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Aisha N. Griffith, Reed W. Larson, and Haley E. Johnson

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How Trust Grows: Teenagers' Accounts of Forming Trust in Youth Program Staff

Aisha N. Griffith
University of Virginia

Reed W. Larson
University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign

Haley E. Johnson
University of Virginia

Trust is a critical ingredient to young people's experience of effective learning relationships with youth program leaders. Youth's trust typically follows trajectories that grow over time spent in a program through interactions with leaders. We interviewed 108 ethnically diverse youth (mean age: 15.7; range = 12–19 years) at 13 project-based programs (arts, leadership, technology) to obtain their accounts of experiences that increased their trust. Qualitative analyses were used to capture the specific, varied processes youth described. Findings identified 11 sequences of trust-growth, each entailing a distinct type of leader action in a specific context, leading to distinct youth evaluative processes. These fit into 3 overarching categories representing different types of youth experiences with the leader: (a) the leader provided support to youth's work on their project, (b) the leader interacted with youth as a whole person with goals, needs and interests beyond the program, and (c) youth observed and evaluated leaders from a bird's-eye view. Theoretical analyses across the processes led to 4 propositions about how youth's trust grows. First, project-based programs provide rich and varied affordances for leaders to foster youth's trust-growth. Second, trust-growth often stems from leaders' attuned responses to situations when youth experience vulnerability. Third, trust develops when leaders' actions align with youth's goals and empowerment. Fourth, youth's appraisals of trustworthiness involves discerning assessments of leaders over time; these included youth compiling evidence from multiple experiences and employing multiple criteria. The findings lead to recommendations on how trust can be cultivated in youth-staff relationships.

Keywords: trust, youth programs, youth–adult relationships, adolescence, youth development

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Trust is a critical ingredient to young people's experience of effective learning relationships with adults. Adolescents' experience of trusting, caring relationships with adults is one of the strongest predictors of learning outcomes from school (Gregory & Ripski, 2008; Stipek, 2006), mentoring relationships (Sale, Bellamy, Springer, & Wang, 2008), and participation in youth development programs (Griffith & Larson, 2016; Vandell, Larson, Mahoney, & Watts, 2015). Yet achieving this trust is not easy. Adolescents become more sensitive to evidence of adults' inauthenticity and ulterior motives (Krueger, 2005; Rauner, 2000; Noam, Malti, & Karcher, 2013). Many report distrust of adults stemming from experiences in which adults

Aisha N. Griffith, Department of Psychology and Youth-Nex, The U.Va. Center to Promote Effective Youth Development, University of Virginia; Reed W. Larson, Department of Human Development and Family Studies, University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign; Haley E. Johnson, Youth-Nex, The U.Va. Center to Promote Effective Youth Development, University of Virginia.

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Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Aisha N. Griffith, Youth-Nex, The U.Va. Center to Promote Effective Youth Development, University of Virginia, P.O. Box 400281, Charlottesville, VA 22904. E-mail: ang6f@virginia.edu

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were hostile, disrespectful, or "treat you like a kid" (Cohen & Steele, 2002; Jarrett, Sullivan, & Watkins, 2005, p. 47). It is important, therefore, to ask, what happens that helps youth overcome appropriate cautiousness to form a level of trust that allows them to benefit from authentic learning relationships? Little research has been done on this seminal question (Szcześniak, Colaço, & Rondón, 2012).

In this study we examine high-school-aged teens' growth of trust in the adult leaders of youth development programs. What processes increase their trust? Youth programs (such as, performing arts, technology, science, and leadership programs) are contexts in which teens often report trust in leaders (Hirsch, Deutsch, & DuBois, 2011; Halpern, Barker, & Mollard, 2000), so these provide good settings to understand how trust develops. In previous work analyzing graphs interviewees constructed, we found that youth's trust in program leaders follow trajectories that typically begin at fairly low trust yet grow over time spent in the program through interactions (Griffith, 2016). However, little is known about the *specific* types of interactions that lead to increases in youth's trust along these trajectories. To generate knowledge useful for practitioners, we wanted to understand the types of experiences and interactions with leaders that contribute to youth's formation of trust. We expected there might be diverse types of transactions that caused increases in youth's trust and felt it important to identify this variety. In order to make our findings useful both for science and practice, we employed methods of grounded theory and related techniques to develop a conceptual understanding of youth's appraisal processes across this variety.

Literature Review

Trust Formation

Although we sought to learn from youth's accounts, we also consulted prior research for concepts and findings that might inform our interpretation of these accounts. The largest relevant literature on the processes that *grow* trust comes from studies of trust formation in adult-adult relationships, particularly in the fields of business and education. Despite the difference in age and context, many findings from this research on adult-adult trust were in accord with the smaller literature on trust in relationships between youth and adults (Rotenberg, 2010; Szcześniak et al., 2012).

We identified a number of consistent findings across sources. It is generally agreed that one person's trust in another person builds incrementally over time through cumulative experiences and assessments of that person's trustworthiness (Lewicki, Tomlinson, & Gillespie, 2006; Rhodes, 2002; Simpson, 2007). These assessments can involve a combination of affective and cognitive judgments of the person's actions (McAllister, 1995). In addition, across age groups and contexts, these assessments of trustworthiness are typically found to include evaluation of the person on three main criteria: *benevolence, abilities*, and *integrity* (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995; Szcześniak et al., 2012; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015).

Benevolence. Appraisals of a person's benevolence, or goodwill, are found to be based on evidence that the person "wants to do good" – to help you (or possibly other people like you; Mayer et al., 1995, p. 718; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015). The person has acted in ways indicating she or he *cares* about you, your goals, and your needs; for example, when a teacher is attentive and responsive to you as a person (Gregory & Ripski, 2008). How the person acts in situations when you experience vulnerability may be most impactful to trust formation, because more is at stake (Lapidot, Kark, & Shamir, 2007; Li, 2007). In literature on children and adolescents, perceptions that an adult cares and will not cause them emotional pain—especially in situations of vulnerability—are thought to be central to a youth's formation of trust (Rotenberg, 2010; Szcześniak et al., 2012; Rauner, 2000).

Abilities. A person's benevolence may be of little use, however, if the person lacks the abilities to provide useful help. So an important focus in assessments of trustworthiness is whether the person demonstrates competencies in providing help relevant to one's goals and needs (Handford & Leithwood, 2013; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015). This is believed also to be the case for adolescents (Szcześniak et al., 2012).

Integrity. Likewise, the value of a person's benevolence depends on their having the integrity to reliably respond to one's goals and needs (Banerjee, Bowie, & Pavone, 2006; Mayer et

al., 1995). Research with adults indicates that assessments of a person's trustworthiness are likely to hinge on experiences that test whether the person is truly vested and committed to acting with goodwill. For example, adolescents may be sensitive to whether an adult is reliable: whether there is consistency between what the adult says and does (Rotenberg, 2010; Szczešniak et al., 2012). Judgments of integrity can also include assessment of whether the person adheres to principles (e.g., honesty, consistency, faithfulness to goals of their profession; Lapidot et al., 2007; Mayer et al., 1995). For example, an adolescent may assess whether an adult's actions are guided by ethical principles (Szczešniak et al., 2012). Some evidence suggests that these assessments can be based on observations of how the person acts not only toward oneself but toward others (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015).

For the current study, all these possible components of trust formation were used as "sensitizing concepts" that could be helpful to understanding youth's accounts of the types of experiences that increased their trust (Charmaz, 2014).

Trust Formation in Learning Relationships With Program Leaders

We have previously found adolescents who maintain participation in youth programs typically increase their trust across a trajectory over time spent in the program through interactions with leaders (Griffith, 2016). Indeed, youth programs provide favorable conditions for youth to increase their trust in leaders. First, in most cases, participants in programs for high-school-age youth have voluntarily joined a program (Vandell et al., 2015). Youth are in the program because they choose to be.

Second, most programs for adolescents engage youth in projects that provide opportunities for meaningful youth–adult interactions. Youth create products, plan events, or participate in other activities where they work toward a goal (alone or in groups). Research shows most youth become highly motivated and invested in these projects (Dawes & Larson, 2011; Larson, 2011). Doing well is, or becomes, an important goal. Often leaders have expertise in the domain of youth's projects, and their role includes providing structures and guidance to support youth's projects and help them learn (Halpern, 2009). So leaders are positioned to support goals youth care about—a situation likely to provide chances for trust building.

Third, forming positive relationships with youth is often part of leaders' job description. The field recognizes that positive youth–leader relationships are a *medium* for promoting youth development (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Fusco, 2012). Further, programs typically have relaxed schedules and an informal atmosphere that provide opportunities for leaders to engage in casual relationship-building interactions with youth (Jones & Deutsch, 2010). In some cases, program leaders provide mentoring on personal issues (Mekinda & Hirsch, 2013; Rhodes, 2004), affording additional opportunities for trust building.

For leaders, however, fostering youth's trust is not without challenges. Their responsibilities for supervising youth, managing the group, and behavior control can create situations in which their actions compromise youth's perceptions of their benevolence (Jeffs & Banks, 2010). Numerous instances have been documented where adults working with youth acted in ways that undercut youth's development of trust in them (Camino, 2005; Mitra, Lewis, & Sanders, 2013). Despite this, our research with a sample of program participants found that youth in programs reported increases in their trust over time (Griffith, 2016). We wanted to learn *how* leaders succeeded in supporting youth's trust-growth.

This Study

Our initial research questions were, what do leaders do that leads to youth's increased trust, and what types of situations are most salient to youth's trust-growth? We expected that what leaders do might include interactions around youth's projects, but might also go beyond the projects. During data analysis we also became interested in the thought processes youth use to evaluate leaders' trustworthiness. How do youth determine that a leader deserves trust?

To learn about these processes, we wanted to obtain experience-rich data from youth about the different types of transactions through which their trust grew. To do this, we employed an established interviewing strategy for studying human change processes. It involves asking participants about a specific "consequential shift" (in this case, increased trust), then questioning them

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about the experiences leading to this shift (Lofland, Snow, Anderson, & Lofland, 2006).

We asked these questions as part of a large study of high quality programs with experienced staff. We expected that such programs would have a number of youth experiencing trust-growth, thus providing a sizable sample of accounts and enhancing our ability to study the variety of processes through which trust formed. An added benefit of selecting high quality programs, we believe, is that we were able to study trust-building in the context of authentic, effective learning relationships. Indeed, prior analyses of other data from this study found that youth reported substantial developmental benefits from these relationships (Griffith & Larson, 2016).

Method

Sample

Programs. We collected data within the Pathways Project, a longitudinal study, approved by an Institutional Review Board, examining processes of youth development within programs. Participants came from 13 project-based programs serving low-income and working class high-school-age youth in Central Illinois (n = 4), Chicago (n = 5), and the Minneapolis–St. Paul metropolitan area (n = 4). Following procedures used by McLaughlin, Irby, and Langman (1994) programs were selected based on an assessment that they had features of high quality (experienced leaders, low staff turnover, meaningful roles for youth, low youth dropout rate, leaders prioritizing youth development). The programs focused on arts, leadership, and technology (see detailed table list in: Griffith & Larson, 2016). Six programs were studied in Year 1 of the project; seven in Year 2.

Programs had between 1 and 3 leaders. The 25 leaders from the 13 programs had substantial professional experience. They had spent an average of 14 years leading youth programs (range = 4–42). Fifteen were paid full-time staff (5 part-time, 5 unpaid); 19 had college degrees. Their median age was 34 (range = 24–62); they included 14 women and 11 men. Sixteen were European Americans; 3 Latinos; 3 African Americans and 3 of mixed ethnicity.

Participants. Our interview sample comprised 108 youth (6–12 per program), who were chosen to be representative of each program in age, ethnicity, and length of program participation. Their average age was 15.7 (range = 12–19 with 92% between ages 14 and 17). They included 46 Latino youth, 36 African Americans, 21 European Americans, and 5 of other ethnicities. They had attended the program for an average of 1.5 years at the start of the study. Approximately half identified as female (n = 55). Half comprised a "prospective subsample" (n = 54) interviewed at four times over the program cycle. These youth were asked questions about trust formation at Time 2 (circa November in most programs). The other half comprised the "retrospective subsample" (n = 54) and were interviewed only once at the end of the program cycle. Combining data from these two subsamples allowed us to double the sample for the analysis. Selection of youth for these samples employed methods of purposive selection (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014) to obtain approximately equal numbers of youth at each program for each subsample while also achieving approximate representation by age, ethnicity and participation length.

Data Collection

The interviewer began by asking youth to identify which leader, if any, they trusted most. Then, youth were asked these questions about how their trust in this leader grew:

a. Now I want to understand what happened to change your trust. What happened that made you trust them more? Were there any events or situations (that increased your trust)? What did the leader say or do (that made you trust them more)?

b. Since you've known them, what has the leader said or done related to your work in the program that made you trust them?

c. Since you've known them, what has the leader said or done not related to your work that made you trust them?

In Year 2 we added a prompt prior to these questions that served as a memory and communication aid (see Griffith, 2016). Youth were

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asked to draw a line indicating how their trust changed over the period since they first worked with the leader. Then, when asking the questions above, interviewers pointed to upward slopes in the youth's lines to probe for experiences that precipitated trust-growth. Youth in Year 2 reported the same categories of change processes (described below) as youth in Year 1, however this addition was helpful in yielding somewhat more detailed accounts.

Data Analysis

The goal of the analyses was to identify the experiences and processes described by youth that led to increases in their trust. We found that 103 of the 108 youth reported an increase in trust in a leader over the course of program participation. The five other youth included four who said they did not trust any program leader, and one who said her trust did not change because she had been close to and trusted the leader her entire life. Among these 103 youth, 98 provided a sufficiently detailed and clear explanation of their trust-formation processes to be coded. Youth who did not have such an account included one who was not asked questions a-c, three who were asked one or more questions but did not respond specific enough to identify the aspects of their trust growth experience, and one whose response was not sufficiently clear to be coded.

Analyses were conducted by the co-authors using iterative methods based on grounded theory analytic strategies and related qualitative techniques. These involved three phases progressing from examination of leaders' actions, to trust-building processes, to a final integrative phase.

Phase one: Identifying categories of leader actions that precipitated trust-growth. First we examined the leader actions that were the focus of youth's accounts of trust-growth. These were things leaders said or did that youth described as precipitating trust-growth. The lead author began the analyses by engaging in open and focused coding of a small number of cases from Year 1 (Charmaz, 2014). Open coding involved incident-by-incident coding in the margin of the interview transcripts, often incorporating the phrases used by participants to describe leader actions that increased their trust. For example, a few of the phrases the first-author wrote in the margins of the transcripts during open coding included: "when giving advice on project, wouldn't necessarily put ideas down," "telling youth he's proud of her," "helping with other stuff like getting what need for school," and "treating others with respect." The author compared these initial codes to each other, grouping similar ones together to create a tentative set of focused codes. The author then defined each focused code by identifying the similarities across data associated with each. For example, the focused code "forming trust program" was initially defined as "when youth's trust forms in interactions with the leader relevant to and within context of program work." Memos were then written about data associated with each focused code. Three preliminary categories of leader actions were generated through these memos.

The research team, comprised of the three co-authors, then modified and refined these categories, employing rigorous iterative procedures of consensual coding with the entire set of 98 interviews (Hill et al., 2005; details provided in: Griffith & Larson, 2016). To do this, we first divided the data for each youth into excerpts, in which the text included in each excerpt included the full account of youth's distinct experience that increased trust (including responses to interviewers' probes about the experience). These analyses yielded the identification of three distinct categories of leader actions that precipitated trust-growth. Chi-square tests found that the frequency with which youth reported the three different categories did not differ significantly by gender or ethnicity. We then identified subcategories of specific leader actions falling within each of the three categories, following the same iterative procedures of consensual coding. These totaled 11 specific leader actions.

Phase two: Describing the trust-growth sequences associated with each leader action. Next we examined the processes of trust-growth associated with each of the 11 leader actions. Given our goal of understanding processes as experienced in context, we worked from the bottom up, conducting constant comparison across the excerpts associated with each leader action to identify commonalities and variations within each (Boeije, 2002; Charmaz, 2014). During memoing we noted youth's descriptions of how trust grew from each of the specific leader actions typically contained similar ele-

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ments, including the context or situation in which the leader's action occurred and youth processes of assessing or interpreting this action. As a result, our analyses focused on the elements associated with each action. Our strategy was influenced by analyses conducted by Larson and Brown (2007) in which they used youth's narrative accounts of emotional experiences in a theater program to analyze distinct sequences in the episodes youth experienced related to specific emotions (anxiety, elation, disappointment and anger). They found that each emotion was associated with a sequence that included distinct types of situations that elicited the emotions and distinct responses to the emotion.

To identify sequences associated with each leader action, we first created matrices with columns representing the elements of: "leader action or interaction," "how this is experienced by the youth," and "how this leads to trust." Then we analyzed the range of youth reports for each element for the 11 leader actions. Later versions of these matrices included more specific columns, such as, "context for the leader action and youth experience," "youth's account of their cognitive-affective processes stemming from the experience," "why these experiences are important and meaningful," and "youth's overall reaction to the experience." These set of matrices served as a tool for synthesizing the elements of experience associated with each leader action described across youth's narratives. For each leader action, we identified a distinct sequence of processes (i.e., a "trust-growth sequence"), beginning with leaders' actions followed by youth processes that increased trust. The results of Phase Two provided composite descriptions of the processes for each of the 11 trust-growth sequences, which were embedded within the three original categories of leader actions.

Phase three: Conceptualizing the trust-growth sequences. In the final phase we strengthened the conceptualization of the trust-growth sequences identified in Phase Two by examining the elements in each of the 11 sequences through the lens of extant literature. We used sensitizing concepts from the literature as "tentative tools" for theorizing about the sequences we identified (Charmaz, 2014). For example, we consulted literature in the fields of mentoring (e.g., Pryce, 2012), educational philosophy (e.g., Noddings, 1992, 1998), and human resources (e.g., Nienaber, Hofeditz, & Romeike, 2015) to identify concepts that might help us conceptualize *how* each sequence increased trust. Through team discussion, we chose concepts (e.g., situations of vulnerability) that helped articulate the processes described by youth. We then reexamined youth's accounts to ensure they were consistent with the concepts and our representation of each sequence. Because we sought to understand these sequences as experienced by youth, the Findings includes illustrative examples of each sequence, including variations within it (We use pseudonyms in these examples for the programs, youth, and leaders). Lastly, we conducted theoretical analyses to identify broader patterns across the different sequences (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). Patterns identified for each of the three categories are presented in the "Conclusions" subsections within the Findings. We also generated four overarching propositions about trust-growth across all sequences, which are presented at the end in the Overall Conclusions section.

The Role of the Researchers

Together the members of the three-person research team who analyzed the data have substantial experience collecting and analyzing interview data from adolescents in youth programs and in youth–adult relationships. Based on this experience and on the research cited above, the research team approached the data with an assumption that youth programs are often positive contexts for youth–adult relationships and that these can have a positive impact on adolescents. The iterative analyses employed by the researchers enabled them to be attuned to the processes of trust growth as constructed by the interview participants.

Findings: Processes That Grow Trust

Youth reported that their trust in leaders grew through three broad categories or "groups" of transactions. Within each group we identified multiple trust-growth sequences through which actions by leaders led to youth's increased trust. Table 1 identifies the 11 sequences, summarizing the specific leader actions and the ensuing youth processes that led to trust-growth. The youth processes that followed the leader actions included

Table 1
Eleven Trust-Growth Sequences in Youth Programs: From Leaders' Actions to Youth Processes

Leaders' actions	Youth processes that increase trust
Group A: Leader supports youth's work in the program	
1. Demonstrating confidence in youth's potentials.	Raise their beliefs about what they can achieve; this helps them take on difficult tasks.
2. Entrusting youth with responsibilities in the program.	Use the opportunity that leaders provide to live up to the leaders' faith in them, to learn, and do well. Leaders' goodwill and credibility are verified.
3. Providing everyday help and assistance.	See that leaders care. Assistance helps youth achieve goals in which they are invested.
4. Providing assistance during challenging situations in youth's work (including emotional challenges).	Get back on track. See that leaders respect their feelings. Gain evidence that leaders are effective and reliable in coming to their aid.
5. Giving feedback on youth's work that is both honest and respectful.	Experience leaders' balancing of straightforward feedback with being respectful (not being "mean"). Experience opportunities to exercise choice with the benefit of leaders' ideas. See that leaders' input is aligned with their own needs and goals.
Group B: Leader interacts with youth as a whole person.	
1. Providing help with an instrumental need.	Experience leaders' unexpected acts of kindness as distinguishing them from other adults; see that leaders care.
2. Being responsive to an emotional need.	See that leaders notice, respect, and care about their feelings of personal distress without trying to *solve* youth's distress. Experience leaders listen and validate feelings while allowing them to process these feelings on their own.
3. Exchanging interests and experiences with the youth.	Experience a bond with the leader. Feel respected as someone who matters.
Group C: Youth observe and evaluate leaders' actions from a bird's-eye view.	
1. [Observing how] leaders led the program.	Youth evaluate evidence that leaders exercise competence, goodwill, and integrity in managing the group and facilitating their work.
2. [Observing] interactions between leaders and other youth.	Youth judge that they could trust leaders from seeing how other youth's trust in leaders is merited.
3. [Youth's global observations and evaluations of] leaders' actions across situations.	Youth synthesize evidence from multiple experiences with the leader to evaluate the leaders' consistency, faithfulness, and overall character.

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changes in youth's self-confidence and emotional states; youth making decisions informed by the leader's input; and, in most cases, appraisals of why the leader had merited their increased trust.

The first two groups of sequences involved leader actions or interactions that were directed at the interviewed youth (or at a larger number of youth that included her or him). Group A entailed processes that began with leaders *providing support, encouragement, or assistance for the youth's work in the program*. Group B began with leaders *interacting with the youth as a whole person*, a person with personal interests and needs beyond the program. Group C involved leader actions that were not directed at the youth, but were *observed and evaluated by the youth from a bird's-eye view*. Many youth described multiple trust-building experiences, including experiences involving leader actions from the different groups ($n = 42$). In the Findings we describe each group in detail. We first describe each sequence within a group, including illustrative examples of the sequence. We

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then present patterns across the group of sequences in a "Conclusions" subsection.

Group A: Leader Supports Youth's Work in the Program

The analyses showed that youth's projects provided favorable conditions for trust-growth. A majority of youth ($N = 59$) described trust formation stemming from leaders helping with their project work. We identified five distinct trust-growth sequences associated with different kinds of leader help.

Demonstrating confidence in youth's potentials. First, youth described increased trust from leader affirmations of their abilities to succeed in the work. Asked to explain their increase in trust, youth said of leaders: "they believed in me," "showed that she trusted me," and "thought I could take on the challenge." Leaders' demonstration of confidence was valuable because youth were often doing new and unfamiliar tasks, and sometimes were unsure if they could do it. They reported growing trust because leaders' encouragement raised their beliefs about what they could achieve. Eduardo at La Prensa, who served as the editor for his group's video on "school closings" in Chicago, expressed concern that "it was going to be a difficult job." But his trust increased because the leader, Enrique Ceballos, "would always tell me to continue working with Final Cut Pro because he knows I will be very good at it." Enrique's confidence helped Eduardo keep motivated. Liliana reported frequent uncertainty in her abilities as President of Unified Youth. Her trust in the leader, Bill Lyons, grew because, "He's always there to just encourage me. He's told me on several occasions that he's so proud of me, and it just helps so much to hear that." Youth's narratives identified a sequence of processes in which hearing leaders' affirmation of their abilities boosted their beliefs about what they could achieve, which helped them do well.

Entrusting youth with responsibilities in the program. Youth also reported growing trust when leaders provided opportunities for youth to realize their potentials. Leaders had entrusted them with a role or responsibility such as representing the program at an event or taking responsibility for a challenging task. In these cases the trust-growth sequence often had a long arc, extending through youth's experiences realizing the opportunities of the role or responsibility. For example, Kyle at Emerson High School Drama Club was highly invested in theater. He said his trust in the director, Linda Williams, increased through "her casting me in various roles, because she trusts that I could do the roles and do them well." His success in these roles led her to cast him as the Scarecrow in the Wizard of Oz. Kyle said, "I think [her] learning to trust me with the responsibility to do that, in turn, made me trust her more." Trust begot trust. Linda's confidence in Kyle, he suggested, gave him chances to improve and prove his skills, which increased Kyle's trust in Linda. Youth reported leaders' acts of trusting them with responsibilities contributed to their work and learning; also to assessments of trustworthiness.

Youth's experience of self-doubt and vulnerability was sometimes an important element of these narratives. Alonzo at Urban Farmers experienced anxiety when Melissa Vaughn suggested that he lead the program's public cooking demonstration. Alonzo recalled:

> I told her "I'm a shy person. I don't think this would be a good thing." She said, "You gotta do this, you can do this." And that made me, like: "She's trying to help me get over my fears. She cares about—like, she *sees* my abilities. She wants to trust me more. She puts her trust in me." So I guess I trust her back.

Because of Melissa's trust, Alonzo took the risk and accepted the role. He was still anxious: he reported "praying that the day wouldn't come" when he had to do the demonstration. But the day came and Alonzo felt he performed well. He said that this experience helped him "overcome my shyness. . . . After I did it, I was like 'I could do it again. It was nothing.'" Melissa's faith in Alonzo's abilities, he reported, helped him quell his self-doubt; and his success in the role increased *her* credibility as a person who knew him and could be trusted to know what he was capable of doing. Leaders won trust in part by demonstrating knowledge of youth potentials.

Leaders' confidence, then, was a catalyst for youth overcoming feelings of vulnerability, taking risks, and achieving goals. These experiences provided evidence of leaders' goodwill and trustworthiness.

Providing everyday help and assistance. The third trust-growth sequence entailed youth's experiences of leaders providing every-

day assistance with their work, such as ongoing tips and advice. Nick at Emerson Drama Club described his trust in Linda increasing because she gave "those little looks and helpful hints" when practicing his theatrical role. Valeria at High Definition (a media program) said her trust in Lora Parks grew because "as time goes by, the things you have to do in there, she helps out and she gives a lot of advice on how to make your work better." Youth saw that leaders knew what they were doing: their advice paid off. Another youth concluded from this regular assistance: "Man he really cares about our video, so that's how I gained trust for him." Leaders' repeated help and attention added up.

Providing assistance during challenging situations in youth's work. A number of youth described increases in trust from leaders helping them deal with a difficult challenge or obstacle. These were often times when they were struggling, felt a loss of control, or experienced distress about their progress. At Voces Unidas, youth were making Ofrendas (offerings) for their observance of Dia de los Muertos. Eloise felt hers "didn't look right"; she was "mad, upset, and didn't want to do it anymore." But Silvano Ochoa helped calm her emotions and come up with a new plan, which increased her feeling of trust toward him.

Geoff at Reel Makers reported learning he could trust the leader, Tyler Bates, when he reached a similar point of distress with the video he was making.

> I was all down in the dumps about that documentary, and he really saw that we were having troubles and he really came through. He was like, "Look it's gonna be alright. Call these people. Just look around more. You're going to get it." So he was always there to push. He's always there to help.

Geoff went on to compare Tyler's assistance to schoolteachers who were often "too busy to help." In contrast, Tyler was "always there to help." Leaders' responses to these situations of vulnerability persuaded youth that leaders cared and were effective and reliable in coming to their aid. As one youth said in describing his increased trust: "They stepped up to the plate and basically had our backs on things we couldn't handle."

Giving feedback on youth's work that was both honest and respectful. The fifth proposed trust-growth sequence entailed narratives in which leaders provided helpful feedback on their work. Research shows receiving feedback is a delicate matter—a situation of vulnerability. Adolescents—and people of any age—can easily take feedback personally, and react with diminished trust toward the giver (Cohen & Steele, 2002; Hattie & Timperley, 2007). These youth, however, reported increased trust because leaders provided feedback in ways that balanced honesty with respect.

Youth valued honest, straightforward feedback because it was helpful. They said their trust grew because leaders "never sugar coat," "always tell it like it is," and give "honest assessments, especially at the stuff I'm not good at." Payton at Reel Makers described how Tyler Bates' suggestions on his work helped him recognize that he "cares about the final product of my video" and that "he's actually trying to teach me how to do something." Honesty evidenced leaders' integrity and their investment in youth's work and learning.

But it was not just the honesty; it was that feedback was given in a sensitive way, with respect for them as a person. Youth emphasized that their trust grew because leaders were patient, do not "put our ideas down," and "they talk to you calmly and help you understand." Lucy at La Prensa said that the manner in which Enrique gave feedback on the group's journalism project helped her trust him more:

> That he wasn't mean, that he was nice to us, and that he knew we made mistakes and he wouldn't get mad. Maybe he did get mad, but he never actually showed he was mad. He would just be like, "Okay, we'll try it again, do this instead of this." That made me trust him because I was like, "Oh, he's not an angry person so maybe I can just talk to him about whatever it is I need to talk to him about."

Lucy's account suggests she had prior experiences with feedback from other adults that felt "mean" or angry. But Enrique's patient, encouraging manner showed he was different. She concluded she could trust him with other things.

Leaders' combination of honesty and respect for youth's needs, goals and personal agency appeared to be central to increasing their trust. One youth described this as feedback that is both "professional and friendly." Xavier at High Definition explained how his trust grew from the way Herbie Watkins provided this kind of feedback on his group's video:

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> [He] wouldn't be like, "No you can't do that." But [instead] he would try and lead us in a different way, so that we could see it from maybe a different way. And then we could make our own decision on whether we still wanted to do our thing or if we wanted to take the advice that he [was] giving us.

Trust grew for Xavier and other youth getting feedback because leaders suggested ideas and helped them see different perspectives. But they did so in ways that validated youth's goals and respected their autonomy. Balancing honesty with sensitivity to the person has been identified as good practice in youth programs (Larson, Izenstark, Rodriguez, & Perry, 2015) and other educational contexts (Dweck, 2006). It contributed to trust because it was aligned with youth's goals and needs.

Conclusions: How leaders' support for youth's work led to trust-growth. Our theoretical analysis yielded four conclusions for the Group A sequences of processes that increased trust. First youth's projects afforded varied opportunities for youth's trust-growth: five distinct sequences. Second, across these sequences trust grew because leaders' actions responded to youth's investment in project goals: youth wanted to complete them, do well, and learn from them. But, third, for many the work to achieving these goals was challenging; in some cases challenges elicited anxiety and self-doubt. Trust grew because leaders responded in ways attuned to these challenges and vulnerabilities. Finally, we found that youth's criteria for assessments of trustworthiness readily fit the criteria for trustworthiness from the literature. Youth said their trust increased because leaders' actions showed they were *benevolent* ("he actually cares about what I'm doing"), had *abilities* to help with things that mattered ("helpful hints," advice on rethinking a video shot) and provided this help with *integrity* ("they had our backs on things we couldn't handle").

Group B: Leader Interacts With Youth as a Whole Person

The second set of trust-growth sequences stemmed from interactions in which leaders demonstrated care for youth as individuals—as whole persons with personal interests and needs beyond the program. Youth reported that their trust increased through conversations (typically one-on-one) in which leaders were attentive to them, provided personal assistance, and demonstrated they were aware that youth had lives *beyond* work in the program. Accounts fitting into Group B were described by 46 youth, including 31 of the same youth reporting Group A. The first two sequences in this set involved youth's experience of leader's responsiveness to their personal needs. The third involved mutual youth–leader exchanges.

Providing help with an instrumental need beyond the program. First, trust increased when leaders helped youth with an instrumental need or goal outside the program. Frequently these were times when youth did not directly ask the leader for help. Leaders gave them a ride home, helped them look for a job, assisted a youth's family, and helped a youth get into a summer medical class at a university. John, a youth at La Prensa, described what caused him to grow trust in Enrique Ceballos after only knowing him for a few months:

> One time I forgot my lunch money and then he did a really nice thing, he bought me lunch. I was like "*Yay*, thanks Enrique." And so I kind of like gained a lot of trust in him then. Especially since he said not to pay him back. I still paid him back though.

These unexpected acts of kindness caught youth's attention, and suggested leaders were trustworthy because they related to them in ways that were different from other adults. One youth said his trust in the two program leaders grew because they had been working with him for several months to help with his college application, checking up on his schoolwork, and making sure he was staying "out of trouble" to support his goal of getting into college. Leaders cared enough to be attentive to youth's goals and needs and sacrifice time on their behalf.

Being responsive to an emotional need. In the second sequence, youth described trust growing when leaders listened or helped with an emotional need. Leaders were responsive to them in situations where they felt vulnerable, including dealing with upsetting problems at home, being "pissed" about a teacher who teases students, and struggling with issues with friends that were "too emotional to handle." Leaders responded by noticing their distress, providing a listening ear, saying comforting words, or just acknowledging their distress, for example, with a hug, a chocolate, or giving them space to deal with the feelings.

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Asked how her trust in Lora Parks grew, Rosana at High Definition described an instance in which she had been trying to conceal her distress:

> One day I was like really sad 'cause something happened at school and I came in here really sad, and I tried not to show it. But she saw it. And she sent me a text message saying, "Are you ok?" And I thought that was like the sweetest thing ever. So then, yeah, like we just—I feel like we had a bond and stuff so yeah, I trust her.

Lora's simple, discrete gesture of concern—a text: "Are you okay?"—created a bond of trust because it stood out for Rosana as a kind of caring rare from adults, "the sweetest thing ever."

In many instances, like Rosana's, what leaders did that built youth's trust was *not* trying to solve youth's distress, just acknowledging and respecting their feelings. Similar to trust-growth sequences in Group A, this had impact because it was enacted in ways that supported youth's autonomy. Nadir at Emerson Drama Club, described an instance of this sensitivity from Linda Williams:

> I had a really rough day. I missed a phone call from my dad, who I don't get to speak with very much. And she just pulled me out and she talked to me . . . and gave me some time to think.

What made Nadir trust Linda Williams was not just talking with him, but recognizing his need for time away from his work to process his feelings on his own.

In some cases youth's trust-growth stemmed from more substantial, ongoing care and attention from leaders. Jamie attributed her increased trust in Melissa Vaughn to her responses to occasions of personal distress and vulnerability, including everyday situations and larger stressors such as a cousin being hospitalized. Jamie explained:

> Our conversations always made me trust her because she said, "Jamie, you can talk to me about anything. You sound upset. Is something wrong?" "No, Melissa." "I can hear it in your voice, what's wrong Jamie?" and I'm like, "Well . . ." and she's like, "I knew it."

Jamie contrasted Melissa's patient caring to teachers at school who inquired only once about what was wrong and then stopped asking. Numerous youth cited other adults' unresponsiveness in explaining their growth of trust in leaders. Devin compared her mother to Linda Williams: "Because my Mom, she would talk *at* me; she doesn't talk *to* me." But with Linda, "I used to come to her room so many times, just crying, and I could talk to her and she would just listen . . . and tell me everything was going to be okay and just give me a hug."

Youth said leaders' cumulative patterns of responsiveness to their emotional needs created trust that leaders will help if needed. They are "there for me" and "looking out for me."

Exchanging interests and experiences with the youth. A smaller number of youth described trust growing through leaders participating in *mutual* leader-youth conversations. In contrast to the one-way help in the prior two trust-growth sequences, in this sequence youth's trust increased in response to leaders exchanging personal interests and experiences with them. Youth shared personal information and stories from their lives and leaders shared their own stories. Aidan at Toltecat Muralists described how such interactions with Desiree Bustamante increased his trust: "she told me her personal stories, so in a way it was bonding time . . . we connected and it's like we started sharing each other's stories."

Lorelei described a similar trust-building process through exchanges with Lora Parks, the leader of High Definition:

> There's something about her I can really trust, and like I go to her and talk to her. . . . It started when we started talking about art, because I'm really interested in art and she is too. And I guess like that's when we started talking about like every day and like everyday life.

They also talked about protests and activism, which was significant to Lorelei because she didn't discuss these topics with other adults.

Youth reported conversations with leaders involved sharing passions, feelings, and laughter. Several said increased trust was related to a leader sharing private information, including difficult experiences, "sad stories," and transgressions as a teenager. After a leader described a youthful escapade, Lydia at Toltecat Muralists felt: "Oh my god, she's talking. It made me feel comfortable because she's sharing her experience, she's opening up to us." Leaders' willingness to trust youth with personal information evidenced leaders could be trusted.

Most of these youth emphasized that it was the mutuality in these exchanges that increased

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trust. As Katie from Rising Leaders said, "I'm learning stuff about him and he knows stuff about me." Isabella at Unity House said: "I trust her and she trusts me." Over time, this reciprocal sharing led youth to experience a bond of trust or "friendship." Lorelei explained that this mutual trust was possible because the leaders at High Definition "don't try to like have an authority like I feel teachers have to. . . . They make me feel like an equal and they don't talk down to you." Trust grew from the experience of a relationship based on equality and mutuality. Youth were experiencing an adult opening up to them as someone who mattered.

Conclusions: How leaders' interactions with youth as whole persons led to trust-growth. Youth experiencing the three trust-growth sequences in Group B gained trust because leaders respected and responded to them as whole individuals, with lives beyond the program. Leaders paid attention to them—to their needs, feelings and interests—in ways that stood out from other adults. They paid for their lunch, persisted in asking "what's wrong," and opened up about their own lives. For the first two sequences, leaders noticed youth were experiencing a situation of personal need or vulnerability and responded. Leaders' repeated responsiveness to these needs over time (cited frequently for the second sequence) demonstrated leaders' benevolence and faithfulness toward them as a person. For the third sequence, leaders respected the youth as someone with whom they could share personal interests, stories, and laughter; and this reciprocal sharing showed the leader had a stake in a mutual bond and could be trusted.

Group C: Youth Observe and Evaluate Leaders From a Bird's-Eye View

The third set of trust-growth sequences differed from the prior two in that youth made judgments a step removed from the action; they were observing and evaluating leaders' actions from a bird's-eye position. An important finding was that youth's trust-growth did not depend solely on their own interactions with leaders. Trust could grow through observing others' interactions with leaders. This bird's-eye observation was described as a contributor to trust-growth by 39 youth. For 20 of these, observation was the *only* source reported for youth's growth in trust. For the other 19, their observations complemented their direct experience with the leader (i.e., Group A or B). The first two sequences in Group C involved observations of how leaders interacted with others. The third involved global observation and evaluation of leaders across time and situations.

Observing how leaders led the program. Frequently, youth described growth in their trust from watching how leaders carried out their professional role of managing the group and facilitating the group's work. For example, when Will at Emerson Drama Club was asked what made his trust in Linda Williams increase, he pointed to the final week of rehearsals:

> I got to know her when things were—when I had less time to talk to her, when she was busier, when she had 50 different kids trying to talk to her at once. It's a week before the show and all of these costumes just came in and they don't quite work and she has to coordinate the kids and get them to calm down and get everything working again. That's when I get to know her best, I guess, to see how she truly is.

Will continued by describing how competent and thoughtful she was in directing this large group through frantic final preparations. He said his trust increased because: "I got to know her better, and I liked what I got to know."

Some emphasized that their trust grew from observing how leaders managed challenging behavior. Oscar at High Definition said that his trust increased from observing how Lora Parks was "strict" in keeping youth on schedule completing their articles for a magazine: "She makes sure we are in order; that we are not goofing off." Oscar was invested in the magazine and, although "there are times where it kind of sucks and I can't side talk," her strictness "keeps us on track and taught us self-control." Even though his own behavior was sometimes singled out, Oscar's trust grew from observing how Lora carried out her role of supporting their work with integrity. Similarly, Lydia at Toltecat Muralists said her trust grew from seeing how Desiree Bustamante managed a situation in which youth wanted a member—whom they found "annoying" – removed from the program. Lydia recounted how Desiree explained her refusal to do this: "because the program is to help people. If we can't help them, who can?" and Lydia said, "That made me trust her more." Desiree's faithfulness to a

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higher principle of caring was evidence of her trustworthiness.

Youth drew on all three criteria of trustworthiness to explain why their trust increased from these observations. Leaders had shown benevolence toward youth's work: "She always made sure we understood it every time," "the way he treats people with respect," "how hard he worked." They demonstrated abilities to support youth's work: "He knows how to guide other people," "She always motivated everybody." And leaders demonstrated integrity in helping youth: "He's always truthful," "She makes sure that everybody gets a chance to talk." Youth's trust increased because they saw evidence of trustworthiness in how leaders performed their job.

Observing interactions between youth and leaders. Youth also described gaining trust from observing one-on-one interactions between leaders and other youth. At times they cued in on how leaders supported an individual's program work. Airelyn, at Unified Youth, described observing another youth's trust as an impetus for her trust:

> I noticed the President having a lot of trust in [the leaders], so I wanted to take the risk of getting to know them and see if I could trust them as much as she could. So getting to meet them, getting to know them more was what made me know I could trust them.

Noticing the President's trust led Airelyn to "take the risk" of building her own relationships with the leaders.

In other cases, youth were influenced by observing youth having trusting interactions with leaders about their personal lives. Observations from a bird-eye perspective helped youth double-check their judgments based on their own interactions with leaders. Lucy, who described how her trust in Enrique Ceballos grew through his respectful way of giving feedback (see Group A), also reported increased trust from seeing him provide personal advice to her peers. After seeing a young man asking Enrique for advice about romantic relationships, Lucy recounted thinking: "You don't really go up to any teacher at school and ask them about guy problems or girl problems. I thought, 'We all have that friendship relationship with him.'" Seeing that it was "not only me," but that "we all have that bond of trust with him" made Lucy feel more secure in her trust.

Observing leaders' trustworthiness in interactions with others served as an impetus for—or helped reinforce—their own trust. Asked about his increased trust, Colton, at On Target, observed that Larry Peterson was consistent in providing help to everyone: "I'm not his favorite, he likes every kid in the county. He'll teach any of the kids like he'll teach me." Amanda at Emerson Drama Club said of Linda Williams, "I know I can trust her because other people trust her."

Global observation and evaluation of leaders' actions. The final trust-growth sequence involved global processes. Youth described synthesizing observations of leaders' actions across time and situations. Our coding identified two interrelated youth processes: deliberative evaluation and making global attributions.

Most of these youth described deliberative evaluation. In explaining their increased trust, they evaluated the consistency of leaders' caring, abilities, and integrity. They assessed whether leaders stuck to what they said or who they were. Mariana from Unity House said her trust in Jenna Frank grew because: "she always come[s] through with what she said she was going to do and she'd let us know in advance what we were going to do." Youth also pointed to consistency in leaders' trustworthy behavior with different people and across situations: "this guy's really nice to everybody"; and "seeing how he connects with all the members and helping them with anything." Andre observed consistency in David Dunn's benevolence across ups and downs:

> He's had crabby days every once in a while—and you can tell when he's having a crabby day because he's not all talking and cheery the whole day. Even then he's still a nice person and still does good things. I just find it rather impressive.

This deliberative evaluation included assessments of whether leaders had ever acted in ways that showed they were not trustworthy. Imani helped explain her increased trust in Carol Taylor by saying: "She never really insulted me at all or offended me in any type of way." Another youth said: "I see all the good things he does, and I haven't seen him do anything wrong." Noah at Rising Leaders described his growing trust in David Dunn:

> There's nothing that he's said that made me think like, "Wait a second, should I trust this guy or is this a good

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> guy?" It's always been like this: "he sounds like a good guy." I know that can be deceiving but it doesn't seem very deceiving from him. I never heard him talk bad behind somebody's back about somebody.

The second process, making global attributions, involved youth forming categorical judgment about leaders' overall character, which they presented as further evidence of leaders' trustworthiness. Youth's explanations for their increased trust included: "he's a really cool person" and "the most honest person." Mariana's account of her increased trust in Jenna (mentioned above) concluded with the global attribution, "She's just a real good person." Another youth attributed her trust to "just his personality, the way he presents himself to others no matter the situation." Social psychological research suggests these kinds of sweeping categorical appraisals of a person's character might reflect a "halo effect" (especially when stated in absolute terms). Research shows that people often overgeneralize beyond what they know, attributing broad positive qualities to others (the "halo") that inflate their predictions about specific types of behavior (e.g., trustworthiness; Forgas, 2011).

Conclusions: How youth's observations of leaders led to trust-growth. A central finding for the Group C trust-growth sequences was that youth evaluate leaders' trustworthiness even when leaders are not interacting with them—in many cases when youth had no personal goals, needs, or vulnerability at stake. Youth evaluated how benevolent, effective and principled leaders were in their professional roles (managing the group, helping other youth). They evaluated the consistencies in leaders' actions with different people and across situations. For one fifth of the youth ($N = 20$) these bird's-eye observations were their sole explanation for increased trust. This suggests that some youth may not require direct interactions with leaders to form trust.

Overall Conclusions

Youth's trust in leaders is essential to effective learning relationships (Vandell et al., 2015; Griffith & Larson, 2016). But trust cannot be taken for granted. With age adolescents become more cautious about adults: they "discover they can't take anyone at face value" (Noam et al., 2013, p. 104). In this study we analyzed accounts from ethnically diverse youth about the experiences through which they came to trust program leaders. The findings extend our previous finding that youth typically begin with a fairly low level of initial trust in the leaders that grows across time spent in the program (Griffith, 2016). Findings from the current study suggest that this growth is attributable to a set of distinct trust-growth processes. In this section we report four overarching propositions about youth's trust formation that emerged from our final theoretical analyses; then we discuss implications for future research and programs.

Four Propositions

Proposition 1. Project-based youth programs provide rich and varied affordances for leaders to support youth's development of trust. The analyses identified 11 different trust-growth sequences through which actions by leaders led to increases in youth's trust (see Table 1). Each sequence affords different opportunities for leaders to cultivate trust. The leader actions in these sequences were responses to distinct situational contexts, for example, when youth were struggling with their projects (Sequences A1, A4) or needed a listening ear for a personal issue (B2). In many cases leaders' actions were directed at the youth reporting trust-growth, but trust also grew from youth observing leaders' interactions with others (C1, C2, C3). Across all trust-growth sequences, leader actions involved leaders doing things that youth experienced as *helpful*: demonstrating, providing, giving, listening, exchanging. Leaders helped youth think, solve problems, address emotional needs, and reach goals they were invested in. As a whole, these 11 trust-growth sequences suggest diverse avenues for leaders to cultivate the trust of youth with different needs and goals.

Proposition 2. Trust-development often stems from leaders' responses in situations when youth feel vulnerable. Situations of vulnerability can be pivotal to trust formation because important needs and goals are at stake (Lapidot et al., 2007). Youth's accounts of their growth in trust often involved situations where they experienced self-doubt or anxiety. They confronted an obstacle or difficult task in their projects (Sequences A1, A4, A5), they experienced concern or distress in their outside lives

(e.g., issues at home, difficulties with peers or teachers, B2), or they observed situations of vulnerability in the group's work (C1). Leaders' actions were salient to youth because they had responded to these situations in ways that differed from other adults: The leader "wasn't mean," "didn't get mad," didn't humiliate youth, or make them feel small. Rather leaders responded in ways attuned to the youth's feelings. Attunement has been defined in the mentoring literature as an approach that *focuses on mentees' needs, while maintaining a relationship of mutual respect* (Pryce, 2012). Youth reported that their trust increased because leaders responded to their vulnerability by listening and helping, but doing so in respectful ways (see Table 1, col. 2. A1, A4, A5, B4). Trust grows, our findings suggest, when leaders' actions are *two-way interactions* attuned to youth's needs and sensitivities.

Proposition 3. Trust develops when leaders' actions are attuned to youth's goals and youth's empowerment. Leaders' actions also help build trust when they validate and empower youth. Our participants described trust growing because leaders raised their sense of competence ("they believed in me," "thought I could take on the challenge"; A1, A2) and provided assistance in reaching goals in their projects (A3, A4, A5) and personal lives (B1, B2). In youth's accounts, the leaders' approach to empowering youth appeared to be key to their trust-growth: Leaders balanced providing assistance as needed with supporting (not undercutting) youth's experience of agency. For example, leaders helped youth see different perspectives and choices but then supported youth's judgment in making the final decision (A5). In many cases leaders' important contribution to helping with personal issues was not trying to fix things, rather listening and validating youth's feelings (B2). From youth's perspective, leaders were demonstrating a central element of caring, as described by the educational philosopher Nel Noddings: their actions responded to youth "in a way that furthers the other's purpose or project" (Noddings 1992, p. 16); and they did so with attunement to what the youth "loves, strives for, fears and hopes" (Noddings, 1988, p. 224).

Proposition 4. Youth's trust develops through discerning affective and cognitive evaluations of leaders. Research with adults finds that judgments of trust often involve emotions and that these are closely associated with cognitive assessments (McAllister, 1995). Our youth were no different. Emotions were interwoven into their explanations of their trust-growth. Kind words from leaders, emotional uplifts after leaders helped them, and, possibly, halo effects appeared to contribute to their trust formation. The role of emotions in these judgments, we think, should not be seen as diminishing their validity—it is increasingly recognized that emotions can serve constructive functions in appraisals of other people (Haidt, 2003).

What may be more important to recognize is that youth's affective-cognitive evaluations of leaders entailed multiple elements of critical rigor. They evaluated leaders using criteria of trustworthiness identified in research on adults (benevolence, ability, integrity). Their assessments often involved comparisons of leaders' actions to those of other adults. Some employed both their personal experiences with a leader and bird's-eye evaluations of the leader's interactions with others. Furthermore youth made evaluations over time, assessing leaders' consistency, how well their advice worked out, and compiling evidence from multiple experiences across different kinds of situations (and trust-growth sequences). To be clear, we do not have evidence that every youth used *all* of these elements of trust assessment, indeed our findings suggest that different trust-growth sequences may be more salient for different youth. And we did not evaluate whether individual youth—or groups of youth—might sometimes be fooled by a manipulative leader. With these caveats, however, the findings demonstrate youth engage in deliberate and critical evaluation of leaders.

Limitations and Future Research

Study limitations point to needs for future research. We employed a theory-building methodology and we focused on high-quality programs because we wanted to understand trust-building processes. Next steps include using quantitative methods to test these findings and studying the range of variation that occurs in youth programs. It is important to evaluate whether the 11 trust-growth sequences are empirically distinct from each other, appraise their

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frequency, assess the effects of each on trust levels, and test the four propositions. We focused only on trust-building: future studies should explore when trust fails to form and when it erodes (Lapidot et al., 2007). Studies of lower-quality programs might provide more examples of these processes. Individual differences among youth should be examined. Research suggests some people are more resistant to trust (Nienaber et al., 2015). Insecure attachment histories, for example, might affect youth's likelihood or pace of trust-growth.

Other levels of analysis must be considered. Research examining leaders' perspectives is important, for example, on strategies for cultivating trust, how their accounts relate to youth's accounts, and how trust might be co-constructed as a mutual process. We studied programs with experienced staff: research is needed with a broader cross-section of leaders. How might youth's trust-growth be related to leaders' years of experience and interpersonal dispositions; also to differences between organizations or programs in philosophy and the trust *among* staff?

Implications for Programs and Practitioners

Given the importance of youth's trust to staff effectiveness in supporting learning, this study's findings can be used as preliminary evidence on how trust can be cultivated in youth–staff relationships.

Program design. Programs should be structured to provide multiple, varied affordances for youth to develop authentic, robust trust in leaders. Projects provide opportunities for youth to experience meaningful support, assistance and feedback from leaders that can help build trust around work youth care about. Programs also should provide opportunities for informal interactions that allow youth and leaders to share personal experiences and interests and permit leaders to get to know youth as whole people. Youth's bird's-eye observations represent yet another set of opportunities. These varied affordances are important to give youth with different goals and needs opportunities to form trust in ways that are meaningful to them. They are also important to providing *all* youth with convergent trust-growth sequences to verify leaders' trustworthiness. For youth to benefit from these varied opportunities, programs also need favorable youth–staff ratios.

Daily staff practices. Our four propositions, above, suggest basic practices for leaders to cultivate youth's trust: (a) Provide different trust-building pathways to give youth diverse opportunities for trust-building; (b) be attuned to youth's experiences of vulnerability and respond in respectful ways; (c) Be attuned to youth's goals—for their work and for their lives—and provide support aligned with these goals; and (d) be aware that youth hold leaders to high standards; their trust is based on a compilation of many experiences, including leaders' interactions with others. Even actions that seem small may be important to youth.

Human resource management. Given the importance of youth experiencing these interactions over time, human resource strategies should be designed to help sustain long-term youth–adult relationships. Programs might require staff and volunteers to commit to the full term of a program (with incentives). Even if relationship-building is not central to a program's mission, administrators should emphasize to staff that building trust is integral to the program's learning goals.

Ethical implications. An important subtext in our findings is that youth's criteria for evaluating whether leaders are trustworthy are closely aligned with leaders doing their job well (e.g., being effective in supporting youth's work, treating all youth fairly). Nonetheless, there is a "dark side" to trust (Gargiulo & Ertug, 2006). Novice leaders who are overeager to win youth's trust can overcommit to youth, which can later lead to feelings of betrayal when leaders cannot follow through on what youth expected (Mitra et al., 2013). Unscrupulous adults can also win trust and use it in ways that are not consistent with an authentic learning relationship. Leaders must understand that youth's trust confers a professional and ethical obligation: it should be used only to serve youth's best interests.

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