

## **Neither Baloo nor Bagheera Alone Could Get Mowgi Safely to the Man Village: Helping Mentors Decide What To Do with Mentees**

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### **What should mentors do with their mentees: Useful activities and conversation topics**

What often appears to interfere with mentor's ineffective use of instrumental or goal-oriented approaches is their lack of understanding of how mentoring works, the process.

### **Research on mentoring interactions comes mostly from community-based matches:**

Two primary types have emerged, **developmental** and **instrumental**.

#### **Developmental** (Morrow & Styles, 1995)

“These relationships were given the label ‘developmental’ because the adult partner in the match focused on providing youth with a comfort zone in which to address a broad range of developmental tasks—such as building emotional well-being, developing social skills, or gaining straightforward exposure to a range of recreational and cultural activities. Developmental volunteers responded flexibly to their youth, adjusting to any preconceived notions as to the reality, circumstances and needs of their younger partner. Furthermore, these volunteers intentionally incorporated youth into decision-making about the relationship, allowing them to help choose activities and have a voice in determining whether and when the adult would provide advice and guidance.” (p. 19 in Morrow & Styles, 1995)

Morrow, K. V., & Styles, M. B. (1995). *Building relationships with youth in program settings: A study of Big Brothers/Big Sisters*. Philadelphia, PA: Public/Private Ventures. (available at: [www.ppv.org/ppv/publication](http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publication))

#### **Instrumental** (Hamilton & Hamilton, 1992)

While, the Hamiltons found those who saw their primary purpose as developing a relationship with their mentees were least likely to meet regularly, whereas “the mentors who seemed best able to overcome the frustrations of their task were those who combined the aims of developing competence and developing character” (1992, p. 548). It is for this reason, the Hamiltons suggest that mentoring for high-school-aged youth is more appealing to youth and more effective when “it occurs when it occurs in the context of joint goal-directed (instrumental) activity” and when “the relationship develops around shared goals and actions more than purely social interaction.” (2005, p. 352-353).

Hamilton, S.F., & Hamilton, M.A. (1992). Mentoring programs: Promise and paradox. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 73, 546-550.

Hamilton, M.A., & Hamilton, S.F. (2005). Work and Service-Learning. In D. L. DuBois & M. J. Karcher (Eds.), *Handbook of youth mentoring*. (pp. 348-363). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

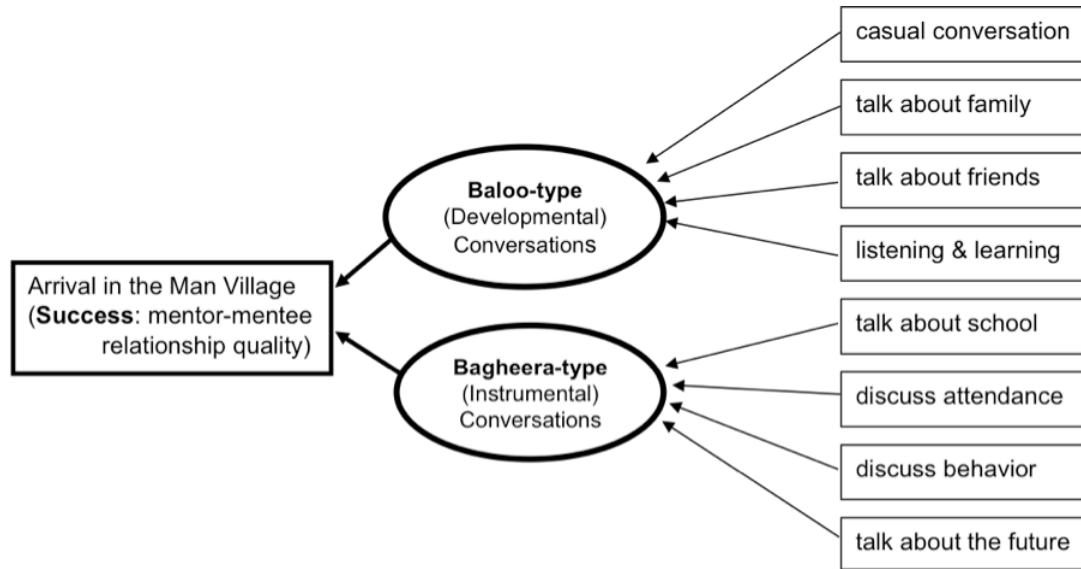
#### **Hybrid** (also Morrow & Styles, 1995, more recently, see Keller & Pryce, 2009 available at [kellert@pdx.edu](mailto:kellert@pdx.edu))

However, it is likely that a combination, well timed and sequenced, is best. Morrow and Styles wrote: “after relatively extended and pacific periods primarily devoted to relationship-building—that is, to establishing trust and partnership, and enjoying activities—the majority of youth in developmental relationships began to demonstrate a pattern of independent help-seeking in which they voluntarily divulged such difficulties as poor grades or family strife....once their relationships were crystallized, nearly three-quarters of the developmental volunteers were successful in involving youth in conversations or activities that targeted such key areas of youth development as academic performance and classroom behavior.” (Morrow & Styles, 1995 p. 20)

In schools, these same factors appear to emerge. In the SMILE study (Karcher, 2008) and the BBBSA School-based mentoring study (Herrera, et al, 2007), activity log data from mentors revealed the same developmental and instrumental groupings.

**Developmental conversations** focus on casual conversations, talk about family and friends, and time spent listening to each other and learning about one another.

**Instrumental conversations** focus on academics, behavior, attendance, and the future.



We found developmental conversations more strongly predicted changes in relationship quality. That is, the more time spent in developmental-type conversations the stronger the relationship quality.

Herrera, C., Grossman, J.B., Kauh, T.J., Feldman, A.F., McMaken, J., & Jucovy, L.Z. (2007). *Big Brothers Big Sisters school-based mentoring impact study*. Philadelphia: Public/ Private Ventures.

Karcher, M.J. (2008). The Study of Mentoring in the Learning Environment (SMILE): A randomized evaluation of the effectiveness of school-based mentoring. *Prevention Science, 9, 99-113*.

(For a fuller explanation, see Karcher, M., Hansen, K., & Herrera, C. (2010). "I dunno, what do you wanna do?": Testing a framework to guide mentor training and activity selection. *New Directions in Youth Development*.)

We find, as did Morrow and Styles, that developmental conversations early in the match provide a foundation for effective instrumental conversations and activities later. Rhodes and others suggest that developmental matches that lack any instrumentality, any focus or direction, are of little use.

Two less recent but even more memorable examples of **mentor styles** come from **Disney's The Jungle Book** showing the developmental (Baloo) and instrumental (Bagheera) styles taken to their **extremes**. See what happens when they are finally united into one approach.

To understand this better Karcher and Nakkula encourage programs to help mentors think about:

**Focus**—how directive they are being (developmental is less, instrumental is more directive)

**Purpose**—adult, conventional, future-oriented goals or playful, fun, youth-oriented goals

**Authorship**—who selects the activity and conversation topics and how?

Figure 1: A Typology of Mentoring Relationship Interactions: Focus, Purpose and Authorship.

Purpose	Unilateral Authorship: A “Me” or Mentor focused	Collaborative Authorship (collaboration)	Unilateral Authorship A “Me” or Mentee focused	Purpose
Serves conventional (adult) goals	(Adult-centric)	Focus: Minimally directive and/or highly relational	(Youth-centric)	Serves playful (or youthful) goals
Adult-led spontaneous (non-relational)	1. <b>Preachy, Pompous</b> Mentor driven, goal is vague. Mentor talks about whatever seems important at the time, mentee is disengaged (usually non-relational)	2. <b>The Vulture’s Laissez-Faire Style</b> Langhout, Rhodes et al.) or acquaintance (Keller & Pryce). A relationship “about nothing,” doing whatever both can agree on in the moment.	3. <b>Jocular</b> Overly playful (e.g., mentee has fun, play is spontaneous, but mentor feels insignificant, peripheral) and unstructured	Youth-led spontaneous (non-relational)
Adult-oriented preventive and developmental activities or discussions (relational focus)	4. <b>Role modeling or Preventative</b> Developmental focus on prevention (e.g., indirectly addresses conventional concerns (e.g., school, work); the focus is the mentee’s (self-in-the-future) but in the context of close relationship	5. <b>Baloo’s Developmental Style</b> (from Morrow & Styles) as both relational and collaborative; Includes talk about social interactions and fun, casual activities, “We” authorship via collaboration. Often later supports and encourages incorporation of goal-oriented interactions	6. <b>Playmate</b> as playful, supportive, relational interactions focused on youth’s interests (e.g., may learn skills but indirectly; the focus is the mentee’s self-in-the-present) within a close relationship	Youth-oriented preventive and developmental activities or discussions (relational focus)
Conventional Skill Development Purpose more relevant to adult/societal goals, interests, or beliefs about what the mentee needs to prepare for future (Primarily goal-oriented focus)	7. <b>Tutor (like Keller &amp; Pryce’s Teaching assistant):</b> Instrumental and conventional. Focused on developing skills for adult world, such as reading or writing) <u>or</u> Goal-directed and future oriented (coaching of job skills). Often didactic.	8. <b>Bagheera’s Instrumental Style</b> (from Hamilton & Hamilton) as collaborative, goal-oriented focus on character and competence; shared purpose in the goal they choose or agree to focus on, and increasingly relational over time.	9. <b>Teammate</b> as instrumental and playful (e.g., older and wiser peer) helps teammate develop skills the mentee needs play well <u>or</u> May focus in the mentee’s present concerns (e.g., peers)	Playful Skill Development Purpose more relevant to the youths’ goals, interests, or emphasizes outcomes in the present (Primarily goal-oriented focus)
Remedial/ Intervention-oriented: Serves adults’ goals (goal-oriented)	10. <b>Prescriptive</b> as heavy handed (often insensitive), bombastic, directed at problems an adult has identified	11. <b>Colonel Haithi’s Apprenticeship Style</b> Highly instructive (directive), minimally relational but has some youth buy-in	12. <b>Coach</b> as active, fun, but very directive and minimally relational. Focus on youth’s goals or skills	Remedial/ Intervention-oriented: Serves youths’ goals (goal-oriented)
Serves conventional (adult) purpose	(Adult-centric)	Focus: Highly directive and/or minimally relational	(Youth-centric)	Serves playful (or youthful) purpose

From Karcher, M.J. & Nakkula, M.J (2010) Youth mentoring with a balanced focus, a shared purpose, and collaborative interactions. In *New Directions for Youth Development* (2010) special issue entitled “Inside the black box of youth mentoring: Structuring the relationship.”

What is the purpose of Bagheera's?

Is it **conventional** (safety, security) or **playful** (connection)? How so?

What does Bagheera do to try to make this happen? (Is there a directive or non-directive focus)?

Who decides what they will do to together? That is, who authors their interactions (their story)?

How well does the Baheera-type approach alone work at achieving Bagheera's goals?

Discuss the "residue of bad mentoring: Mowgli displaces feelings about Bagheera onto Baloo"



Bagheera finds helpless  
Mowgli and knows  
what is best for him...

Baloo's fun-loving style  
appeals to Mowgli,  
but gets him nowhere  
but into a lot of trouble.

**"If it's too Baloo, no one knows what to do":** Goal of the next video clip is to help you decide whether Baloo's interactions are more adult-centric or youth-centric; more relational (and non-directive) or directive; more collaborative or less?

What is Baloo's initial goal or purpose? *Conventional* (safety, security) or *playful* (connection)?

What does Baloo do to try to make this happen?

Does Baloo focus on this purpose by being directive or relational? (How does following Mowgli's lead, observing and honoring Mowgli's goals, affect their relationship?)

How does this make Mowgli feel? Does he feel understood, validated, disempowered, ignored, what?

Who decides what they will do to together? Who authors their early interactions?

Do they both shape what they ultimately do together—How is it collaborative?

Does a Baloo-type, Baheera-type, or a hybrid approach work best at getting Mowgli home? Why?