

# RADICAL TEACHER

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## Traditional and Critical Mentoring

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The academy has long recognized peer mentoring is an essential component to undergraduate learning and academic success. Most American universities and an increasing number of international institutions of higher education have adopted some form of a formalized undergraduate peer mentoring program, which is usually centered on a site of student transition – for example, between high school and college, or as students enter a new program of study.

While undergraduate peer mentoring programs vary dramatically between campuses (Jacobi, 1991; Crisp & Cruz, 2009), their overall frame of reference is almost always the same: they view mentoring as a process of assimilating students into the existing cultures, practices, and values of an institution or group. The unspoken assumption of these programs is that the more quickly newcomers adopt the attitudes, skills, and languages of the institution, as well as build positive networks, the more likely they will be to remain in the institution and succeed academically. Most of the literature on undergraduate peer mentoring follows suit, focusing on the development of various models, methods, or approaches for facilitating this process (Chan, 2008; Hill & Reddy, 2007; Pitney & Ehlerst, 2004), or describing the characteristics of peer mentors who might be effective facilitators of this process (Cramer & Prentice-Dunn, 2007; Terrion & Leonard, 2007).

In the last twenty years, there has been a growing literature on critical mentorship, which draws on insights from critical theory and critical pedagogy (Gair & Mullins, 2001; Humble, Solomon, Allen & Blaisur, 2006; Margolis & Romero, 2001; Smith, 2013; Weiston-Serdan, 2017). This literature questions the guiding assumptions of traditional approaches, critiques their impacts (particularly on students from marginalized and minoritized backgrounds), and seeks to offer alternative conceptualizations of mentoring practice. Despite recent advancement, the theories and practices of critical mentoring have yet to meaningfully impact the discourses of peer mentoring at the undergraduate level (Crisp & Cruz, 2009, p. 540). This essay is an attempt to address this gap.

It will begin with an overview of four primary frameworks of traditional undergraduate peer mentoring programs, which are broadly based on developmental theories that foster student success through assimilating students into the culture and practices of a university. It will then present critical mentoring as an alternative to these frameworks, specifically focusing on the ways in which critical mentoring frameworks diverge in their conceptualization of the school and the student. Lastly, it will advance a critical framework for undergraduate peer mentoring that accounts for the complexities, political realities, and power-ladenness of academic culture and student identity formation, and which focuses on the cultivation of critical agency in students.

## The four frameworks of traditional mentoring

Almost all undergraduate peer mentoring programs are grounded in one of four general mentoring frameworks

(Smith, 2013, p. 56; Gershenfeld, 2014, p. 366). In this section, I will outline these frameworks. In the next section, I will identify what they have in common and offer a critique of two of their governing assumptions from the standpoint of critical theory.

### Mentoring as increasing involvement

The first framework views mentoring as a process of increasing student involvement in a wide variety of academic activities, as early as possible in a student's college career. This framework draws from Alexander Astin's theory of student involvement (Astin, 1977, 1984, 1999). For Astin, student involvement refers to "the quantity and quality of the physical and psychological energy that students invest in the college experience" (Astin, 1999, p. 528). Involvement theory focuses exclusively on the behavioral mechanisms and processes that facilitate student development, as Astin argues that the extent to which students can achieve particular developmental goals is a direct function of the time and effort they devote to activities designed to produce these gains (Astin, 1999, p. 522). Astin's theory is focused on involvement in any form, such as absorption in academic work, participation in extracurricular activities, and interaction with faculty and other institutional personnel (Astin, 1999, p. 528).

However, because there is broad recognition by most colleges and universities that student success is linked to academic performance, mentoring programs grounded in this framework typically encourage mentors to focus on encouraging mentees to involve themselves in a wide variety of traditional academic activities, such as increasing academic "time on task" activities like increased studying, as well as participation in undergraduate research opportunities (Smith, 2013, p. 56).

### Mentoring as facilitating integration

A closely related framework views mentoring as a process of facilitating students' integration into the academic and social life of campus. This framework is based on Vincent Tinto's theory of academic and social integration (Tinto, 1975, 1982, 1993). Tinto argues that students are much more likely to persist and thrive if they are connected to the academic and social life of the institution, both within and outside the immediate context of the academic learning environment. Tinto defines integration as a student's overall sense of belonging in campus culture, as evidenced by things like their willingness to participate in extracurricular activities, their overall feeling of involvement in and comfort with their academic experiences, and their general feeling of connectedness to other students and teachers (Severiens & Schmidt, 2009). Tinto argues that individuals reformulate goals and commitments as a result of such integrative experiences and that positive experiences serve to reinforce institutional commitment. Mentoring programs of this type generally focus on creating positive academic and social experiences for undergraduate students as a means of helping them feel less alienated and building positive familiarity with the school environment. For instance, mentors may provide their mentees with opportunities to

engage in informal socialization with faculty, staff, and administrators so that they can build strong social networks (Smith, 2013, p. 56).

## Mentoring as providing support (and challenge)

A third approach to mentoring views it as a process of offering students positive social support in the midst of the various challenges they face in the course of their education. This framework can be traced to psychologist Nevitt Sanford's studies of college students in the early 1960s (Sanford, 1962, 1966). Sanford argues that optimal student growth requires that academic and social challenges must be met with supports so that students can sufficiently tolerate the stress of the challenge itself (Patton, Renn, Guido, & Quayle, 2016). Challenges that students face can be motivated either internally or externally, and occur when the challenge upsets the current equilibrium of the student (Evans, Forney, Guido, & Patton, 2010). The student may respond to challenge in a variety of ways. If the challenge overwhelms the student, he or she may retreat and not grow from the challenge. A reciprocal danger is that too much support is provided in relationship to the challenge, in which case support results in stagnation in growth (Evans, Forney, Guido, & Patton, 2010). Finding an adequate balance between providing challenges to and support for students is the key to this approach. Mentoring programs deploying this framework encourage mentors to meet with their mentees on a regular basis to discuss concerns and provide support related to the student's entire college experience. For example, if a student has financial-aid issues, her mentor might call the Financial Aid office and make a personal request that the office schedule a meeting with the mentee (Smith, 2013, p. 57).

## Mentoring as role modeling

A fourth framework for mentoring places various student developmental theories at the center of the mentoring relationship. There are a range of various developmental theories driving this approach to mentoring, such as Arthur Chickering's theory of identity development (Chickering, 1969), William Perry's theory of intellectual development (Perry, 1970/1999), or Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of moral development (Kohlberg, 1971). Mentoring programs of this type typically emphasize the mentor's awareness of the developmental stages of their mentees, rather than any specific behavior that might be engaged to move through those stages (Thomas, Murrell, & Chickering, 1982). These programs also place high emphasis on the selection of mentors who represent advanced developmental stages and can serve as role models for the kind of attitudes and behaviors desired of mentees (Smith, 2013, p. 57).

## Critical mentoring as an alternative paradigm

While it is clear that the four traditional mentoring frameworks are based on different conceptualizations of student need and, therefore, recommend different strategies for mentorship, it is also the case that they share a governing frame of reference. In all cases, the mentor should foster a process of cultural assimilation while, at the same time, activate developmental stages in students. The first three frameworks (involvement, integration, and support) are concerned with the behavioral mechanisms or processes that facilitate student development through student assimilation to culture, while the fourth (role modeling) emphasizes modeling developmental outcomes of the mentoring relationship (Astin, 1999, p. 522).

From a critical perspective, each of these frameworks holds problematic core assumptions that can cause harm to the very students they intend to serve. In this section I will show how critical mentoring troubles two central assumptions of traditional mentoring regarding the nature of the school and the student.

## The school as a site of domination

Traditional mentoring begins with the assumption that the school, as the site of student learning and growth, has a unilaterally positive impact on students or, at the very worst, plays a value-neutral role in the student experience. In other words, the school is little more than a container in which a generalized process of development is carried out.

This belief is a result of the fact that the educational theories underpinning traditional mentoring models are built on and remain committed to a fundamental binary in the human experience. On one side are internal, universal, ahistorical developmental stages through which students are presumed to move through during college. On the other side are external environments (e.g., contexts and experiences) which are ontologically discrete from individuals, but understood as motivating their developmental progression. In essence, traditional mentoring theories view the student as a behavioral agent who encounters and engages their environment as a "mind from outside."

Traditional mentoring's emphasis on "unlocking" inner developmental realms of the student has a long history in educational theory. It can be seen in Plato's theory of recollection, through Rousseau and his followers in educational theory, such as Kant and Pestalozzi. It moved into modern educational theory through early behaviorists like E.L. Thorndike. All of these theorists had a significant impact on the contemporary understanding of education, and all saw the process of learning as essentially a conflict between a human being's original (inner) nature and an (outer) social world (Russell, 1993, p. 176). This binary between person/environment is an expression of the basic Cartesian dualism and remains rooted in traditional mentoring frameworks. It also renders traditional mentoring incapable of accounting for the dynamic interrelatedness of

history, culture, institutions, and, in particular, the entanglements of persons and environments.

Critical mentoring, on the other hand, rejects the binary between person and environment, instead understanding persons as dialogically interrelated to and interdependent with the environments they inhabit. Critical approaches view learning as a socially situated process mediated through various environments, each with its own set of values, aims, cultures, and power relationships. Learning is a unique, context-bound process that takes place in and through all the environments a student inhabits (e.g. the classroom, dorm room, and athletics field).

Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger (1991), for example, argue that learning is a process of gaining increasingly legitimate “peripheral participation” inside communities of practice (p. 29). Learning is neither a processes of value-neutral knowledge transmission (top down), nor is it a process of passing through universal developmental stages (bottom up). Instead, it is an entangled and embodied process of developing modes of thinking and acting in live situations. At the same time, it is a process of increasing fluent inhabitation within communities where capacities and knowledges find their meaning and value (p. 53). Integration into a community of practice demands that members gain increasing fluency regarding the community’s core values, can operate according to implied rules, and have the ability to engage in forms of practice (e.g. modes of writing, speaking, and thinking) specific to that community (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This process also affects a deep, transformative change on the individual who increasingly becomes “a full participant, a member, a *kind of person*” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 53; emphasis added). What this means is that students, themselves, are social and cultural constructions which emerge from and are shaped by the environments they inhabit.

While there are undoubtedly positive effects of such socialization processes on student growth, critical theory also understands the process of learning as being mediated through patterns of domination and resistance between individuals and environments. From a critical perspective, the problem is not the fact that learning occurs as a socially situated process, but rather that students are not aware of the effect of these processes on their emerging identities. It is for this reason that critical pedagogues argue that learning must be dialectical, involving critical interrogation of the core tensions, conflicts, and histories of the environment where a student’s education will be enacted. Students are, however, rarely given the critical tools necessary to engage these processes dialectically. Without holding such a critical awareness, learning and growth can easily become as much a form of empowerment as alienation, marginalization, and colonization.

From a critical perspective, one of the major problems with traditional mentoring is that it evacuates the cultural politics of the institution and the ways in which those cultural politics shape and impact the experience of transitioning students. In other words, in traditional mentoring models the school is uncritically accepted as a site of student

empowerment and growth, whereas critical mentoring views the school itself as a potential site of colonization, domination, and oppression.

## The student as oppressed

The goal of traditional mentoring is to empower students through catalyzing their engagement and fostering their development. However, if one understands the colonizing effects of the school on student identities as an effect of a socially situated process of learning, then it becomes clear how such approaches can unwittingly undermine the very aims they attempt to achieve. From a critical perspective, one of the major flaws of traditional mentoring is that it begins with the needs of the institution (e.g. matriculation, persistence, degree attainment) and assumes that the needs of students flow from and are analogous to the needs of the institution. As such, it views mentorship as a process of assimilating students into the values, beliefs, and practices of the institution to achieve these ends. In such a model, it further is believed that students are empowered as a result of conforming to the dominant institutional paradigm. As a result, mentoring that intends to foster student empowerment unwittingly becomes an act of colonization.

Critical mentoring, on the other hand, begins from the perspective of those being socialized by the school. It assumes neither that the needs of students align with the institution, nor that the process of institutional socialization have a positive impact on students (Margolis & Romero, 2001). Critical educational theory has a long history of identifying and analyzing the colonizing effects of schooling practices on the growth and identities of students. Although these critiques look at the effects of schooling from a variety of perspectives, such as race (Yosso, Smith, Cega, Solórzano, 2009), gender (Carlone & Johnson, 2007), sexuality (Vaccaro, 2012), class (Taylor, 2008), etc., what they share in common is an understanding that without attention to structures of power, domination, and resistance, schooling is largely a site of colonization that marginalizes and oppresses students (Freire, 1970/2000).

Critical mentoring is therefore aimed at fostering students’ critical agency. Here, agency is understood as the capacity of a student to bring about self-directed change and where achievements are judged only in terms of the values and objectives set by the students themselves (rather than the goals the institution may have for him or her) (Sen, 1999). Working toward critical agency demands that a student develop the capacity to critically engage with (e.g. drawing from, resisting, reconstructing) the cultures, values, and practices of a school in the service of his or her self-articulated goals.

This goal of critical agency is built on the foundations of critical theory in that it takes human emancipation as its guiding interest and understands mentoring as a process of enabling students to meditate on and respond to the intersection between their own lived experiences and the normative structures and cultures of the institution (Giroux,

1983). Critical agency demands that mentors empower and enable mentees to take a dialectical (rather than monological or unidirectional) stance toward institutional culture.

Critical agency is grounded in Paulo Freire's notion of critical consciousness (1970/2000), a process in which people learn how to critically analyze their social conditions and act to change them (Watts, Diemer, & Voight, 2011). Freire's model for critical consciousness rejects a universalized understanding of human development, such as those underpinning traditional mentoring programs. Instead, it understands growth as emerging out of the specific, material and political contexts of individuals who work to conceptualize, critique, and reconstruct both their social roles and the overarching social order in which those roles are manifested.

Traditionally, this process has been understood as a process of liberation for marginalized and minoritized populations because systems of domination impact these communities in unique and dramatic ways. However, I understand critical consciousness as a wider concept. If students are understood as a population oppressed by the school, then I believe it can be applied as a central conceptual tool within the context of mentoring. Taken in this wider sense, then, critical consciousness is a process by which any person works to disembody themselves from the norms, values, and expectations of their immediate cultural, social, and political environments via engaging in critical analysis and dialogue. It also requires those persons taking active efforts to reconstruct both their own place in that environment and the environment itself (Mustakova-Possardt, 1998).

## Critical mentoring in practice

In the previous section, I outlined two central points of divergence between traditional and critical frameworks for mentoring. Specifically, critical approaches begin with the assumption that the process of growth is culturally and socially situated, and that the school is primarily a site of domination and oppression, rather than empowerment. This means that unless students develop critical capacities for resistance and agency they are oppressed as agents inside the institution. This section will build on the previous one by advancing a framework for critical mentoring in practice.

## Mentoring as horizontal

As a result of the uncritical belief in the positive effects of schooling, and the assumption that mentoring is a process of activating a priori developmental stages in students, traditional frameworks understand peer mentoring as a vertical relationship in which institutional, personal, or cultural knowledge is transmitted from mentor to mentee (Liou, Martinez, & Rotheram-Fuller, 2016, p. 107). This is evidenced by the fact that almost all traditional mentoring models at American colleges and universities rely on pre-determined "programming" models, in which events are

offered by peer mentors to groups of mentees. The content of these events is typically determined by institutional concerns or generalized assessments of student needs.

From a critical perspective, the traditional mentor "program" can be understood as a version of what Friere called the banking model in education, in which knowledge is "deposited" by the expert into the student to seemingly enable their success. Freire (1970/2000) wrote that in this model "[e]ducation thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat" (p. 72). In the banking model, students become little more than dutiful consumers of an educational product.

The traditional "programming model" is similarly designed to assimilate the student into a school culture and embeds an implicit power dynamic between the mentee and the mentor, who tells students what they "need to know" in order to become academically or socially successful. There are a number of violences that can be perpetrated on students within such a relationship, including the colonization of the mentee's aspirations, talents, and skills in favor of the dominant culture, as well as the possibility of harboring deficit ideologies if and when the mentee resists the confines of the mentor's vision for success (Liou et al., 2016, p. 108).

To the contrary, critical mentoring is understood as bi-directional, mutual, and reciprocal (McDaugall & Beattie, 1997; McGuire & Reger, 2003). Stated another way, critical mentoring begins in the formation of authentic relationships rooted in critical listening, friendship, and dialogue. Dialogue forms the basis of critical mentoring, in part, because it dismantles the top-down structure of traditional mentoring approaches, replacing it with a horizontal relational structure. Through dialogue, the mentor becomes a co-learner and participant. Mentoring is not an act *performed on* a mentee, but a process that is enacted by all students involved and in which all students are affected and engaged in a process of mutual critical consciousness raising. Freire (1970/2000) writes that in such a dialogical process, all participants "become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow. .... Here, no one teaches another, nor is anyone self-taught. People teach each other, mediated by the world..." (p. 80). In this way, dialogue is a mutual and bi-directional sharing of one's life experience with others in the community of learners, which includes mutual sharing and vulnerability on the part of mentor.

Critical mentoring is, then, a horizontally emergent process which grows out of and responds to the organic needs and everyday experiences of mentees *and their mentors*.

## Mentoring as dialectical critique

The second way in which critical mentoring diverges from traditional approaches is that its aim is not presenting the official representation of culture, nor is it teaching

students how to assimilate into or code switch to manage culture. Instead, mentoring is a process of provoking questions to raise students' critical consciousness.

This aspect of critical mentoring draws from critical theory's focus on dialectical engagement with reality (Au, 2007). This approach aims to understand phenomena through critical examination of the central aspects of a system, including its histories, values, structures, and practices. Critical theory maintains that it is only through such interrogations that we might distinguish between what is and what should be (Giroux, 1983, p. 8).

Dialectical critique is a process of going beyond the surface of concepts, systems, or objects that shape a system by placing them in critical social, historical, and political contexts and attending to the ways in which aspects of the phenomenon are mediated by power relationships. Its ultimate goal is changing the dynamic relationships in a social system for the purposes of emancipation and justice. As Freire argued, "the fundamental task of the mentor is a liberatory task. It is not to encourage the mentor's goals and aspirations and dreams to be reproduced in the mentees, the students, but to give rise to the possibility that the students become the owners of their own history" (Freire et al., 1997, p. 324). This means that mentoring is a process of challenging the mentee to understand and critically engage with the environments where their education will be enacted.

Freire described this process as *problem-posing*, which places students' preconceived notions, as well as the cultural paradigms of the school itself, into critical contexts in order to expose them as historically and politically conditioned and, therefore, malleable. Freire (1970/2000) writes "whereas banking education anesthetizes and inhibits creative power, problem-posing education involves a constant unveiling of reality. The former attempts to maintain the submersion of consciousness; the latter strives for the emergence of consciousness and critical intervention in reality" (p. 81). In this process, interlocutors engage in critical questioning and dialectical analysis, moving from questions and concerns derived from lived experiences toward the social, historical, political, and institutional contexts that gave rise to those questions and concerns. In the context of critical undergraduate mentoring, this process pays specific attention to a student's educational and intellectual beliefs and the ways they are shaped by the expectations, beliefs, and practices of the institution. For example, a mentor and mentee might unpack and critically analyze normative aspects of their classroom experience (e.g. writing or classroom discourse expectations) and how such practices constrain or expand their learning process and impact their goals.

Here, the notion of the hidden curriculum becomes a significant framework for conceptualizing the work of critical mentoring. The hidden curriculum can be broadly understood as the unstated norms, values, beliefs, and codes of power that govern routines and social relationships in an educational environment. Traditional mentoring embraces dominant institutional social values and norms via

accepting them as either inevitable or universally positive. As such, they approach the task of mentoring as a process of helping students engage those norms and practices in culturally accepted ways. While traditional theories might debate which aspects of the hidden curriculum should be transmitted to students (i.e. the "content" of mentoring, such as unwritten expectations for communicating with professors), they ignore critical analysis of its negative aspects (e.g. power structures, governing political interests, and normative cultural, class, and identity expectations). Critical approaches, on the other hand, see the hidden curriculum as an ideological mechanism which is politically loaded and value-laden. The hidden curriculum is not value neutral, but in fact dramatically (and often negatively) shapes the student's identity as a learner and knower. In a critical mentoring framework, the hidden curriculum must not be uncritically transmitted, but analyzed with mentees as a site of domination and contestation, and understood in terms of its effects on the emerging identity of students (Giroux, 1983, pp. 62-3).

The process of dialectical critique has a double-barreled effect. In the first instance, it empowers students through exposing what appears to be normative cultural or social truths (e.g. the traditional role of student as passive listener) as being historically developed and shaped by institutional forms of power. Students can then begin to understand their education as a place of possibilities instead of limits, as well as understand the power within them to claim and change their learning process. Secondly, it deepens and expands the mentor-mentee relationship through a mutual process of exploration.

## Mentoring as critical action and institutional resistance

In traditional mentoring frameworks, the mentor is narrowly focused on activating specific changes in the student beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors, while ignoring the institutional conditions that shape the process of learning. To the contrary, because critical frameworks maintain that student growth is socially and culturally situated, critical mentors are equally concerned with the ways in which the cultural politics of the institution shape the student experience. In doing so, mentors are also understood as agents of critical action and institutional resistance. Here, critical action is understood as a process of embedded stance taking and social change in relationship to oppressive structures and cultural flows.

Critical action begins when institutional structures and cultural assumptions – often presented as the "official" representation of reality advanced by and embodied in schools (Giroux, 1983, p. 64) – emerge through the dialectical critique previously described. When the mentors and mentees identify oppressive aspects of the school (e.g. policies, practices, expectations, values), mentoring then demands forms of institutional resistance aimed at liberatory action.

This aspect of critical mentoring practice is perhaps the most divergent from traditional mentoring models. In traditional models, the mentor works to represent and reproduce the culture in order to assimilate students into accepted ways of being and behaving in an institution. In a critical approach – which is grounded not only in thought, but also critical action – mentors work with mentees and other allies to resist and reconstruct aspects of the institutional culture which suppress and marginalize student growth and identity development.

This aspect of critical mentorship requires that mentors not only develop the skills of analyzing and decoding the built environment of the school, but also have the leadership capacities necessary to negotiate and take stands against unjust aspects of institutional culture. It also requires that mentors become critically aware of the ways in which their own identity is bound up within and has been shaped by the dominant culture of the institution. In traditional frameworks, mentors are chosen because they represent, reify, and are expected to reproduce particular aspects of the dominant culture. These mentors are, therefore, unequipped to understand the complex issues of integration and resistance that are central to agency. Critical mentoring must ensure mentors not only develop ways of analyzing and decoding schooling culture, but also engage in dialectical analysis of their own situatedness.

The process of critical action is not only a way of shaping the organizational context to become more just, but it is also a significant form of learning and growth for the mentor and mentee. Freire (1970/2000), for example, argues that “one of the gravest obstacles to the achievement of liberation is that oppressive reality absorbs those within it and thereby acts to submerge human beings’ consciousness. Functionally, oppression is domesticating. To no longer be prey to its force, one must emerge from it and turn upon it. This can be done only by means of the praxis: reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it” (p. 51). For Freire, knowledge is not a collection of facts, but a capacity to act in ways which change the structures and norms of the world toward more socially, environmentally, and economically just ways of inhabitation. It is only when students critically analyze *and work to reconstruct* social, political, and institutional structures can they begin to transform themselves and to grow as critical agents.

## Conclusion

In this essay, I have sought to advance a critical basis for undergraduate peer mentoring, which diverges from the traditional frameworks guiding most undergraduate peer mentoring programs.

While there is no doubt that traditional mentoring frameworks have provided useful frameworks for supporting students’ transition to and integration in colleges, they have failed to account for the potential negative effects of mentoring and the wider socialization processes on mentees. Implicit in traditional mentoring models is the idea that the socialization process is not only positive, but also

more “successful” for those aligned with the values of the institution. The goal of mentoring is assimilation or, for those who are mis-aligned with institutional values, to code-switch as a way of becoming more institutionally accepted and acceptable. Left out of these discussions is the acknowledgement that such processes have a colonizing effect on the identities of students who are expected to submit to a distinct cultural consciousness (often rooted in normative class, race, and gender assumptions) in order to become legitimate participants (Gair & Mullins, 2001, pp. 35-36).

Critical mentoring, on the other hand, is a process of naming, critically analyzing, and resisting the invisible forces of domination that shape students’ experiences and emerging identities. From a critical standpoint, undergraduate mentoring is an intervention – a way of provoking critical engagement with culture. In doing so, mentorship becomes a practice of critical empowerment that enables students to recognize their own capacities and values in dialectical relationship to the institution in the pursuit of institutional transformation and personal agency.

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