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Final Project Reflection

My mentee's name is Jasmine, she is a very bright individual who tends to be very shy. Jasmine is a sophomore in high school. Sometimes she says shorts answers if she doesn't want to answer the question, which I can relate too. This semester she wanted to work on organization with school work, praying more and opening up more. I met my mentee about two years ago at a youth group. We were on the dance team at my church. I have been catching up with her lately because I know she looks up to me as a big sister. I thought that would be a perfect opportunity to mentor her. Her three big goals this semester were to stay more committed to praying more, pay more attention with school, for her to try to be less shy. While we were reconnecting after a few years of not seeing each other I remembered she plays basketball. I used this as a building bridge to connect/relate to her, since I have played with the same team she is trying out for when I was in high school.

The mentoring experience was uncomfortable for me because I never know how to start a conversation and I am a person that says very few words at minimum if I have to talk. This was a way out of my comfort zone. I feel like at first it was very awkward. Once we got to know each other then we talked more and she opened up more. I helped her set up a prayer cloud to help her with praying more, and we also started a prayer journal. She enjoys the prayer journal.

We made a schedule together for the times and days for her to do that specific class and all the work for each class to stay organized in school. Every three meetings we focused on the smaller goals which will help her in the future with the bigger goals. At the beginning of the meetings we would meet at the park when the basketball hoops were up and I helped her work on her basic skills to build a connection. I've played basketball mostly my entire life and I thought I can help her out a little bit by giving her some tips that my coaches used to tell me, when I played on many teams when I was her age. We met every Monday and Thursday, our meeting spots were coffee shops, my backyard and towards the end of the meeting video calls because of the world's circumstances at the moment.

Her overall evaluation began at a slow pace, she was very introverted and shy. Opening up, even to me 1 on 1 was challenging to her in the beginning. We discovered a mutual love of basketball and dance, which I was able to use a building block to establish trust. It's easier to talk about something we shared but she soon warmed up to me over the course of 3 months. Jasmine doesn't have many friends so she was excited to meet someone with similar and same interests. I was also very excited as well, I think that I was able to open her eyes to the world around her. Jasmine tended to be closed off and self contained, she was missing out on the bigger picture. This young lady had tunnel vision and not realising what others opportunities offered as she was having a hard time committing to pray everyday, staying focused and also being a less of a shy individual. Gradually she saw her changes, we made a schedule and she was very good at staying on track with the schedule. She also enjoyed making the prayer cloud and everything she wrote she prayed for and as she started seeing the change she would cross off the thing she wrote down. On the cloud she had written about 25-30 things around the clouds perimeter and one big

thing in the middle of the cloud. I had noticed that towards the end of our meetings that she was coming out of her shell more and more and her parents had contacted me and noticed that as well. Her parents had noticed that she was coming out of her room more, she was doing her school work more and staying focused a lot more. They were grateful that I was able to build that connection with her, because of this I will be meeting her every week to have weekly check in to see how she is doing after this semester is over for myself. One highlight for this semester was making the prayer cloud with her and seeing how much she really stayed connected to that cloud and really wanted to change those parts in her life that she was struggling and still dealing with. A lowlight was at the beginning when she didn't really talk to me the first couple meetings. I had my doubts at first because I didn't think that me personally wasn't going to be able to make that connection to her. I get very nervous when starting new opportunities. This was out of my comfort zone, if I do not have to give full answers then I will keep a conversation first and I am more of a listener than a talker. I got to experience what it was like to be someone who can make a change in one person's life.

During this class this semester I learned how to build relationships, which is very hard for me being online. Sometimes I get anxiety and keep the conversation short if I do not know someone very well. Taking this class helped out a lot, without having a connection it is very hard to have a connection with someone to help them out if there is no direct line of communication attached. I used the building a relationship with Jasmine by remembering that we both have something in common which was basketball and dance and I used basketball as a building block. Once I got the understanding of what we have in common I had a good idea of what to do. For while we mainly just talked about basketball and dance until I felt like it was okay to start talking

about what this my class was about and my idea for mentoring her. This semester I think I struggled the most with the motivational interviewing due to me having a hard time not asking open closed questions and not getting straight to the point with no leading context before just getting right into the topic. I am still learning to have a full conversation and having a full understanding. Recently, I think I've become a better listener and a fuller understanding of how to respond in different situations. That was the biggest aspect that I was missing which was the active participant.

I felt like this was a big step out of my comfort zone having to actually talk to someone else and understand how they feel because I am a listener. Sometimes I let myself be quiet, sometimes being an active participant is more valuable to the person you are listening to that was sometimes I wasn't used to. What I learned about myself was when I am not sure about something or how to respond I get quiet and I know that can be crucial when it could be an unimportant topic. I also learned that mentoring someone takes a lot of commitment and that also was something I lacked sometimes. I had to manage my time to make the meetings happen. I feel like that was something that made me a better mentor. I feel like if I could go back to the beginning of the meeting I would change the fact of how I could have reassured that it was a good way to respond to things. I also have a hard time figuring out what he has in common. The advice I would give myself when I first started mentoring Jasmine to stay calm and collected because there was no reason to rush because my anxiety was high trying to figure out what to say and do at that moment. It was a stressful process of trying to figure out what this semester of mentoring was going to be about. I tend to overthink and I should have sat down and gathered myself before then I wouldn't have had a big anxiety attack.

Watching Jasmine grow and open up was a wonderful experience. I got to grow as a person and in a way we helped each other. Jasmine challenged me to come out of my comfort zone as well and it wasn't easy. She was a wonderful mentee and I am thankful to have had the experience to mentor her. There were some points when I mentored Jasmine, she mentored me as well making sure I was okay and sticking to my word when doing my work and also the activities we were doing. I'm glad that I was able to make a small change in her life that other people are noticing like her family and friends. With everything that's going on in the world I am glad I had the opportunity to mentor someone other than myself. The pandemic affected us because the things I wanted to do originally were closed or in an area with high cases and for safety precautions we didn't go. Jasmine and I enjoyed eating our favorite fast food places or driving to Starbucks or Dunkin for coffee. I enjoyed this class as well and I would recommend others to take this course.