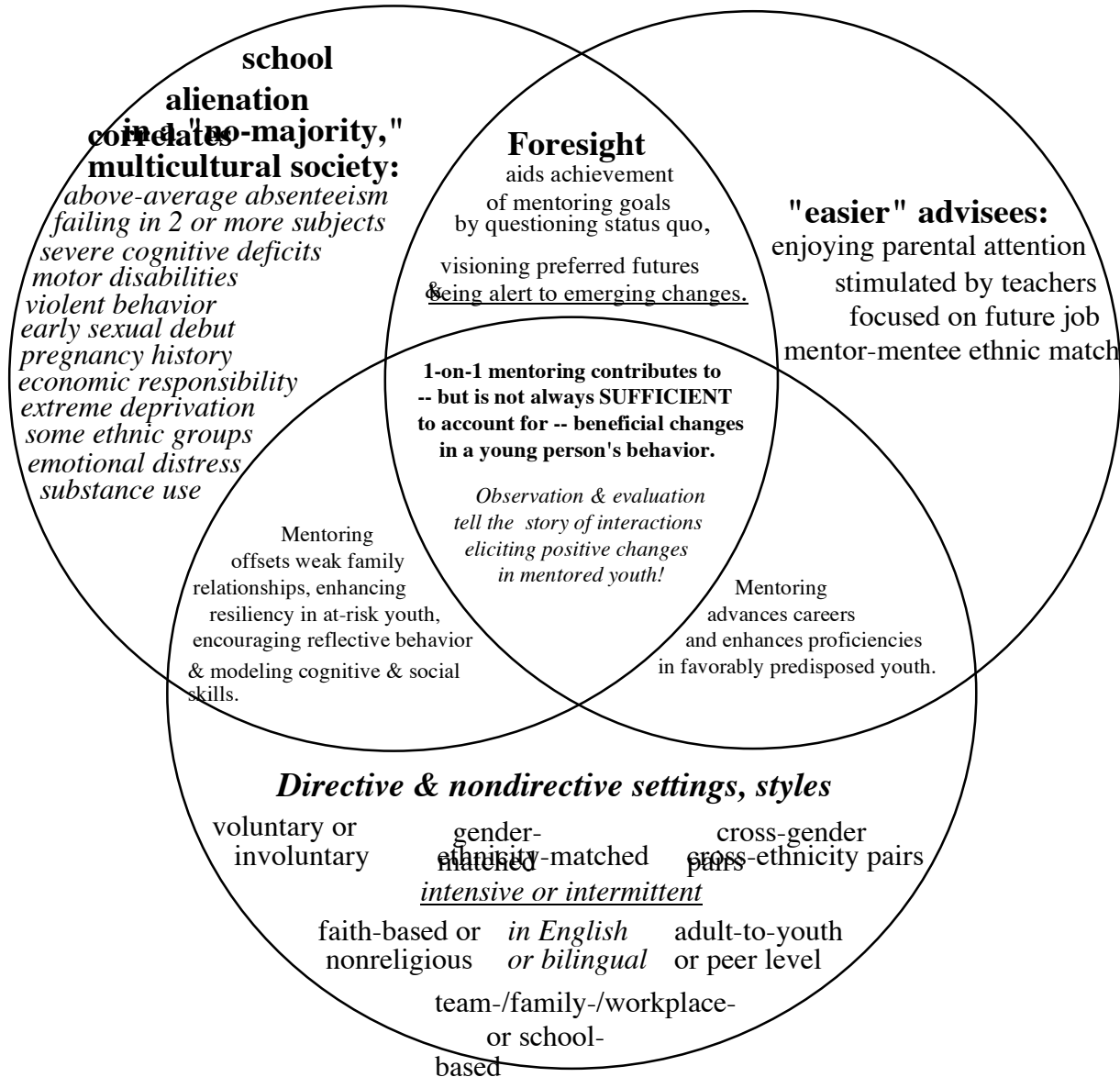


Hawai‘i Youth at Risk?

Developing Appropriate Methods of Evaluation for Public- and Private-sector Mentoring Programs*

Vincent K. Pollard



Mentoring Potential School Dropouts:
 Goals, Contexts, Characteristics and Approaches

NOTES: (1) Correlated attributes and behaviors listed above in the left-hand circle of the Venn diagram are not completely distinct from one another: their combined impact may increase the likelihood of a student's leaving school before graduation.

(2) Students exhibiting two or more of the italicized attributes or behaviors in the left-hand circle of the Venn diagram above may be considered "at-risk." Students in whom these attributes and behaviors cluster are more likely than average to leave school before graduating.

* Ku'i Ka Lono, 2006 Conference on Hawaiian Indigenous Education, Research, and Well Being, 15-17 November 2006.
(Please turn to the other side.)

Excerpt from field research. An executive of a local mentoring program summarizes an instructive success story from the Na Keiki O Ka 'Aina ("Children of the Land") collaborative mentoring program: Videotaped excerpt (5 minutes, 15 seconds) from community meeting co-sponsored by the Hawai'i Research Center for Futures Studies and the Hawai'i Mentoring Inventory.

For more information about Na Keiki O Ka 'Aina, visit its website; the URL is <http://www.aloha.com/~hoa-aina/keiki.html>.

Free, downloadable resources. Executives of traditional and nontraditional local mentoring programs and others interested in developing appropriate site-specific methods of evaluating the effectiveness may download the following free file from the Internet:

Vincent K. Pollard (with Lloyd Asato and Val M. Johnston), *Hawaii Youth at Risk? Conceptual Challenges in Communicating a Statewide Mentoring Initiative* (Honolulu: Social Science Research Institute, University of Hawai'i at Manoa for the Hawai'i Mentoring Inventory, 14 July 1999); Reprinted in United States Department of Education, *Resources in Education* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service), No. ED 443 035 [CG029989], 12 February 2001); URL: http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2/content_storage_01/0000000b/80/21/d5/8c.pdf

In Part II: "A Selection of Mentoring Handouts and Readings"), Appendixes 2-12, the file includes the following documents

- Participatory Action Questions for Five Directors of Hawai'i Mentoring Programs
- Question to the futures studies e-mail discussion list about emerging trends likely to affect mentoring negatively
- Community and Media Outreach for the "Hawai'i Youth at Risk? Futures of Mentoring" Panel Discussion and Open Meeting
- Teaming for Tomorrow: A Career Exploration Conference for Hawai'i's High School Girls
- Community School-based Mentoring Partnership
- Mentor Application, Mentor Evaluation Form, and Protege's Evaluation Form
- Quality Assurance Standards & Effective Practices Handbook
- Achieving and Measuring Community Outcomes
- Four Stages of Evaluation
- Barriers and Opportunities for Reporting and Evaluation of a Mentor Initiative-A Concept Paper
- Parent/Guardian Report on Mentor-Youth Matching

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Brief summary of presentation. Mentoring may be defined as a voluntary, structured and preventive relationship that a 10-to 18-year-old youth has with a caring adult outside her or his family. To drop out of school is to cross a dangerous threshold. Thus, mentoring is seen as a tool of social intervention. But how do we know that mentoring works? And what steps can conscientious, diligent, politically committed executives of local mentoring programs take if they wish to be reasonably confident that their mentoring activities are achieving intended results? These questions matter, even if a mentoring program does not depend on outside public or private funding for a significant part of its annual budgets. Responding to this challenge, Pollard’s paper introduces a conceptually rigorous but technically simple approach to thinking about self-assessment of mentoring programs directed at Native Hawaiian youth and other young people locally. The presentation will do so with graphics, text, and references to accessible resources.

Significant findings: Scholarly and lay mentoring literature provides valuable suggestions and cautions for executives of mentoring programs. Yet much of the literature is based on experiences of mentees different from those of at-risk Native Hawaiian youth and other constituencies served by local mentoring programs. Those differences can make it difficult to tease out elective affinities from the literature. At the same time, traditional and nontraditional mentoring programs for at-risk local youth (including Native Hawaiians) have achieved a degree of success. For example, executives of five mentoring organizations participated in a vibrant community meeting sponsored by the Hawai‘i Mentoring Inventory (funded by the Department of Health) and the

Hawai'i Research Center for Futures Studies in 1999; Kua'ana Student Services, University of Hawai'i at Manoa; the Association of Women Bodyboarders; Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Honolulu; the Girl Scout Council of Hawai'i; and the Church of Latter-Day Saints of Jesus Christ. These panelists' videotaped presentations are a rich qualitative database which later was edited for inclusion in a "Hawai'i Youth at Risk" on 'Olelo Community Television. Analysis of these mentoring executives' reports and their interactions with members of the community reveals that clarity about their own goals, clarity about at-risk constituencies being served, and a sense of the multi-faceted process of mentoring contributed to the effectiveness of their otherwise diverse mentoring programs.

Conclusions. Pinpointing the cause of a mentoring failure can be easier than tracing multiple influences on mentoring success. There is no magic, "one-size-fits-all" evaluation template for assessing effectiveness of mentoring programs that target at-risk Native Hawaiian youth and other local young people. On the one hand, mentoring executives should try to learn from the diverse experiences of local organizations and others to evaluate how well they mentor at-risk youth. On the other hand, selecting methods of evaluation is premature if mentoring program executives have not yet clarified their own goals. Meanwhile, tolerance for ambiguous results and a commitment to self-evaluation as an ongoing, continuous process appear to be essential for improving the effectiveness of mentoring. Communicating all these considerations to one's primary stakeholders, constituencies and funding agencies and engaging them in ongoing dialogue is essential for honest, effective self-evaluation.

The presenter. Vincent K. Pollard is a comparative politics specialist. He has been affiliated with the University of Hawai'i at Manoa since the 1990s. Social movements, social change and social justice are a recurring theme in his research, writing and teaching. Contact information: Website: <http://www2.hawaii.edu/~pollard/>, E-mail: pollard@hawaii.edu.