentor-mentee relationship in the context of these power relations.

Chapter V Findings: mentors' stories

For my research, I connected with four mentors who I introduced in Chapter III. In their interviews with me, a former HS mentor with a similar background, they fleshed out their experiences and their efforts in negotiating their roles and identities in their mentoring journeys. These narratives with commentaries can engage these mentors as agents to co-construct how they navigated the relationships with their mentees: how university volunteers perceived their own roles and those of their mentees' throughout the process of mentoring; in what way mentors carried such perceptions into their practices; the difficulties and achievements they encountered; the impact of program decision and some societal factors they perceived working upon their relationships with their mentees.

5.1 Qingying's story

I first interviewed Qingying in mid-February 2020 after she mentored her mentee twice. She was a first-year undergraduate student from China majoring in Finance. This was her first time ever as a mentor. She learnt about HS from a biweekly newsletter sent to all first-year undergraduates. This program generally met her goal to add some voluntary community service experience to her CV. Her visa status did not allow her to work off campus, so she chose to start from some basic community service work to earn her first paid internship. She aimed to do NGO consultancy in the future.

Qingying had once engaged in a benefit concert launched by her high school in partnership with a local NGO in the hope of raising tuition for three high school students in Qiandongnan Prefecture, a highly deprived mountainous area in China. She expected to turn this short-term project-oriented involvement into an ongoing commitment. Therefore, she visited them later in the summer vacation and was accompanied by organization staff to gather

feedback to improve their assistance. Qingying told me in a shocked tone that she got to know

from the organization staff that tuition was not the major barrier to these students remaining at

school:

> They told me that the state has spared no efforts to help these teens go out of the
>
> mountain. No case that they can't go to the high school or college because they
>
> can't afford the tuition. The state would be of great help in this regard. In fact,
>
> many of them did not believe that higher education would be interesting and
>
> meaningful. They were more tempted to leave school early. You know, to work
>
> for cash and then possess one modified motor scooter or do other things teens
>
> think cool. They might not come to realize the importance of higher education
>
> until they get to thirtyish, when their education became a barrier to their income.
>
> (First interview, February 20, 2020)

Qingying felt sorry for these young students who seemed unaware of survival strategies in a

highly competitive knowledge economy. She continued to tell me excitedly that the HS program

offered an opportunity for her to compensate for the regret in her previous experience. As a

mentor with everyone around her choosing to go to university, she felt responsible for planting a

seed of higher education in her mentee's heart mainly through building up her mentee's

confidence in learning, a more achievable goal that she believed more appropriate for younger

school children.

"Is he really the mentee originally assigned to me?"

Qingying's mentee was Joe, a sixth grader who had already been in this program for one

semester. Although she had known that she could not have any expectations for her mentee, that

he was "something unknown" (First interview, February 20, 2020), she still felt surprised when

Joe was assigned to her and wondered why they were matched up. Qingying refrained from telling me explicitly where her uncertainty came from, but described the scenario and her feeling of being matched with Joe. At the beginning of the first mentoring session, all mentors and mentees were asked to sit together in a circle. As one mentee after the other was called and paired with a mentor by the onsite program coordinator, Christine, and then left, Joe and Qingying were the last people still waiting there and ended up being paired together. Harbouring doubts, she led him to an empty desk. Just as they sat down, another mentor-mentee pair, Gina and David (we will learn their story in the fourth case), came to them and Qingying had to put aside their introductions and some small talk. Gina checked with Qingying whether they could work together, because David and Joe are very good friends. From then on, they worked as a group till the end of the 2020 Winter semester.

During the process of helping with Joe's French homework, Qingying shared some personal information at times. For example, she told him that she was from China, and also a French beginner, so they were "on the same page" (First interview, February 20, 2020). Qingying hoped that sharing this information could help close the distance between them from their first meeting, but acknowledged in our first interview (one week after this first meeting) that she was unsure whether it worked and just tried to think positively. She was also unsure about why Joe was included in this program and tried to hunt for clues from their conversations mainly in their first meeting when they were asked to complete the "about the self" worksheet Christine spread out.

> I think that he is here not just for improving his grade. His reaction is ok when he
>
> is doing homework. He told me that he lives with his dad only. You know what?
>
> He is just a six grader but has a credit card! […] I just assumed that his family did

not have much time to accompany him, otherwise he would not be given a credit

card, right? Just in case… So the school may be aware of that and believes that

extra attention can benefit him. (First interview, February 20, 2020)

Homework hassle and gratitude for the teacher's intervention

In the first three weeks of this program, Qingying did not feel that the mentoring sessions

went as well as expected and sometimes she felt frustrated, which she told me when we met

online for our second interview. She wondered whether she was the only one who did not feel

"proud and satisfied" (Second interview, April 24, 2020), as described by those mentors of the

semester advertised on the program's Facebook page and website. She valued voluntary and

informal debriefings with Eddie (whom we will meet in the third story) and other mentors to talk

over difficulties. In most cases, she struggled to get Joe to do his homework and depended on

teachers' interventions to ask him to take his workbook out from his backpack. Joe either made

an excuse that he forgot his homework at home or colluded with David to prove to their mentors

that they did not have any homework although they actually did. Qingying held a wavering

attitude toward Joe's resistance to doing homework. On one hand, she believed that she did not

need to put heavy academic pressure on Joe who may instead need more vocational training for

his future job. On the other hand, as a volunteer, she felt obligated to motivate Joe to advance his

education for his own good.

> Joe wants to be a plumber. You know, in Canada, as a plumber, you are still well
>
> paid. It doesn't have much to do with receiving higher education. It [receiving
>
> higher education] depends more on whether you have motivations to advance. But
>
> maybe receiving higher education can bring more positive influences to people's
>
> life. (First interview, February 20, 2020)

When Joe answered that he did not have homework again in the third week, Qingying finally took a more serious, unyielding stand and went directly to Christine for extra math worksheets that Joe was more willing to work on, since she did not intend to leave Joe squandering the entire homework session. On the way back, she came across Simone who Qingying believed was in overall charge of this program in the school. Qingying checked with her whether Joe had homework that day and reported that Joe never came with homework these weeks. After getting an affirmative answer from Simone, Joe seemed to be defeated and had to take out his homework for that day, an English worksheet.

This familiar homework wrestling match between Qingying and Joe continued on Joe's birthday which coincided with the fourth mentoring session. Before starting on their homework, Qingying gave him a birthday card, the cover of which was Joe's pet bird, Jackie. She drew it from memory, as Joe showed the picture of his bird to her when he introduced his favourite animal at their first meeting. Qingying explained to me that since she knew that Joe lived only with his father, she felt sorry for him and planned to give him a birthday card. She hoped that it could make Joe feel cared for as a birthday boy. Although Joe did not show much excitement at receiving the card, he placed it on the desk and looked frequently at it.

Although this prelude seemed to please Joe, he and David still claimed that they did not have homework and then Gina suggested they play a game of drawing and guessing. Mentors teamed up with their respective mentees for a guessing competition. Simone soon noticed this and passed by. She saw Derek's birthday card on the desk and told him in a serious manner that he needed to be more responsible for his behaviour when he turned one year older. She further warned that if Joe did not do homework, his mentor needed to take some responsibility and may be blamed for that and asked whether this was what Joe wanted to see. Qingying recalled that Joe

seemed persuaded by this and started to do his English homework. When Qingying reflected on that experience of "being caught by the teacher" in our second interview, she felt a little embarrassed but was clearly appreciative of Simone's legitimate authority over students, which she did not have, to make Joe aware of what he needed to do in this program. She added that if she had let Joe indulge in playing games, she could have never got to know his needs or weaknesses in his school learning, let alone to fix them (Second interview, April 24, 2020).

"Something changed… He was beginning to open up to me."

From then on, Qingying felt that Joe was more cooperative in doing his homework and she did not need to spend much time and effort persuading him to show it to her. Sometimes, Qingying just needed to hint that David, who she considered to be quiet and self-regulated, was doing homework and then Joe would also show his to Qingying. Qingying described that her feelings of self-efficacy grew when she saw that Joe was more engaged with his homework. She speculated that Joe felt the same way and listed some details to prove that. Once in working on the math homework, Joe showed Qingying an easier method to answering one difficult math question. Qingying could still remember how proud Joe was to tell her that his dad taught him this method. Sometimes, when she offered a challenge to Joe, like doing multiplication without a calculator, Joe would also take it up.

In retrospect, Qingying could not identify any tense moments between her and her mentee. She said that she tried more to give as many verbal encouragements and compliments as possible when they completed tasks (Second interview, April 24, 2020). After a while, she told me that Joe and David running up and down the stairs gave her a headache sometimes, because mentees were forbidden from doing so during mentoring sessions by Simone and Miller, the cooperating teacher in this program.

I can't say no to him, as he literally did not go there 'during' the mentoring. It was

almost after everything was done and when we were gonna to leave. I couldn't

restrict him the way the teachers did, just stood watching him. But I did not want

to do that either. I believe it was his free time. (Second interview, April 24, 2020)

She also felt that some information she initially learned from the orientation resulted in

her low expectations for the child she mentored and made her patronize him at the very

beginning.

At the beginning, I felt that this program had a very noble mission that needs me

to motivate him to receive higher education and arouse his interest in learning. I

had assumed that my mentee had highly desired my help. As time goes by, I find

that he [Joe] is just a 'normal' and happy kid and I do not see what special factor

makes him end up here. He could be said [to be] smart in doing math. He has a

very good friend [David] at school. His dad can be seen [to be] involved in his

homework. (Second interview, April 24, 2020)

Qingying was more relaxed after she found out that there was seemingly nothing wrong

with Joe and his immediate environment and that he was quite assertive about his future life

options. She told me that she had not felt obligated to make him want to go to college (Second

interview, April 24, 2020) either. Coupled with that, she was surprised to find that Joe seemed to

open up more to her. Their conversation was not merely limited to what happened in school that

day, as Joe would sometimes unknowingly disclose more about his family while they were doing

homework. In the mentoring session after the spring break, after Qingying helped Joe practice

spelling, she did not expect that he would talk about his family life in a casual way:

He said 'you know what? I was a French native speaker, but I am doing bad in my

French exams. My mom speaks French, so I could speak a lot of French when she

still lived with us [dad and me]. Since I lived with dad only, we have not spoken

French anymore'. (Second interview, April 24, 2020)

Qingying did not want Joe to feel pitied and shared her family language story. She told him that

she cannot speak the local dialect she was supposed to hold dearest, because her family had only

spoken Mandarin to her while she was growing up. She told me that she felt delighted that they

were somehow closer, because Joe was willing to talk about something personal with her.

Looking back, Qingying felt that she had succeeded in building a closer and trusting bond

with Joe. However, she was hesitant to quantify the benefits Joe had gained from this experience

and was unsure about what she had learned from it either. She still attempted to search for some

answers at the end of our second interview and tried to recall some experiences she wrote on the

reflection log that were examined and then thought to be "cute" (Second interview, April 24,

2020) by the program coordinator (The program coordinator would check mentors' reflection

logs on a weekly basis). Although she could not remember what something "cute" might have

referred to, through identifying with me, she seemed to explain her uncertainty at the very

beginning, why she was doubtful about her pairing with Joe, a white boy.

Our relationship ending was like graduation. Imagine that after you graduated,

you could not see your teachers that often, but it does not mean that you are going

to deny or erase the existence of your relationships with these teachers. Maybe

our relationship was not as strong as those. Joe will probably more trust programs

of a similar nature in his future school life. And maybe he can know more about

Asian people. We are not that different and we are easy to talk [with]. Otherwise I

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don't think there would be more influence over him. (Second interview, April 24, 2020)

Commentary: Clearly, individual dispositions and personal biographies play an important role in Qingying's case, which renders her more sensitive to some specific ideas and values promoted by HS, especially in her early involvement. Some of Qingying's assumptions, especially the stigmatization of youth from low socio-economic backgrounds, had been formed earlier in her short-term voluntary experience in China. This experience led Qingying to focus on some attributes in the person that are different from her as a stigma, rather than seeing stigma as "a designation or tag that others affix to the person" (Link & Phelan, 2001, p. 366). Therefore, in this mentoring relationship, Qingying identified and labeled difference between her and her mentee from the very beginning, which subjected her mentee to her self-perceived ability to influence him (French, Raven, & Cartwright, 1959). That is, she aimed to push her mentee to follow the same educational path she believed ideal for a successful life and to attain higher social status. Throughout this mentoring journey, Qingying sought to detect Joe's weakness and then address it. Similarly, she held a positive view about the power this program and program staff could exercise over her mentee and the whole group of mentees to prescribe their responsibilities and behaviours and treated it as benign paternalism for their own good. However, it is noteworthy that this state in which she aimed to prevail over her mentee was not that stable. Her mentee, Joe, kept resisting her attempts to exert influence on him.

At the end of this relationship, Qingying found out that her mentee seemed to be a normal child, different from how HS had portrayed him, which I first viewed as a sign of her critical reflection on her sense of entitlement in our first interview or to challenge the way that policy can lead to stigmatizing this group of children that was somehow perpetuated in the HS program

context. However, a closer examination indicates that she did more to exempt her mentee from this negative stereotype, rather than to challenge externally imposed stigma on her mentee and children from lower socio-economic background. Different from being unaware of the externally imposed stigmatization or stereotyping of her mentee, Qingying tried to impose a positive representation of being "Asian" on her mentee, a white boy, through a relational encounter, which can be seen as her agency to fight against the complex social processes including racism that have led to the negative construction and marginalization of Asian people in Canadian society.

5.2 Jia's story

Jia is a 17-year-old first-year student majoring in Psychology and minoring in Educational Psychology. Influenced by her mother, who is a teacher, she is also considering becoming a teacher and tried to start out on this path through volunteering in teaching-related programs or activities. Therefore, when she found the HS mentoring program on the Internet, she decided to sign up for it promptly. She was also the first HS mentor to get back to me and express her strong interest in my study, after I introduced my project to all the mentors in School X. She self-defines as being "sensitive to others' emotions, feelings and needs", but also "interested in observing others' emotional needs." (First interview, March 3, 2020)

Jia is from China but attended a private high school for girls in Manitoba. She had two mentoring experiences at high school. The first one was mandatory for all tenth graders in one course called *University Guidance*. The second was a music mentoring experience in which she mentored three elementary school children and prepared for a concert together. When I asked her to talk more about her previous mentoring experience, she told me that she needed to improve

her proficiency in English and learn how instrument playing is usually taught to these children (First interview, March 3, 2020).

Jia did not expect that she would be assigned two boys when she was the first one to be called and matched with Will and Daniel. These two children, as Jia recalled, got familiar with each other quickly when they were matched with her, although they were from different grades (Daniel from grade 4; Will from grade 5). Jia just asked a simple question "what class did you have today?" and both of them answered actively. Jia soon found that they started small talk by themselves and felt glad that she did not need to be the leading voice. She told me that she had been cautious not to create an impression of showing preference for either of them from the first meeting.

Daniel: "he is exactly the kid the program believed needs company."

Jia described Daniel as a well-behaved mentee who showed his homework without being asked and worked on it cooperatively since the first mentoring session. Sometimes Daniel had even finished his homework beforehand. Jia could guess roughly why Daniel was matched with her. She believed that her attentiveness to children's emotions which she indicated in her application may fit what the program believed Daniel needed. The first time Jia sensed that Daniel wanted to be noticed was in their second mentoring session. All mentees were gathered to compete with each other about how far their paper plane could fly on one side of the hall. Jia was waiting on the other side with other mentors and found that Daniel kept turning around to check her presence. She waved at him and then saw Daniel smile back at her and return to the game assured.

"If I am flying my plane there, I would like someone I am familiar with to stand behind me and see me doing that as well," said Jia, who told me that she could empathize with Daniel at that time and continued speaking:

> He is an extremely kind kid but his family seemingly have [sic] no time for him. I know little about his family, except that he lives with his aunt and has a sister maybe. So they (the program staff and teachers) might believe that one mentor can support him [emotionally]. He is exactly the kid this program believed needs company. (First interview, March 3, 2020)

Will: "he can do anything but homework."

Jia defined Will as an "expressive and assertive" (First interview, March 3, 2020) child. Although Will's exuberant personality served as a perfect icebreaker for their first meeting, Jia soon found out that she had no idea about how to deal with some of his behaviours. For example, she did not know whether she needed to take a more directive manner when Will refused to collect his own waste paper and throw it into the recycle bin. What bothered her more was that he was reluctant to do homework, especially French and History.

Jia's concern arose and ensued since the third week. That week, she needed to mentor another girl, Katie, who was Will's classmate, because her mentor was absent for a midterm exam. Daniel worked on his homework as usual, but Katie and Will claimed that they did not have homework. Miller, the cooperating teacher, who sat nearby, overheard their remarks, came to them directly and asked Will and Katie to show their mentor the history textbook after checking with other tables. Will did not take out his history textbook as Katie did and said that he had lost it (an excuse that Jia detected later). Although Jia asked Katie to share her book with Will and asked both of them to explain the main content to her, Will did not want to do so.

Afterwards, the teacher again checked with Jia whether her mentees (Will and Katie) were working on their homework. Jia had to answer awkwardly "not exactly". The teacher came back to them and warned them seriously that if they did not do their homework, they did not need to come to the HS program next time. Jia described how differently Will and Katie reacted to this:

> The teacher lectured them. That girl [Katie] seemed fine but Will looked down in the mouth. [But] this is the good part of working with three kids. The girl could also feel that Will was in a mood and talked to Will that she could explain the textbook for him. She was trying to cheer Will up and Will got better soon. Of course I also intended to make a conversation to distract him. (First interview, March 3, 2020)

Jia recounted that Will often did not want to do homework and tried to avoid doing so by using various strategies. Sometimes, he would tell a lie that he did not have his textbook. At other times, he would try to distract Jia first by showing her his drawing or anything he had that day.

However, when I asked Jia further in what way she finally got Will to do homework under these circumstances, she was hesitant and told me that she never succeeded in doing so.

> No actually… It was the teacher who came to him and talked to him very seriously that he needed to take out his homework. After that, I would coax him, saying like 'could we just do this question first?' 'If you can read this paragraph for me, you can do other activities next.' Usually it worked; but sometimes, no. Or sometimes Will found that there was no space for negotiation and would propose to do math. He preferred to do math. (Second interview, May 2, 2020)

Jia confessed that she struggled to push Will forward in doing his homework and found that it turned out to be an impossible mission. In this case, the teacher's attention on them, which she appreciated earlier, became a kind of burden on her. She had a mixed feeling when the teacher's gaze fell on them. Jia did not want to force Will to do his homework, especially after she found out that the teacher was passing by only to make sure that Will was doing his homework. When the teacher did not look at them, Jia would choose to do their own activities which did not have much to do with homework but she believed could intrigue her mentees more, such as purely tossing a dice or just talking about how their day was going and sharing something interesting in their daily life. However, Jia told me in our second interview that she still felt guilty for not being able to fulfill her responsibility as a mentor to get her mentee to do homework.

With Daniel and William: balancing them out

During both interviews, Jia kept telling me that she had been conscious of treating Will and Daniel equally, unsure whether they noticed that or not. For example, she would intentionally change the order of their names she wrote on that day's reflection log. More importantly, Jia made more efforts to balance their voice and decision-making, as Will and Daniel used to have different opinions. Daniel was usually the one who gave in. Therefore, Jia said that she would seek to stand on Daniel's side next time to balance the dynamics of their interactions (Second interview, May 2, 2020).

Jia recalled that on William's birthday, Daniel and Will had conflicting ideas in building a construction using cotton candies. One episode happened earlier that afternoon confirmed her decision to back up Daniel. Will wanted to go home earlier for his birthday, but he was asked by the cooperating teacher, Miller, to stay. This information was what Will told her later. For the

first ten minutes of that day's session, Jia found that Will was gloomy and refused to talk to anyone when Jia and Daniel checked on him. Jia had no idea and had to leave Will alone and went back to Daniel. Jia and Daniel started their conversation while trying their best to involve Will. After a while, Will finally raised his head and told them that it was his birthday that day. When the topic came to birthday gifts, Jia shifted her attention to Daniel. She told me that she was more concerned about whether Daniel would feel left out after he knew of Will's birthday gifts.

> Daniel's family seemed to show less care for Daniel than William's family for
>
> him. And Will just listed his birthday gifts, item by item, like earphones and other
>
> stuff. A lot of stuff. But he was not that satisfied with his gifts. Daniel seemed
>
> fine and talked about what he received. But what he received was like… you
>
> know. I remembered that I said to Will 'your birthday gifts are great!' But I could
>
> not say much to Daniel actually. I did say to Daniel 'your gifts are great, too!'
>
> though. I didn't know much about his family. Maybe Will just had higher
>
> expectation for his gifts. (Second interview, May 2, 2020)

Although Daniel did not seem to be upset, Jia kept monitoring his mood and supported Daniel more when Daniel and Will expressed different opinions in building a construction. Will did not agree and Jia advised Will to work on his own. She would work on Daniel's idea with him. Jia recalled that Will was shocked and blurted out "are you turning your back on me?" (Second interview, May 2, 2020). Then, she had to negotiate with Will again and both of them finally reached an agreement that Will first joined them and then worked on his own.

Not a mentor, but not a buddy as well…

The first time Jia began to reflect on her mentoring style was after her group worked with another mentor-mentee pair, Sarah and Noah, to make a story together in the third week. Will did not enjoy this activity and preferred to have fun with Katie alone. Although Daniel was involved and added his opinions at times, Noah sometimes ignored what Daniel said or directly said that "your view is not good" (First interview, March 3, 2020). Jia was concerned whether this made Daniel feel uncomfortable, since he tended to hide his feelings. Therefore, she felt it necessary to accompany Daniel to contribute to the story while checking on Will and Katie who stayed aside and had fun by themselves. In contrast to Sarah's facilitator role in encouraging her mentee to express more ideas and helping scaffold and organize them, Jia used "translator" (First interview, March 3, 2020) as the word to describe the way that she needed to go to Will and Katie and then take their ideas back to the communication loop they were not in. In addition, after seeing Sarah's more directive way of asking Noah to behave well when he yelled at her or ignored what she said, Jia asked herself in our first interview whether she should directly tell Will (and Katie) that they were a part of the group and needed to contribute to making that story. "Do I need to directly tell them that you can't be like that? Do I need to discipline them more instead of leaving them doing whatever they want?" (First interview, March 3, 2020)

If the first interview was a process of asking Jia to self-question and self-reflect, the second one was exactly the confession in which she revealed details about her weaknesses and assumptions of 'what if…'. I reminded her of her previous idea to make a change in her approach to mentoring, when we met online the second time and asked whether there were some changes occurring in their interactions after the first interview. Jia paused and told me that although she had been inspired to re-examine her mentoring style after seeing Sarah's interaction with her mentee, she still decided not to impose rules on her mentees. She believed it

unnecessary on second thought, because her mentees were not as difficult to work with as Sarah's seemed to be. She told me that what she changed was to engage herself more in their discussions and activities, compared with only observing them before. She would ask mentees to explain when she did not understand their topic. She would also put forward her ideas when mentees were busy defending their own ideas in doing *Creative Challenges*.

When I asked whether she built a tighter connection with her mentees through these interactions, Jia showed an ambiguous attitude and then identified her own cultural background and the age gap as barriers to connection:

We just met each other once a week and one and [a] half hours each time. It was not an easy thing to know about each other during such a short period. But I think it is also related to cultural background. Sometimes, I can't get the point when they were talking about the game or movie. They could not understand some abstract ideas either. Or maybe it is more related to the age gap. (Second interview, May 2, 2020)

Jia even expressed her otherness when she looked back on her relationships with both her mentees in the second interview, but explained later that she also meant to distance herself from her mentees, because she believed that being too close was not what the HS program and she expected. I asked Jia to tell me more why she wanted to keep a distance with her mentees:

For my own part, getting too close may keep me thinking about and analyzing our relationship. Like did I need to prepare something for their birthday? You know, the relationship between a mentor and mentee is not exactly the same as a friendship or romantic relationship. To what extent and in what way you care

about them could be different. Keeping thinking about this stuff may cost me too much time and sometimes makes me stressed." (Second interview, May 2, 2020)

Jia's intentional detachment from this relationship was to avoid burdening herself from a close relationship with her mentee. She also revealed her stress from emulating other mentors. But later, she named some other mentors and categorized them and herself into different types to assure herself of her uniqueness as a mentor. Nevertheless, she still felt frustrated that she was not a fun mentor who Will really enjoyed being with. Will would sometimes go to another mentor, Rachel, and have fun. She expressed an expectation for more intergroup activities and even more flexible mentoring relationships (not necessarily long-term one-to-one relationships) for different mentors to capitalize on their assets and unique characters and allow mentees to interact with a mentor they really enjoyed being with. However, at the end of our second interview, taking the experience of working with Sarah's group as an example, she honestly acknowledged that intergroup activities could be used to alleviate her individual stress as a mentor and to accommodate some children's inactivity.

> I did feel stressed sometimes. Language is definitely one factor. I also felt stressed when I saw how other paired mentors and mentees interacted. [...] [If there had been more intergroup interactions,] I did not have to get involved and could have just observed my mentees. My mentees' pressure could have been alleviated as well, because they didn't need to participate. I can see that they were not that interested in those activities. They could just have fun with other friends and then this task would be done. (Second interview, May 2, 2020)

Commentary: Jia's case is one of the few cases in which one mentor had two or more mentees because the school provided more mentees than expected and some contingencies

occurred such as covering for other absent mentors. To some extent, Jia's group can be regarded as a small organization that enjoyed some autonomy to deal with some situations this program did not expect. If we borrow Bachrach and Baratz's (1962) view toward power to explain her efforts to establish a new order, we can also understand Jia's group dynamics as "a mobilization of bias" (p.949). In many cases, Jia needed to depend on her "bias" to set up some new rules to incorporate some issues, practices, and behaviours which had been ignored by this program, but she was experiencing. For example, when she found that Daniel usually gave in to Will in their interactions, one situation unique to their group, she took initiative to regulate the relationships so that Daniel and Will could take turns to make decisions, bearing the principle of justice in her mind. According to Rawls (2009), the principle of justice is the result of fair agreement or bargain. Therefore, when Jia sometimes distributed decision-making power to Daniel because of some factors embedded in external contexts beyond this mentoring group (Daniel's family and class background) that might not be understood by Will in the same fashion, it possibly created an impression on Will that she made an arbitrary decision to favour Daniel. Similarly, we could also see that Jia gave veiled suggestions to Will to get him familiar with new rules imposed on him in this trio relationship. In this sense, Will's behaviours that were deemed as disobedience could be understood as resistance to Jia's indirect attempts to ask Will to adhere to an unstated set of rules.

With Jia's ambition to establish stability in this relationship in mind, we could make sense of a range of her practices and assumptions in her interactions with her mentees. Conscious of what she did not do well at, she attempted to learn from and emulate other mentors who she thought had better control of the relationship with their mentee. At first, she appreciated the teacher's intervention to push Will back on track. However, after she witnessed that the teacher

bluntly coerced her mentee, which in fact wreaked havoc on their relationship, far from the stability she desired, Jia did not align herself with the teacher.

In addition, it is noteworthy that Jia's agency to establish a new order within this trio relationship set her against the established rules and norms in this program that seemingly expect mentors to reduce the exhibition of their positional power and some complicated social hierarchy issues associated with class and ethnicity (her culture and language). At the end, Jia's agency to establish a new order in this trio relationship came to a demise after she realized that she was unable to mediate the influences of asymmetric mentor-mentee power relationships not only associated with positions in this program, but also with multiple group memberships they held (Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989).

5.3 Eddie's story

Eddie is currently a second-year student from Iran majoring in Chemistry. He had been in the HS program for three consecutive semesters starting in Winter 2019, although he volunteered in a different school and was matched with a different mentee each semester. Unlike other mentors who approached this program for their future study or job, Eddie stated that he had "always wanted to work with kids" at the start of our first interview. He clarified why he was passionate about being with children and proudly narrated how well he got along with his younger sister. "Whenever my parents could not get my sister to do her homework or to do something, I try to find another angle, a creative way to get her involved in it" (First interview, March 7, 2020). Therefore, when Eddie saw the HS program at *Activity Nights* where hundreds of student clubs showed up, he decided to sign up to seize this opportunity to interact with the younger population which he rarely met with and find out whether they would respond to him the same way as his younger sister had. Eddie seemed to have a clear memory of what happened

between him and all three of his mentees. Compared with other mentor participants in this project, he was able to tell me in what way he changed or maintained how he interacted with his mentees since he first began.

Back to the very beginning: "I walked in a little bit nervous…"

When I invited Eddie to recall the experience of his HS orientation one year earlier and how he understood this program at that time, Eddie jumped back and forth to collect and organize his "unfresh memory" (First interview, March 7, 2020). He recalled that when he walked into the room where the orientation was held in the 2019 winter semester, he was slightly nervous and unsure of his role. Although Eddie told me that he had read some articles concerning children from lower socio-economic backgrounds to prepare himself before going to the orientation, he still felt intimidated by others' rich knowledge of dealing with children.

Eddie remembered that his concern did not fade away when the HS program co-founders gave some motivational speeches and "went through all the general stuff about HS" (First interview, March 7, 2020). When mentors were grouped with the rotating coordinators to ask and answer some "what if" questions involving a variety of mentoring scenarios, Eddie finally came back to earth. He felt assured that what he needed to do was to "help homework, do some *Creative Challenges* and move on" (First interview, March 7, 2020) and he could get help right away when he found himself struggling during the mentoring.

"The main issue has been making sure the kids show up to the sessions."

Eddie had been concerned whether he would be able to connect with his mentee well and control the mentoring progress which most new mentors experienced. However, before he started his third mentorship in the 2020 winter semester, his biggest concern had been whether his

mentee would show up to the weekly sessions. When I asked him to explain more, he narrated what happened to his second mentee in early November 2019:

> Last semester, it was during November, early November. My mentee sort of just looked at me. And he just sort of had panic in his eyes. I was like 'is everything ok?' He was like 'that's my ex-girlfriend there'. I was like 'no, how does that make you feel?' And he was like 'it was awkward. I don't think I am gonna show up anytime soon after this'. And we just sort of… he started laughing and I just assumed that he had made a joke. But I didn't see him for another three weeks. (Second interview, May 10, 2020)

His new mentee of this semester, Zae, did not show up once, in the second week, which worried Eddie, especially after his second mentee's long absence. He expressed his worry in the first interview that "whenever they are absent, there is no way to reach them and make sure everything is okay" (First interview, March 7, 2020). Eddie told me that what made him feel worse was that he had no control over such an issue and did not even have the power to ask why his mentee(s) did not show up.

The best things are never arrived at in haste: "They don't know what to expect."

A consistent pattern could be observed in Eddie's account of his interactions with his mentees. For the first meeting, Eddie would usually spend more time bonding primarily through talking, not doing homework. The topics varied from what they do at home to their relationships with their parent(s) or family. Through several rounds of tentative questions, Eddie would take quick mental notes about the top five things that really interested them. Besides remembering what his mentees like or dislike, he would note in what way they reacted to such topics. Eddie gave me an example of how his mentees reacted differently to two different topics: basketball

and pizza. "If you ask them about sports, they will be like, my favourite sport is basketball; but when you ask them about pizza, they start talking about memories they have, this and that" (Second interview, May 10, 2020). In this case, Eddie would keep in his mind that talking about pizza keeps the conversation going for a long time or talking basketball can be an icebreaker. Eddie described these topics as coming in handy during these semesters, especially if his mentee(s) confided in him about some tough matters in their life. However, Eddie acknowledged that it was not easy to get children to talk about themselves and their lives with a stranger. He said "they [mentees] sort of have their guard up because it's a stranger coming to talk to them about their family. Or I'm asking random questions about basketball or something like that. So they don't know what to expect" (Second interview, May 10, 2020).

This was especially so when it came to Zae, an extremely quiet and introverted child, during the Winter 2020 semester. It took more time and patience for Eddie to engage Zae in their private conversation when they first met. Eddie recalled that Zae kept looking around and trying to see what other children were doing. He spent more time dragging his attention back by playing some quick games and then they started their own conversation. Eddie shared with Qingying, the mentor we met in the first story, how unresponsive his mentee was after they finished their first meeting (I learnt this from Qingying in our second interview). When I asked Eddie further what he knew about Zae's background through their early interactions in our first interview (three weeks after their first meeting), he smiled in embarrassment and answered that his answer had to be "nothing" (First interview, March 7, 2020). Although Zae did talk about himself, for example, that he used to like making airplanes, he went silent when Eddie asked him about his childhood or his family. "Maybe it was not time. I will ask him those questions later this semester, but comfortable", Eddie told me at the end of the first interview.

"I am here to take care of what you are interested in and need."

When I met Eddie online for the second interview, he recalled the interactions between him and Zae and presented some bonding moments when Zae showed and taught him some dance moves. Besides that, Eddie acknowledged that "not much happened, to be honest" (Second interview, May 10, 2020).

In most cases, Eddie still needed to deal with Zae's reluctance to do homework, which was one usual but tough situation in Eddie's mentoring journey. Sometimes, Zae would get bored of his homework and really did not want to start it. Eddie said that in this case, he would retreat a little bit and use the dice or poker cards the program gave mentors to distract him for a while and then come back to the homework, because it was the main goal.

> There was a French exam once this semester and he had to go through eight and
>
> nine pages of um, his book. And he really didn't want to do that. So I suggested
>
> that [sic] me reading one page and him reading another one. And he still didn't
>
> accept. We played the dice game before that, so I just told him 'whoever rolls the
>
> higher number has to do the first page. And after these pages, we just move onto
>
> the next one'. Since it had a bit of the element of game we played before, he was
>
> accepting it. (Second interview, May 10, 2020)

In this way, Eddie explained that he still tried to build a "middle ground" (Second interview, May 10, 2020) between him and Zae to help him understand that he was here to have fun as well, besides doing homework together. Eddie believed that it was important to help his mentee(s) understand that he was able to give the experience they wanted, as they had got enough information that they needed to do homework here. He explained in a passionate tone:

> So I just wanted to give them a completely new experience, just the

experience that they wanted, not necessarily what was advertised. So if they

wanted to work on something or wanted to just talk to someone, I could be there. I

sort of went in showing them that I'm here to take care of what they need and are

interested in, not to fulfill some sort of wish that the organization has. (Second

interview, May 10, 2020)

However, Eddie told me that staying passionate about creating more fun was not always easy for

him, as a university student busy balancing his own studies and other aspects of his life. To

guarantee his commitment to creating some fun experiences to hold Zae's attention, he would

usually use *the Zone of Regulation* which the HS program designs in the reflection log for both

the mentor and mentee to reflect on the change of their mood by circling different colours.

Other times, Zae would appear to be agitated, sad or in other negative moods, something

that had also happened to Eddie's previous mentees. In these cases, Eddie was aware that his

attempts to get Zae to do homework just deepened Zae's anger and somehow led to tensions

between them. I asked Eddie to describe the scenario where his mentee(s) got more angry.

Aware of how his position as a mentor may affect the way that his mentees expressed emotions

in their relationships, Eddie explained:

Since we're in a position of power, the anger they show isn't just like

getting mad and yelling at us. It's more by frustration. They sort of show their

anger through the frustration. They would stop paying attention completely. Just

put their head down. Close their eyes. We had a little corner that had some

basketballs and like some other playing there. They would just get up during our

session and go there just to be away from me. Or they would use going to the

bathroom as an excuse. (Second interview, May 10, 2010)

Eddie interpreted Zae's disinterest and disengagement as a nonverbal way to express his unmet needs, something that his previous experiences had taught him. Eddie needed to put aside what he expected Zae to do for a while and to check whether something was going wrong in Zae's life. In most cases, these issues were "very human" (Second interview, May 10, 2010), in Eddie's words and he even experienced some of them when he was in elementary school, such as feeling lonely and having no true friends.

Under these circumstances, he acknowledged that all he could do was just console his mentees through empathizing with them, because they just met each other for 2-3 hours a week. However, Eddie could still feel that once he lent an ear to his mentees, they would gradually assume that their mentor was on their side, let down their shields and be more willing to work on their homework with him. Eddie added that "it did not happen to my last mentee [Zae], but I felt like we were on the right path, at least" (Second interview, May 10, 2020).

"We had a very good connection and get homework done", but …

As a mentor who had engaged in HS for three semesters in a row, Eddie gained a clear understanding of what the program expected mentors to do and then accentuated what he prioritized from his actual engagement with his mentees. He got to know about his mentees' needs from his actual engagement with them and doubted to what extent the HS program was aware of these.

> They [program staff] basically say whenever you go there, just do the best you
> can. Don't think about solving long-term problems in that moment. Just make
> them feel better, get their homework done, just help them move on. Sort of do
> well on that day or our [their] hope was not that huge, but it is still
> meaningful…But once you get there, the kids bring up some issues… I felt like

there were a lot of matters that caught me off guard when I got there. (Second

interview, May 10, 2020)

Eddie identified these issues as family troubles and children's experiences of being bullied at

school. All three of his mentees had different family problems and two of them had been bullied

in school. He expressed his unpreparedness when his mentees came to him with these

complicated issues. However, Eddie felt that he could not afford to ignore them, considering that

these children did not have the same "privilege" (First interview, March 7, 2020) as him to

confide in their parents and get their help to get through the difficulties. What Eddie found

trickier was children were unable to clarify their feelings about these issues, which failed to offer

him a full picture of what happened and made him indecisive about his intervention. He

acknowledged that he could not do much more than console them by emphasizing that he was

there to listen to them any time they wanted to talk. Eddie had once reported one bullying case

that he felt that he could not handle to the cooperating teacher but felt that the school had not

addressed it.

Eddie came to realize that his commitment could not make as great a change to his

mentees' life as he had expected and the school was passive in protecting the children's well-

being. He then placed his hope on the HS program itself to make a bigger and more meaningful

influence on these children's lives, which he kept talking about during our two interviews:

I felt like they [program staff] have got the most out of it through the years. The

problems are ever in the system. But I feel like the goal [of this program] isn't to

make a huge change in the kids. I'd love for our help to be a little bit bigger, a

little more meaningful. I'm sure the kids look forward to HS every week, but two,

three hours and like about 25 hours in a semester isn't enough time to make a

meaningful change. So that's one of the concerns I have feel like they could do

more. (First interview, March 7, 2020)

However, after further referring to HS "as an organization from the university to the school once a week" (First interview, March 7, 2020), Eddie seemed less passionate about the prospect for this program to make some bigger changes. Instead, he became more conscious of the limitations of what this program can do for children with this amount of time and as an outsider to the school.

   Commentary: Eddie's case demonstrates a deeper involvement than the other participants in his mentees' environment (i.e., school and family) and this program. His awareness of the significance of his mentees' contextual factors led him to develop a higher expectation for fulfillment of his role as a mentor. He attempted to extend some facets of his role beyond the dyadic relationships and into mentees' social contexts. When located within the dyadic relationships, Eddie frankly acknowledged his positional power as a mentor who was tasked with activities that he thought the program designed for the mentees' benefit and saw this power as a property of the program's structure (Hinings et al., 1974). He was aware of and could understand the tendency for young children to see him, an adult mentor, as an authority figure and to initially treat him with low levels of trust. This positional power was perceived as inevitable by Eddie to help mentees develop necessary resources (Ragins, 1997) in order to gain greater control over their learning and to shape children or leave them to shape themselves when he saw them moving in the direction of those positive behaviours that the program desired. However, we could also see that Eddie did not deny his mentee's expert power to show him something he had not known.

In addition, Eddie felt obligated to address the difficulties his mentees were faced with in their immediate environments that interfered with their performance during the mentoring sessions. However, his role as a mentor coming from outside of the school limited his access to information concerning his mentees' school and family life. He entered this school setting as a volunteer which could not provide him with authority and credibility in terms of dealing with some issues, e.g., bullying, that he believed needed expertise from professionals to address. Therefore, Eddie's frustration originated more from the contradiction between the limited power allowed to mentors by this school and his accountability to cross over into multiple contexts of his mentees' life. Thereafter, we could see a change in Eddie's mindset from directly addressing some difficulties in his mentees' immediate environment to resisting the effects of mentees' toxic immediate environments on their performance when they were located in this mentoring program through temporarily distracting their attention from these difficulties. Although his awareness of his class privilege reminded him of a moral responsibility not to ignore the difficulties in his mentees' immediate environments, he finally returned the responsibility and expectations this program imposed on mentors to make immediate changes in mentees' environments to the program itself. Meanwhile, he also revealed the limitation of what this university can do in this endeavor to make changes in mentees' immediate environments.

5.4 Gina's story

I approached Gina first after I heard Christine talk about some mentors who showed higher levels of persistence facing their more difficult mentees. Gina was one of them. She was a U0 student from India, who had decided on Psychology as her major and was hesitant whether she needed to minor in Educational Psychology. She explained that the HS program could prepare her for the study of Educational Psychology, if she finally made up her mind to minor in

it. She expected to get the most of this experience and hone her skills for her future psychology-related career through working with children, the group she believed that she needed to "double up patience" (First interview, February 28, 2020) to communicate with.

Gina got to know about this program from *Activities Night* and was attracted by the form of mentoring, which she had never encountered in her previous educational experiences in India. Rather, she had some informal experiences of helping with her classmates' school work as "one of the smart kids in school" (First interview, February 28, 2020) or working together with two talkative girls who were self-motivated to do their homework or other academic activities (mainly reading). By contrasting David, her mentee, with these two girls, she viewed him as more passive and indecisive about his future. Gina has been in this program for two consecutive semesters with the same mentee. She described David as "reserved" and "extremely shy and quiet" throughout our two interviews. When we met for our first interview at the beginning of the 2020 winter semester, Gina acknowledged that even after one semester's mentoring, she still did not know much about her mentee's family and school lives, compared with what other mentors knew about theirs.

"I am pretty shy, but I know someone who is more shy."

Looking back to the very first time they met, Gina could still remember how hard it was to approach this relationship because of David's quietness and unresponsiveness and tried to offer me a more thorough understanding through inviting me to imagine what happened in the same school setting where I had once mentored my mentee.

So as far as the first time I met him, he was really quiet. He didn't talk to me at all. He just didn't tell you his name properly. If you know the setting we went to the same place, we were sitting there. And during the activity time we had to do

the secret handshake. And he was kind of shy. He didn't want to do anything. He was just like, no, it's too embarrassing. I don't want to do it. He just kept moving around and I was following him. 'Ok, do you wanna talk?' I was like 'oh how are you?' 'what's your favourite colour?' (First interview, March 9, 2020)

Gina told me that she was afraid to risk labelling David as a shy child and overlooking other potential factors that might render him quiet. Therefore, she came to the teacher and Christine immediately after their first meeting and was told that David truly has a quiet personality. The only suggestion they gave to Gina was to be patient and wait for David to open up.

For the first few weeks of the 2019 Fall semester, Gina tried hard to connect with David through making different conversations intentionally. It was not an easy task for Gina, as she also defined herself as pretty shy. She needed to take more initiatives to "talk to the mentee" and "get the mentee to talk to me [her]" (First interview, March 9, 2020). In Gina's eyes, age and culture gaps became formidable barriers for her to connect with her already quiet mentee. David did not even know that what she used to do in her childhood had existed while she had no idea at all about what David said about his life right now. Conversations did not help close the distance between them as hoped for. Gina told me that she was discouraged during the beginning weeks, especially after seeing other mentor-mentee pairs highly engaged in various creative activities while she merely followed her mentee moving around the room. However, she did not give up easily and kept going back to the teachers and Christine to report their situation and seek their advice. After all, as a shy person, she was clearly aware how difficult and intimidating it was to talk to a random stranger and accept him/her.

The critical turning point: "we didn't have to talk."

After two or three rocky weeks, Gina recalled that they were moved to work with another group where Joe, David's best friend was located. This was one attempt by the program to help Gina and David develop their relationship. Gina finally saw what it looked like when David was interacting with someone. She was keen on observing interactions between Joe and David for most of this time to learn what he liked.

The critical turning point for their relationship finally came after a couple of weeks when they started working with Joe's group. Gina recalled that David was in a bad mood and did not even want to attend that day's homework session. This usually did not happen. Gina indicated that David was usually disciplined and completed his homework. The teacher came over and tried to soothe him and motivate him to look forward to *Creative Challenge* that would be taking place later in the session. Fortunately, David was really into that day's craft which was a construction activity using marshmallows. Gina reflected that this was the critical turning point for them in building a relationship, as she finally found an effective way to connect with David, not by oral communication, but by "doing something together" (Second interview, May 9, 2020) and expressing themselves through gestures and eye contact.

After the marshmallow activity that really intrigued David, Gina found that he became more responsive to her questions. Gina was attentive to every possible opportunity to strengthen their relationship in the nonverbal way she had learned from their collaboration in this activity. Later, in one activity during which they made costumes with newspapers, Gina made an extra hat that caught David's eye, besides their superman costume. Gina recalled that David really liked it and emboldened himself to ask for another one from Gina. Gina made and coloured one at home and brought it to the school the following week. She recalled how excited David was in that

week's session and understood his excitement as being not merely because of the hat but more about being touched by his mentor's efforts to maintain this relationship.

> He's so happy that day because it is more about the effort that I put at home, like having a heart to decorate it for him and bring it next week. So he was really happy about it. And he wore it the entire session and every time it fell, he was like 'my hat', 'my hat'. Excited about it. (Second interview, May 9, 2020)

To maintain the relationship: "If he has [sic] been more open maybe, it would be a lot easier."

Gina did not talk much about interactions with her mentee during the second (Winter 2020) semester. Most of her memories concerned the previous semester as she explained that they had more time there. However, Gina still described the concerns that she had in restarting their relationship in the second semester and her mentee's recurring disengagement.

Gina was concerned whether her return was what David looked forward to, compared to meeting new mentors and receiving new mentoring experiences. David did not express any excitement and surprise as other mentees did when they saw their old mentors and was disengaged for the first two weeks. Gina was unsure whether his disengagement was more about her or the activities that took place during this time. It was also during these two weeks that the first interview with Gina took place. When I asked Gina about the mentee's role in this program, she gave an example that a hyperactive boy who swore a lot and did not listen to his mentor was removed from the program in 2019 fall semester to emphasize mentees' responsibilities.

> Because they [mentees] signed up themselves. So it's their responsibility I think because it's not anybody forces them to be in [HS]. If they did it voluntarily, they wanted to be part of this thing, they should just try to be more engaging [sic],

more supportive too with their mentor, because even the mentors are showing up

and they're trying to do their best even with their university classes and exams. So

if the mentee is not cooperating and it's not helpful for any of you. (First

interview, March 9, 2020)

Contrary to Gina's assumption, many children were signed up by their parents for this program,

which Christine explained in her interview (Interview, February 24, 2020). Then, Gina talked

about her mentee more specifically and still believed his quiet and reserved personality to be a

strong barrier to advancing their relationship after one semester's mentoring. (First interview,

March 9, 2020)

Although Gina felt that "if he [David] was more open maybe, it would be a lot easier"

(First interview, March 9, 2020), her mentoring experience in the previous semester and the

acknowledgement from the program (Gina was publicized as a mentor of the semester in the

2019 fall semester) apparently made her more assertive and resilient. Compared with strenuously

and aimlessly making conversations and pushing everything to work from the very beginning,

Gina was patient for their relationship to get back on track.

I start at a base that's comfortable, because we don't wanna rush through things

like tried [sic] to get the mentee to know everything in just one period, like one

session. So it's just helpful to go slow and then try to see what's most appropriate,

most suitable for the mentee. And I think it's more a long-term thing. It's not just

one time. (First interview, March 9, 2020)

When we met for our second interview, I invited Gina to reflect more on the second

semester's interactions and further asked how her relationship with David progressed after our

first interview. Gina made a brief summary that it was a stable relationship except that she took

more initiative to design other activities for David. Especially when he did not want to do homework or did not really have much homework to do, Gina would offer other alternatives to replace what they were supposed to do and usually Qingying's group would also be involved (as indicated in Qingying's interviews).

> I did not really wanna put pressure on him like 'now we have to do some homework'. There is no point in pressurizing a kid who did not want to do homework. […] I know this program is mentee-oriented. I tried to give my mentee respect. So that is why I tried to give him all the decision power and everything. (Second interview, May 9, 2020)

Commentary: Gina was the mentor who interacted the most with the program coordinator and the teacher in school. We can see that she also held a positive view toward the positional power the teacher and this program has over the mentees, which means, in Gina's eyes, more access to the information about her mentee (Pfeffer, 1981). Therefore, when Gina was unsure about the reason why her mentee was extremely quiet, she believed in the teacher's power of classification (to classify David by comparison with mentees who were less quiet) and individualization (assigning a characteristic to a person) (Gore, 1995) to label her mentee. She was then assured to set her goal more to do some other activities to intrigue and connect with this quiet and less responsive child (even when he was supposed to do homework) with a subjective understanding of a "mentee-oriented" approach that she learned from the program. In addition, Gina was aware of the teacher's expert power and depending on her ability to cope with sources of uncertainty (Finkelstein, 1992) to increase her competency. In this case, through more frequently interacting with the teacher, Gina had the ability to turn HS into a professional space for her and aimed to be socialized into the professional practices. Therefore, compared with other

mentors, she talked more about what skills she learned and practices she found effective to deal with her mentee.

When Gina's relationship with her mentee entered into the second semester, she became more assertive about her practices, which resulted from her enhanced sense of her expertise as a result of professional learning and was confirmed by the program's acknowledgement. Thereafter, Gina did more to decontextualize her relationship with her mentee and considered the power dynamics between her and her mentee in isolation from the context external to their relationship. At the end of their relationship, Gina revealed two preconditions to achieve children empowerment by mentoring that mentors willingly passed over their decision-making power to their mentees at the same time mentees were willing to be helped.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter offers insight into new and old mentors' experiences. They had diverse understandings of their roles as mentors and tried to actualize them in their practices. This chapter demonstrates that mentors entered into their relationships with some awareness of pre-existing power relations that are associated with class and/or race. With such perceptions, they made sense of their feelings of being oppressed or oppressing their mentees accidentally. However, as outsiders, we can see wider power relations were acting on their assumptions and actions not necessarily in an oppressive way. Without such knowledge, mentors could not clearly make sense of their sometimes inconsistent behaviours and thoughts throughout the mentoring process. From my perspective, their actions and interactions were the result of competing discourses/power struggles within this program. These competing discourses influence what is thinkable about mentoring, mentees and mentors resulted in conflicting representations on these university student mentors. In the next chapter, I will place mentors' assumptions, roles,

practices and the mentor-mentee relationship in their institutional and wider social contexts and

power/discourse struggles to more fully account for the mentor-mentee interactions and

relationships.

Chapter VI Discussion

In this chapter, I present a theoretical analysis of the subject of this thesis: power relations, context and roles. First, I will draw on Foucault's notions of power/discourse to demonstrate how those discourses revealed in Chapter IV position mentors and mentees in the HS program to explain the main points of mentors' assumptions and practices discussed in the previous chapter. More importantly, I will discuss how mentor subjects exercised their agency to resist some specific practices proposed by the program to mirror neoliberal values and accompanied role positioning. Furthermore, their attempts to define their own roles in the relationships with their mentees will be revealed.

6.1 Discursive formation and resistance

This thesis focuses on the notion of mentoring as a discursive practice. Chapter IV presents an analysis of discursive practices in multiple fields in which the HS program is located, which has been seldom revealed in existing discourse analysis of youth mentoring. These discourses are not only connected with political, economic and social contexts but are enacted within specific and contingent institutional arrangements. Mentoring, as a means of education, may also try to naturalize discourses and entrap all participants in certain representations, roles, hierarchies and other hegemonic processes. In fact, as an alternative learning form to supplement formal education, in the mentoring context, those responsible for the programs often employ more progressive rhetoric to speak against inequities in the formal education system. Therefore, this discourse analysis has uncovered an incongruence between the emancipatory language used and practices to maintain the status quo.

Discourses are inseparable from the operation of power. Discourse, as Foucault (1980) argues, can be both an instrument and effect of power. It can transmit, produce and reinforce

power. One of the effects of these discourses is to produce subjects who display certain modes of subjectivity or ways of being. To be more exact, discourses position subjects, casting them in roles according to discursive formation and creating spaces for individuals to locate themselves within and to define themselves through (Westwood & Linstead, 2001). Here, the subject is then governed by others and at the same time the governor of him/herself. It is within this paradox that the idea of resistance becomes a central aspect in Foucault's (2019) analysis of power relations: "In power relations there is necessarily the possibility of resistance because if there were no possibility of resistance (of violent resistance, flight, deception, strategies capable of reversing the situation), there would be no power relations at all" (p. 292). Discourse can be undermined by exposure and rendered fragile and able to be contested (Foucault, 2019).Therefore, attention will be also paid to understand the ways in which mentors created resistance to some practices derived from dominant socio-economic and political discourses, institutional policies which reproduced, protected and maintained these wider discourses, in spite of a more progressive appearance and the technologies in which these discourses are shaped. However, Foucault (2019) also made it clear that "these practices of resistance were not something invented by the individual himself. They are models that he finds in his culture and are proposed, suggested, imposed upon him by his culture, his society and his social group" (p.291).

First, the discourse of normative youth development can reveal a form of governance that emanates from the government introducing neoliberal educational policies. Under the surface of progressive rhetoric, the analysis could expose the directive nature of this program to produce young people (mentees) who are ready to seek individual academic success, able to regulate their

emotions and equipped with individualistic values. This point has been argued by some discourse analysis studies of youth mentorship programs in North America (e.g., Hillman, 2016).

Mentors in this discourse are expected to fit into the roles of observer, supporter and probably a supervisor who needs to make judgements (Cullingford, 2016). All mentors in this case study either explicitly (e.g., Jia) or implicitly (e.g., Elliot) mentioned that they tended to start their relationship with their mentee through observing their behaviours or interests and then attempted to respond appropriately. As supporters, mentors simultaneously support students and teachers in the school or more exactly support teachers through supporting their students. Neoliberal policy initiatives have placed greater emphasis on determining the values of teaching and learning in terms of measurable outcomes, such as standardized test scores and class sizes (Wotherspoon, 2009). Therefore, a tendency to favour the technical dimensions of teaching makes it less possible for teachers to attend to various needs of all students as well as other responsibilities, mainly the interpersonal aspects of a teacher's work (Wotherspoon, 2009). Since this mentoring seeks to develop mentees into neoliberal subjects seeking academic success, it aims more to transform the emotional disposition of mentees that prepare them to pursue the educational trajectory set by the program, to fit the education system, and to make them docile (Foucault, 2012). More specifically, besides engaging mentees in a wide range of curriculum-shaped learning activities to develop some behaviours and competencies desired by formal education, this program aimed more to provide a context of emotional management for young children, enforcing the differentiation between acceptable emotions and those that should be suppressed in the school setting.

By its nature, such engagement targeted children's emotions as a problem and showed little recognition of the character and implications of the difference between adults and children

which comes from the contrasting experiences of the uneven power relationships (O. Jones, 2008, 2013). It required mentors to induce some specific feelings and emotions in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the desired state of the mind in mentees (Hochschild, 2012). We can see that mentoring training encouraged mentors to be cheerful and optimistic about where higher education takes them. It also encouraged mentors to be empathetic with their mentees and listen to them in a non-judgemental way. Aware of that, mentors in this program sought to elicit positive responses from their mentees from their very first meeting, even though some of them, naturally shy and reserved, found it intimidating to do so (i.e., Jia and Gina). All mentors felt obligated to express their feelings of enthusiasm, happiness and self-assurance and expected to stimulate similar positive emotions in their mentees. When some of them tried all the strategies promoted by the program coordinator and the cooperating teacher but still failed to stimulate these emotions, the mentors would make extra efforts outside of the program to work toward this goal. For example, Gina spent extra time making a paper hat her mentee liked. Qingying gave her mentee a card on his birthday to make him feel happy and cared for. Mentors were also directed to distract and suppress their mentees' undesired emotional responses in opposition to them or the program, such as anger, frustration and other unpleasant feelings. Eddie was the only mentor to think of the extent to which his mentee(s)' emotions were permitted to show in the context of the mentor-mentee power relations and to get to know that children's expressions and understandings of emotions may be unlike those of adults. This perspective could be viewed to challenge and resist this program's narrow and dominant conceptualization of children's emotions. More importantly, Eddie's description of his mentee's spatial movement—leaving his place and moving around when he gave an account of his emotional responses—can contribute to one additional finding of the governmentality of mentees

in this program not only in their behaviours, emotions and even their bodies. We can see that even mentees' bodies may be regulated and modified within wider systems and dynamics of power to help develop more desired subjectivities. A similar case can be seen in Qingying's resistance against this program's confinement of children's bodies in one specific place (not allowing mentees to go to the stairs) to discipline them into being docile subjects.

Meanwhile, we need to see that this mentoring entails emotional labour for mentors whose emotions were controlled and prescribed. To help mentees reform their emotional responses in compliance with what the program desired, this mentoring practice also demands a transformation of the mentor's emotional disposition: to develop an awareness of what are deemed to be desirable and undesirable emotions. The emotional disposition this program attempted to produce in mentors in fact exercised constraints on and even exploited those who aimed to be a 'good' mentor. We can see that all mentors were led to minimize their personal emotions and to think it inappropriate to allow these to influence the mentor-mentee relationship. In this sense, the fundamental work of this mentoring is akin to what Colley (2003b) described in her study to transform the emotional dispositions of both sides of a mentoring dyad. Its goal is to produce/reproduce dispositions in a particular way determined by the needs of dominant groupings institutionalized in the program, rather than by the needs or goals of these participants (both mentors and mentees) in mentoring. This view could help us avoid focusing solely on mentors' and mentees' predispositions and indulging in blaming either of them endlessly.

This resulted in emotional costs to mentors, which this program tried to avoid, since these tensions between the program and mentors can be most easily recognised when the individual senses a clash between what they feel and what they know they 'ought' to feel, as Colley's (2003b) study suggests. These costs varied among mentors. For example, Jia would try to protect

herself from the idealized identities imposed on mentors by the program but risked detachment from her emotions and low self-esteem. Eddie tended to extend his roles into his mentee's family or school life to reinforce his devotion, which caused additional stress on him. For the rest mentors in the HS program, Gina, Jia and Qingying did experience the period in which what they felt was different from what they were supposed to feel and at some point, some of them started to resist. For example, Jia, a mentor with two mentees, started to tolerate her mentee's inactivity and disinterest in program-designed activities as her way to resist burdens that the program imposed on her. Gina and Jia sometimes worked for pleasure, not necessarily engaged in program-designed activities, especially those concerning their mentees' homework. In fact, these practices of resistance were more their temporary decision. In the interviews, some of them (mainly Jia and Qingying) still expressed awkwardness and demoralization in resisting the program's arrangement. Jia even came back to find fault with herself for not being able to connect with her mentees, blaming her minority culture background, language proficiency and quiet personality. Culture is mentioned in a similar way in Gina's case. Here, special attention needs to be paid to a possibility that the concept of ethnic minority culture appeared to be a reification (Lukács, 2000) of power relations that render these international student mentors vulnerable. This reification may be a result of this program's attempt to depoliticize the mentoring process and encourage mentors to emotionalize social problems: to address the difficulties they experienced in terms of their own emotions, behaviours, and even culture, rather than recognize underlying injustice, oppression and inequity (Berlant, 2014).

The role of supervisor may be secondary to other roles. The role of supervisor is more acknowledged in workplace mentoring literature that suggests that established teachers and experienced professionals use mentoring or "induction" to introduce a new member of staff into

"the rules, the practices, the culture and habits of the institution" (Cullingford, 2016, p. 2) and enable them to fit in. Mentors' roles in the HS program can be said more to evaluate their mentees' development of skills this program desires and have the light touch of advice at most. What they did was far from the heavy hand of induction. After all, compared with their mentees, they were newer to the school environment and even the educational system in Quebec, if they came from outside of Quebec or Canada. This can explain why Qingying, who expected to instill the higher value she places on higher education to her mentee before she started mentoring, could not find in what way and on what occasion she could do that. However, we can see that some mentors still believed in pursuing the same educational path which earned themselves self-assured authority and identified some of their mentees' dispositions they believed prevented them going far on this path. For example, Qingying was honest about her mentee's passivity in learning. Gina also talked about her mentee's indecision in planning his education trajectory. Although the supervisory side of the mentors' role cannot be fully pinpointed in mentors' practices, one clearly important thing is that conformity is desired from mentees to develop these prescribed abilities. The aspect of controlling and making a person conform that was revealed in Colley's (2003b) study about *engagement mentoring* almost twenty years ago can still be seen with mentors in this program albeit one with a more progressive and emancipatory ethos.

To make mentors perform these roles effectively to shape their mentees into neoliberal subjects, this program adopts many techniques of surveillance of both mentors and mentees. The program requires the presence of one teacher and one coordinator on site throughout the entire mentoring session. They sometimes walked around and reminded mentors and mentees of their responsibilities in the mentoring sessions, especially when they were supposed to be doing homework. In doing so, they were more like the gaze of surveillance (Foucault, 2012), and more

importantly they could create self-discipline amongst mentors and mentees. However, once mentors (and mentees) experienced this panoptic technique as unpleasant or coercive, they would sometimes realize it was not what they wanted and would do some 'irresponsible' behaviours to resist. We can see this resistance in Jia's case where she tried to lead her mentees to do non-academic activities to resist the teacher's direction to the mentees to focus on homework.

In fact, this program has moved beyond the panoptic technique and toward post-panopticism described by Courtney (2016) and Page (2015). It would be more appropriate to see the surveillance existing in this program as an "assemblage" (Haggerty & Ericson, 2000), a collection of individual technologies and strategies that combine to increase the degree of surveillance capacity. Unlike Foucault's panopticon, the surveillant assemblage never maintains its shape. Central to the surveillant assemblage is sorting and categorization (Page, 2017). Some of the mentors involved in this program would be sorted into the categories of "amazing" mentors and advertised in the *Mentor Spotlight* on Facebook and the program website. This surveillance can generate heightened anxiety (Page, 2017) for some mentors. For example, Qingying was afraid of being caught in the wrong category and kept doubting whether something she did wrong deprived her of the sense of self-efficacy that this program proposed. In addition, this categorization not only works on the part of mentors themselves, but also on mentees. For example, all mentees in this program were selected by the school teachers who assigned particular characteristics to them and classified them into the group of "students at risk" of dropping out of school against some specific standards. For example, they assigned the label of quietness to Gina's mentee, which largely shaped her impression of her mentee. In addition, there is horizontal surveillance (Page, 2017) among all mentors. Mentoring activities are placed

in an open-plan space, which not only allows for the teacher and the program coordinator to have

hierarchical control of all mentors, mentees and activities, but more importantly allows mentors

to observe their colleagues. This surveillance can be found in Jia's case where she kept observing

other mentors' mentoring behaviours and styles to improve hers. This suggests that this program

can achieve a concertive control by intertwining the team support with surveillance. Finally,

there is a more complicated technique of surveillance working in this program—the reflection

log. On one hand, it can be regarded as Foucault's (2012) panopticism. With the potential for

being seen at any time, Foucault (2012) argues that the gaze moves inside and discipline

becomes internalized to produce docile bodies. For example, in Eddie's story, the reflection log

(mainly *the Zones of Regulation*) can be a technique to monitor and strengthen his commitment

during the mentoring sessions. However, in Qingying's case, the reflection log is more a way to

write down something considered "cute" by the program coordinator. In this way, the functions

of the reflection log cannot be fully understood by Foucault's idea of the gaze. Instead, it can be

viewed as intrapersonal surveillance (Page, 2017) that has moved the prospect of being watched

from a menace to a temptation: "the promise of enhanced visibility, chimes well with the most

avidly sought proof of social recognition, and therefore of valued—meaningful—existence"

(Bauman & Lyon, 2013, p. 23). Another example of intrapersonal surveillance can be found in

Gina's case where she regarded her publicity in the *Mentor Spotlight* as a reward or at least an

appreciation from the program in recognition of her efforts. Therefore, we can see from this

intrapersonal surveillance that some mentors are active, agentive and willing to participate within

some practices of surveillance. Or we can use Davies and Petersen's (2005) two more seductive

technologies of neoliberalism in the profession of teaching: a technology of agency and

technology of performance, to understand how neoliberalism established a 'dividing practice' (P.

Miller & Rose, 2008, p. 98) to make mentors responsible for their own successful and productive performance and for the performance of their mentees, and to confront them with the risk of being seen as irresponsible.

This study has further problematized taken-for-granted facts and generated discourses beyond youth development. It suggests that mentors were caught up in discourses of contemporary neoliberal university governance and an oversimplistic construct of transformative and experiential learning. These discourses have never appeared in studies about traditional youth mentoring. In fact, these two discourses could be used to understand how neoliberalism influences the university not only through some external impositions of policies on the universities by the government but also through a parallel process that operates internal to the university. These discourses can be also used to remind us of the importance to reflect on what role the service provider plays in the practice of youth mentoring.

Within the second discourse of neoliberal university governance, this program falls under the institutional goal of increasing access to higher education that was not traditionally included in the agenda of research universities. Given that the Quebec government has adopted an all-encompassing educational policy, *Policy on Educational Success: A Love of Learning, a Change to Succeed.* (MEES, 2017), to mobilize the whole Quebec society to achieve children's education success, this research university is no exception and aims to help school boards achieve "successful transition to higher education or the labour market" (p.23) for their students. In fact, Marshall (2008) indicated that Canadian provincial governments increasingly tended to turn to non-governmental sectors (e.g., colleges) to provide increased access to degrees, considering the lower costs in non-university sectors in terms of student tuition and operating costs. However, neoliberal forces have blurred the historically unique role of the university and non-university

sectors and threatened their respective roles in driving independent research and serving the needs of local community (Trotter & Mitchell, 2018). Higher education in Quebec has been chronically underfunded (The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education, 2017). This university is no exemption and needs to compete for more resources and engage in direct competition for market share. Therefore, this program can be regarded as a part of this university's branding campaigns to raise its profile in the public consciousness and communicate effectively with local communities and governments (Hearn, 2010). Its existence, regardless of what program staff believe, may be simply used by this corporatized university to distinguish itself from its competitors in a positive way (Hearn, 2010). Given decreasing funding from the government for education, universities have undergone restructuring to increase productivity and enhance accountability and relevance to external stakeholders (Bleiklie, 2018). Therefore, although public universities were not designed to behave like privately owned for-profit corporations, they were becoming more and more like them (Mirrlees & Alvi, 2019) and were compelled to more fully align themselves with capitalist market relations.

Without a clearer understanding of what higher education undergoes in a neoliberal era, mentors were easily led to believe that this program was designed purely under the premise of making everyone "entitled to a good education for a good democratic society" (Mirrlees & Alvi, 2019, p. 46) and to accept this program as a noble cause from this university, as Qingying's story conveyed. Unlike other mentors who came to this program with the goal to hone their career-related skills or out of personal interest in working with school children, Qingying associated her involvement with the performance of noblesse oblige through helping address a community need. Here, although experiencing local concerns from the program's point of view has broadened her perspective and given her a different experience, emphasis on the service meaning

of this experience limited her opportunities to examine the wider range of factors resulting in the conditions she observed (Hessler, 2000). After getting a glimpse of her mentee's school and family life, she ruled out possible family and school factors that the program introduced that may potentially result in school dropout and then stopped further inquiry. Gina also mentioned that she was here to do good after temporarily putting aside her other school duties, and emphasized mentees' willingness to be helped. These behaviours and thoughts unconsciously positioned their mentees as the recipient of mentors' care services, subject to paternalistic pity, demand for gratitude, domination, control, confinement and marginalization, in the name of care, as noted in the literature of care work (Bondi, 2008; Shakespeare, 2000). In addition, as the claimed meritocracy that higher education admission relies on to equalize educational opportunities is more limited to test scores (Alon & Tienda, 2007), these university student mentors felt obligated to help these mentees meet expectations of merit, that is to push them to focus on their school learning. However, without thinking about whether systems of merit that prevail in society mainly serve the interests of its dominant groups (Karabel, 2006), some of them were easily led to believe their entitlement to be meritorious and to disadvantage their mentees with few resources and less power to influence how merit is defined.

On the other hand, for the mentors themselves, we need to see that the corporatized university constructs its students as consumers of a degree commodity (Mirrlees & Alvi, 2019) and convinces its students to regard this branded degree experience as linked to future work opportunities (Hearn, 2010) and a successful life. These mentors were in fact trained by the corporate university or led to self-train to fit with capital's demand for labour (Bowles & Gintis, 2011). Except for Eddie, all mentors treated their engagement in this mentoring in exchange for

an experience that they hope would one day help them land a paid career (de Peuter, Cohen, & Brophy, 2015).

The discourse of oversimplistic transformative and experiential learning has been the arena in which the fiercest struggle happened on the mentors' part. This program crisscrossed two spheres of central bureaucracy that was becoming more responsive to external stakeholders and the academic pedagogy that claims to defend academic freedom. The construction of critical thinking reflects conflicting interests between these two spheres that this program straddles. On one hand, we can see that this program constructs critical thinking together with communication, interpersonal skills as transferrable skills in use, a shift toward vocationalism and professionalism in higher education (Mirrlees & Alvi, 2019). On the other hand, under the rhetoric of cultivating a sense of citizenship and social responsibility in mentors, it is important to examine how possible it is for this program to be committed to arousing critical consciousness in these university student mentors.

I contend that the HS program needs to accommodate this abovementioned ambivalence, which makes the reflective practice that it claimed to value slippery. Edwards and Thomas (2010) proposed a broad overview of work on reflection and suggested that reflexive processes are usually directed either toward the self and its rational choices or towards knowledge and its social production within power relations. Although no dichotomy is suggested here, they indicate that the emphasis is different in each case. In the former case, the focus is on the self as the locus of reflection. When the focus is on the self, then reflexivity is defined more as a competency to look into one's self and make rational choices (Edwards & Thomas, 2010). Following from this definition, we can see that the HS program training considered reflexivity as something that could be taught as a skill to these mentors, and thus provide a means for emancipation and self-

actualization. All mentors engaged in this type of reflective practice that focuses on the instrumental process (Brookfield, 2017), and employed their professional judgement as mentors to make informed choices in their mentoring. New mentors were still not very confident in their judgement and thus needed to depend on others' expertise. For example, Gina would go directly to the teacher and program coordinator to ascertain some of her mentoring practices. It can also explain why some of these mentors (mainly Jia, Gina and Qingying), as reflective individuals, responded to their immediate context, made choices to change, and understood these changes to be their own initiatives. This definition of reflexivity as an ability to act critically in the world has been criticized by some scholars (Giddens, 1990, 1991) to undermine struggles over power and politics. In this case, social problems would be presented as problems of individuals rather than being considered as the consequences of relations between individuals and social structures (Foucault, 1982). This pattern can be also found in all mentors' reflections, except Eddie, during the interviews. They were all keen to reflect on whether they carried out some practices that would be thought well of by the program and became more assertive about their expertise in dealing with some issues they encountered in their mentoring process, as a result of their critical-analytical thinking process. Even though some of them believed that these practices emerged from their intuition, we can see that the neoliberal governance of the HS program worked best when mentors came to want for themselves what the program desired of them. In fact, Jia had attempted to explore beyond *what works* toward *why she needs to do something*. However, due to the interruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic on this program, we cannot see exactly whether she ended up deciding that she was to blame, as she had done in her previous mentoring experiences or if she would form a new view of what constitutes a good mentoring relationship or mentor through transgressing social practices (Owen, 2013) if given more time.

In the second type of reflection proposed by Edwards and Thomas (2010), the focus is on how relations of power operate and what consequences they have not only for the self-reflexive process and knowledge production, but also for the possibilities to bring about change (Zembylas, 2014). This program seemingly regarded this type of reflection as the core of mentors' experiential learning and gave a brief introduction of the social-historical reality of neoliberal restructuring to accommodate the possibility of mentors' critical reflection (Brookfield, 2017). However, this preparation to contribute to mentors' critical reflexivity has been criticized as being too 'rational' against emotionally involved agents (Archer, 2009, p. 12). The HS program did emphasize emotions as a crucial component of critical reflective thinking acknowledged by Holmes's (2010) summary of Archer's work: "The reflexive self is formed by emotional relations to others and thus emotions play a more complex part in deliberations than helping us form and maintain commitments to our projects" (p.142). The tricky thing is that this program adopted the discourse of normative youth development to prescribe 'appropriate' emotional expressions not only in regard to mentees but also about mentors who are their role models. It also used the discourse of service administration that equates mentoring as giving back to further imprint positive emotions which came from feeling appreciated by the recipients of care (mentees) on these mentors. Therefore, new mentors tended to internalize prescriptions of these appropriate emotional expressions in the program training and tried to hide their unsettling emotions that some critics (Janssen, de Hullu, & Tigelaar, 2008; Kelchtermans, 2009; Kelchtermans & Hamilton, 2004; Shoffner, 2009) suggest critical reflection may require. For example, Qingying was influenced to manage and even minimize some emotions that she believed deviated from the positive emotions normalized by HS. This explained why Qingying

hid her frustration and upset in the first interview, but later revealed them to highlight her sense

of satisfaction and self-efficacy in the second interview.

However, if we pay close attention to Eddie's mentoring story, we can see that he resisted

using externally imposed good mentoring practices, unlike other mentors who were more eager

to incorporate practices from external sources such as the teacher, the program coordinator, or

peer mentors. In Eddie's case, the complexity of his mentees' problems or his knowledge of their

immediate environments led him to give up the power vested in him by this program and

communities of practice that he found to be inadequate in order to address issues he encountered

in interacting with his mentees. He started to challenge the obviousness of some practices this

program introduced and differentiated what he really wanted to do from what the program

desired him to do. Meanwhile, Eddie's examination also helped him learn to understand himself

in the context of power as his mentees often saw him and then realize that his once-held point of

view was inapplicable and needed to be replaced. Thus, he was contextualizing Foucault's

(1997) notion that power relations are not necessarily bad, but was trying to avoid the "states of

domination" (p. 298):

> I see nothing wrong in the practice of a person who, knowing more than others in
>
> a specific game of truth, tells those others what to do, teaches them, and transmits
>
> knowledge and techniques to them. The problem in such practices where power –
>
> which is not in itself a bad thing – must inevitably come into play is knowing how
>
> to avoid the kind of domination effects where a kid is subjected to the arbitrary
>
> and unnecessary authority of a teacher, or a student put under the thumb of a
>
> professor who abuses his authority. (Foucault, 1997, p. 298)

Similarly, Eddie held a positive view of the HS program's exercise of power and expertise to shape children's development and to make changes to their immediate environments. Under the frame of making changes to children's environment, he appreciated what this program had achieved. However, Eddie did not further attempt to identify the "chief enemy" (Foucault, 1982, p. 211) or the underlying socio-political source that renders these children and their immediate environments vulnerable. He did not question the regime of truth this program is constituted in either. One reason for this, perhaps, is that Eddie, as a mentor with relatively more experience, did not need to participate in the orientation and could not "keep watch over the excessive powers of political rationality" (Foucault, 1982, p. 210). Therefore, when he reduced the policies that directed this program and that were introduced in the orientation to "some general stuff", he missed opportunities to look critically at the meaning of these policies. Thereafter, Eddie returned the onus of making changes to children's immediate change to the program itself. Eddie's case can remind us that even though he came to an awareness of his own privilege in relation to his mentee(s), the rather passive image of other community members (the cooperating teacher in Eddie's story) may still perpetuate mentors' perception of this mentoring experience as a philanthropic one, rather than a learning experience to work for more difficult longer term structural change. Without the opportunity to see community members as agents to confront some structural inequities, mentors would believe that the encouragements they provided for their mentees were enough, or jump to the conclusion that they and this program (mainly the university) could not do more.

The abovementioned trivial reflection forms and results could be further made sense of after incorporating the problematic overuse of the terminology of transformative learning in this program. The HS program constructed the idea of critical and transformative learning occurring

as being popular among mentors and yet here it seemed that the use of the term transformation tended to "refer to any kind of change or process" (Kegan, 2009, p. 47). Therefore, some mentors would be misled to equate some changes with transformation and be pleased with some changes they made when they reflected on their experiences, especially for those who believed that they had a relatively rough start in their mentoring journey. For example, Qingying's mentee was rather passive in the beginning but later became more cooperative and even initiated doing his homework, so she was tempted to think her intervention had been working, which explained her sense of self-efficacy. However, as outsiders, we can see other factors (e.g., teachers' intervention and positive influences from the other group) are also likely to take effect here and Qingying may have played an auxiliary role, as Newman (2012) warned in his critique of transformative learning. In fact, all mentors' reflections could echo what has been revealed in the discourse analysis that transformative learning in this program seemed a simulation of an imaginary or idealized pedagogy rather than actually enacted pedagogic practices. By using the notion of profound transformative learning, the highest level of learning (Mezirow, 1998), this program did more to accommodate the lower levels of learning these mentors engaged in and the various reflections central to these different learning ways.

Although some mentors claimed that their minds did change, this study did not find out that they had engaged in the process of learning about the system and one's self through the transformation of frames of reference or habits of mind (Mezirow, 2000). At most, some of them changed their point of view (Mezirow, 2000) regarding some practices this program introduced that may be different from their prior knowledge but were led to believe that they were experiencing a huge transformation. Rather than saying that mentors were unable to engage in transformative learning, we need to consider whether and how this program's strict control of

mentors' emotions can contribute to the opportunity of transformative learning that usually involves emotional upheavals, as Mezirow (1997) indicates. We also need to consider to what extent this program has prepared mentors' skills and maturity to ask inventive questions or think critically about problem framing (Cranton, 2016) and to confront frustration and stress (in Jia's case).

6.2 Summary of this chapter

I have argued that that these discourses of youth mentoring not only exercise disciplinary power on mentors' behaviours, ideologies and even emotions and then normalize social norms and sanctions on emotions. In this case, we can disentangle the mechanisms put into play by neoliberalism as a regime of truth. Meanwhile, as Rose (1996) suggests, "the reconfiguring of the subject of government confers obligations and duties at the same time as it opens new spaces for decision and action" (p. 58). This discussion can also help demonstrate how some mentors in HS shared some discomforts and struggled to recognize different possibilities of power. Hence, we can see how power relations took effect on these mentors and mentees through continuously positioning their roles and practices, but, at the same time, opened new spaces for struggle and resistance in relation to them. Their resistance could help expose some more subtle techniques of governance from the program that could not be revealed merely through the Foucauldian discourse analysis in Chapter IV.

However, we should also see that these agentive attempts of resistance from mentors were not as often and easy as this study anticipated at the beginning. Especially if we take a more macro-level perspective to observe mentors' practices, we could see that what they did more was to perpetuate this program's misrepresentation of one practice as another, such as the construct of transformative learning. It was found that they depended more on roles the program invented

for them to fit into the 'good' practices proposed by the program to build their cultural capital for

future lucrative employment opportunities. It is also important to recognize HS's oversimplifying

of the complexities of the contexts in which this program and mentors are located and of the

power relations which these mentors were subject to.

Chapter VII Conclusion

7.1 Conclusion

This study foregrounds the on-going impacts of discourse struggles or power relations which underpin and shape this mentoring intervention and the institutions involved. In this way, we could get a clearer view of the real limitation of this program that used mentoring, an individualistic solution, to address problems which are in fact deep-seated and structural in nature (Colley, 2003b). The study looks beyond the immediate mentoring relationships and embodies social forces through its explicit analysis of the discursive territory, mainly from interviews and documents from the program staff and within the policy domain. These dyadic relationships and dynamics are not just contingencies but the ultimate mediums of policy delivery and a site for fierce power struggles. This thesis builds upon and contributes to literature that considers mentoring as a relational and situated process through producing context-specific knowledge.

This mentoring program introduces progressive theories and foregrounds social justice to prescribe a reciprocal and equitable mentor-mentee relationship. However, what this mentoring program did was more to downplay the power relations that that render both mentors and mentees vulnerable. We can see that a neoliberal expectation of responsible self-governance institutionalized by HS could make some mentors internalize the stigmatization and stereotyping of socially and economically disadvantaged children and treat them as problems to fix. For university mentors themselves, they were also being trained as a "reserve-army" (Mirrlees & Alvi, 2019, p. 52) of skilled labour for capital. After mapping out the power relations relevant here, this case study questions to what extent this mentoring program really prepared these university students for critical reflection on what neoliberal restructuring on the labour market

and social welfare means for disadvantaged sectors of society in Montreal. After all, it may also risk leading these university students to think critically about neoliberal capitalism and to resist its exploitation of them, which is arguably not a desired outcome by increasingly market-oriented university strategies and missions (Mirrlees & Alvi, 2019).

This study does not rule out the possibility of making the mentoring experience transformative for university student mentors to achieve a more empowering relationship for both mentors and mentees. Instead, it reminds us of the importance of critically examining in what way programs or interventions of this kind that extend from the university's increasingly bureaucratic management structure are able and willing to reflect on the restrictions and impositions of the established order and its ideologies on programs themselves as well as both mentors and mentees, instead of decontextualizing and depoliticizing adult mentors' engagement experiences, for fear of exposing the power relations to which they are susceptible. Moreover, the diverse outcomes of mentors' learning and reflections, which could not be fully predicted by discourse analysis, could tell that the reflection process for mentors was more a process of working through ethically ambiguous entanglements as a result of power struggles, a far cry from the oversimplistic and rational construct of the reflection this program used.

7.2 Limitations and recommendations

Firstly, although including international student mentors as agents to co-construct their mentoring experience and process, these findings cannot represent the diversity of experiences within this program, considering the duration of, and reason for, participation and family situations, goals of mentoring, etc. This program also involves some student service learners who needed to participate in this program to fulfill a class requirement. Compared with volunteer mentors, they were probably motivated to enter this program with more explicit educational

objectives and may stretch them in ways that would meet their learning goals (Stoecker, Hilgendorf, & Tryon, 2009). Therefore, further studies are encouraged to give an account of mentoring experiences to demonstrate more diverse and possibly more unpredictable reflection processes in the mentoring journey.

The COVID-19 pandemic greatly impacted this study. Except for the two returning mentors who had experienced the whole-semester mentoring process, the stories of the other two mentors were based on what they experienced in this program of 2020 winter semester which was interrupted by the pandemic. Therefore, the 'ending' part of their stories need to be treated with caution. If mentors, especially new ones, had experienced the complete process, they may have developed more and some different emotions and thoughts, which may have changed the progress of their relationships with their mentee(s). For the same reason, program staff from the school and the school board in this program, and most importantly, mentees could not be included in this research. Therefore, the institutional relationship is based more on what I learned from the university side of HS. Future studies on this topic should include stakeholders from outside the university in order to have a more holistic view of the institutional relationship and interagency power. Especially because of lack of access to community partners, including the other co-founder from the school board and school teachers, this study still risks neglecting the impact on the community itself and pays more attention to serving or changing university students, which may lead to a self-perpetuating cycle. This study could not offer insight into matched mentees' feelings, emotions and motivations for their behaviours represented in their mentors' accounts either and in doing so possibly undermined mentees' agency in the mentor-mentee relationship. In addition, this study observed some mentors and program practices which possibly created or reinforced hierarchies within mentoring relationships but could not assess

how children felt about them and in what way they may cause harm to mentees. More studies are

needed to critically engage these children's perspectives to make sense of their subjective

experiences and feelings together, since they are the ones who know these the most.

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Appendix A: Informed consent form for mentors

Title of Research: Examining Mentors' Power within Relationships with their Mentees in a School-based Youth Mentoring Program

Researcher: Yilan Wang, Department of Integrated Studies in Education (DISE),
Faculty of Education, McGill University
Tel: 514-550-8757   Email: yilan.wang@mail.mcgill.ca

Supervisor: Dr. Aziz Choudry, DISE (Tel: 514-398-4527 ext. 00952; Email: aziz.choudry@mcgill.ca)

You are invited to participate in the above research project

INFORMATION
Purpose of the research: This research seeks to gain a fuller understanding of the development of mentor-mentee relationships, mainly through studying how program goals, activities, decisions influence participants' understandings of their roles and their practices in Homework Space (HS) program.

What is involved in participating: You will be asked to take part in two one-on-one interviews (30 mins each) at the beginning and late stages of your involvement in the HS Program over the 2020 winter term (January-April). In the interviews, you will be invited to talk about 1) how you see yourself within the interactions with your mentee(s); 2) how program goals, activities and other decisions influence your relationship with your mentee(s). The individual interviews will be audiotaped, transcribed and coded to help with conducting accurate data analysis.

Risks and discomforts: We do not foresee any risks or discomfort from your participation in the research.

Potential benefits: There is no expected direct benefit to you. However, it may help with improving future mentor-mentee relationships and contribute to further academic understanding of mentoring.

PARTICIPATION
Voluntary participation: Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you can choose to decline to answer any question or even to withdraw at any point from the project.

Withdrawal from the study: You can stop participating in the study at any time, for any reason, if you so decide. Refusal to participate will have no effect on your relationship to the mentee, teacher, school or any other group associated with the HS program. Refusal to participate will not affect your relationship with McGill university either. If you choose to withdraw during or right after the study, all information obtained up until that point will be destroyed unless you specify otherwise at the time of withdrawal. Once data has been de-identified or combined for publication, it may not be possible to withdraw your data in its entirety. I can only remove it from analysis and from use in future publications.

CONFIDENTIALITY [Unless you choose otherwise]
Every effort will be made to ensure the confidentiality of any identifiable data. Your interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed by me. All audiotapes of individual interviews will be stored and encrypted in my password-protected laptop and only I have access to them. All audiotapes will be erased after the data analysis process. Interview transcripts and field notes will be de-identified, encrypted and stored in my password-protected laptop. Only I will have access to them. Key codes linking the pseudonym to your real name and institution will be stored in an encrypted file separately from other data in my password-protected laptop and only I will have access to it. Some program staff may know you are participating, but they won't be told what you say. Your real name and any identifiable information will

not be disclosed in my thesis, research reports and published articles. Any other individually identifiable information (e.g., the signed consent form, key codes, contact information) will be encrypted and stored in my password-protected laptop for 3 years after the completion of the research and then destroyed. De-identified data will be retained in my password-protected laptop for a minimum of 7 years.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE RESEARCH?
I would greatly appreciate your cooperation in this endeavor and I am more than happy to share research findings with you. If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact me at yilan.wang@mail.mcgill.ca or 514-550-8757 or my supervisor Dr. Aziz Choudry, at aziz.choudry@mcgill.ca or 514-398-4527 ext 00952. This project has been reviewed and approved by the McGill University Research Ethics Board (REB-II). You will receive a copy of this form to keep for your records. If you have ethics-related concerns, you may also contact the McGill Research Ethics Board at 514-398-6831.

CONSENT

I consent to be audiotaped during the interview: _____ YES _____ NO

I consent that the data from my participation of this research can be used in future studies in future related studies with confidentiality maintained as described:

_____ YES _____ NO

Please sign below if you have read the above information and consent to participate in this study. Agreeing to participate in this study does not waive any of your rights or release the researchers from their responsibilities. To ensure the study is being conducted properly, authorized individuals, such as a member of the Research Ethics Board, may have access to your information.

Participant's signature_____ Date _____

Researcher's signature_____ Date _____

Appendix B: Informed consent form for program staff members

Title of Research: Examining Mentors' Power within Relationships with their Mentees in a School-based Youth Mentoring Program

Researcher: Yilan Wang, Department of Integrated Studies in Education (DISE),
                   Faculty of Education, McGill University
                   Tel: 514-550-8757   Email: yilan.wang@mail.mcgill.ca

Supervisor: Dr. Aziz Choudry, DISE (Tel: 514-398-4527 ext. 00952; Email: aziz.choudry@mcgill.ca)

You are invited to participate in the above research project.

INFORMATION
Purpose of the research: This study seeks to gain a fuller understanding of the development of mentor-mentee relationships through examining mentors' exercise of power. It mainly studies how some political and economic policy factors shape the planning and design of the HS program and how mentor-mentee relationships develop and are influenced in such a program.

What is involved in participating: You will be asked to take part in one one-on-one interview (30-40 mins). In the interview, you will be invited to mainly talk about the planning and design of the HS program and what external events shape it. The individual interviews will be audiotaped, transcribed and coded to help with conducting accurate data analysis.

Risks and discomforts: We do not foresee any risks or discomfort from your participation in the research.

Potential benefits: There is no expected direct benefit to you. However, it may help with improving future mentor-mentee relationships and contribute to further academic understanding of mentoring.

PARTICIPATION
Voluntary participation: Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you can choose to decline to answer any question you feel uncomfortable with or even to withdraw at any point from the project.

Withdrawal from the study: You can stop participating in the study at any time, for any reason, if you so decide. Your decision to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions, will not affect your relationship with the researcher, McGill University and any other group associated with the HS program. If you choose to withdraw during or right after the study, all information obtained up until that point will be destroyed unless you specify otherwise at the time of withdrawal. Once data has been de-identified or combined for publication, it may not be possible to withdraw your data in its entirety. I can only remove it from analysis and from use in future publications.

CONFIDENTIALITY
Every effort will be made to ensure the confidentiality of any identifiable data. Your interview will be audio recorded and transcribed by me. All audiotapes of individual interviews will be stored and encrypted in my password-protected laptop and only I will have access to them. All audiotapes will be erased after the data analysis process. Interview transcripts and field notes will be de-identified, encrypted and stored in my password-protected laptop. Only I will have access to them. Key codes linking the pseudonym to your real name and institution will be stored in an encrypted file separately from other data in my password-protected laptop and only I will have access to it. Your real name and institution will not be disclosed in my thesis, research reports and any other published articles. Your position title will be

modified and identified as program co-founder/ coordinator in any reports for confidentiality. While you will remain confidential in reporting and not be identified with any quotes, it is possible that others in the program may be able to identify you as a participant due to your unique job responsibilities in this program. Any other individually identifiable information (i.e., the signed consent form, key codes, contact information) will be encrypted and stored in my password-protected laptop for 3 years after the completion of research and then destroyed. De-identified data will be retained in my password-protected laptop for a minimum of 7 years.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE RESEARCH?
I would greatly appreciate your cooperation in this endeavor and I am more than happy to share the findings with you. If you have questions at any time about the study or the research procedures, you may contact me at yilan.wang@mail.mcgill.ca or 514-550-8757 or my supervisor Dr. Aziz Choudry, at aziz.choudry@mcgill.ca or 514-398-4527 ext 00952. This project has been reviewed and approved by the McGill University Research Ethics Board (REB-II). You will receive a copy of this form to keep for your records. If you have ethics-related concerns, you may also contact the McGill Research Ethics Board at 514-398-6831.

CONSENT

I consent to be audio-taped during the interview: ____ YES   ____ NO

I consent that the data from my participation of this research can be used in future related studies with confidentiality maintained as described: ____ YES   ____ NO

Please sign below if you have read the above information and consent to participate in this study. Agreeing to participate in this study does not waive any of your rights or release the researchers from their responsibilities. To ensure the study is being conducted properly, authorized individuals, such as a member of the Research Ethics Board, may have access to your information.

Participant's signature_____ Date _____

Researcher's signature_____ Date _____