



## Applied Research Consulting (ARC)

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### Youth Mentoring Survey

The Youth Mentoring Survey (YMS) is the most comprehensive measure of match relationship quality (MRQ) available with published validity evidence<sup>1</sup>. It is completed by matched youth, is typically appropriate for youth aged 8-18, and typically takes 10-15 to administer. The YMS was designed to complement the mentor-completed Match Characteristics Questionnaire (MCQ), and strong correlations between the two measures have been obtained.

#### **Structure & Scoring**

The YMS measures relational and instrumental (growth-focused) MRQ, including positive and negative perspectives on *internal* MRQ (dynamics influenced directly by the matched adult and youth) and *structure* (focus of match activities). It does not measure *external* MRQ (dynamics not directly influenced by the pair). Version 1.2x consists of two sections of rating questions. The first section (25 items) measures relational quality, instrumental quality, and prescription. The second section (22 items) assesses how much match time is devoted to activities focused on fun, sharing/relating, and learning/growing. Three questions measure the frequency, duration, and location of meetings.

The two sections of the YMS present statements that students read and answer by indicating their response on a four-point Likert-style scale (internal items) or a five-point scale (focus items). All scores are translated to a scale of 0-100, with higher scores indicating more positive ratings. Scores on subscales and broadscales are reported only if the respondent answers at least 67% of the questions.

#### **Administration**

The surveys are intended for administration 3-4 months after the match begins meeting, again at 10-12 months into the match, and then at six-month intervals thereafter. The first interval was chosen to avoid an early honeymoon period in which participants may have an unrealistically hopeful perspective on the match and may still be “on their best behavior.” The second interval typically would be expected to fall within the early stages of a “mature” relationship. Subsequent intervals show shifts in the relationship.

We recommend adhering to these intervals but they are not hard-and-fast guidelines. The YMS has been used as frequently as a monthly basis to provide structure to match supervision. Regardless of administration timeline you select, all surveys should be administered within two weeks of the chosen interval in order to facilitate accurate comparisons of quality across matches. When survey administrations are missed, administer the survey as soon as possible and resume administrations on the original schedule.

#### **Use & Citation of the YMS**

Permission to use the YMS and MCQ is granted freely and may be obtained through ARC’s website ([www.MentoringEvaluation.com](http://www.MentoringEvaluation.com)). The appropriate citation for the YMS is provided below and should be used in any reporting associated with the surveys.

We ask that all who use the YMS to share collected data with ARC along with related demographic information and, if possible, related outcome data. ARC will use this data to improve the surveys and to develop norms for them. ARC will respect all requests made about what is done with shared data.

*Harris, JT, & Nakkula, MJ. (2010). Youth Mentoring Survey (YMS v1.23). Unpublished measure, Applied Research Consulting, Fairfax, VA.*

### ***Subscale Descriptions & Validity Evidence***

ARC has analyzed over 1,000 YMS surveys completed by youth aged 8 to 18. Respondents in ARC's database tend to be elementary-aged youth representing two national mentoring organizations. Most matches in ARC's database involve white participants and come from rural or suburban environments. However, the database also reflects hundreds of matches serving other ethnicities, adolescents, participants from urban settings, and other organizations.

The YMS has strong validity evidence, some of which has been published (Nakkula & Harris, 2005). The authors have additional, strong evidence that will be published in 2011. Scales from the YMS have been found to correlate strongly with scales from the MCQ and other measures of MRQ. The authors have found that the YMS predicts outcomes related to academic functioning, length of match, and psychosocial development. Additional evidence has been gathered from interviews and focus groups with youth and practitioners who have taken/administered the survey. The YMS' practical utility has been demonstrated through its use by practitioners as a tool to structure monthly match supervision. It has been used by researchers and practitioners throughout the United States and on several continents.

Factor analyses of the MRQ subscales have yielded reliability estimates (Chronbach's alpha) ranging from .61 to .85. While the items included in the survey remain the same as in the previous version, the factors have been updated to reflect our recent analyses. The elements of internal MRQ measured by the YMS include the following (with reliability estimates):

- Relational Quality (.84), protégé feels happy, close, satisfied with relationship;
- Instrumental Quality (.76), the degree to which the youth perceives instrumental benefits from the match;
- Prescription (.61), protégé does *not* feel that the mentor is too prescriptive;

The elements of Activities Focus measured by the YMS (with reliability alphas) include:

- Fun Focus (.74), how much activities focus on hanging out and having fun;
- Sharing Focus (.85), how much activities focus on talking and sharing emotionally.
- Growth Focus (.79), how much activities focus on academics, outlook, and character development.

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<sup>i</sup> Nakkula, M. J. & Harris, J. T. (2005). Assessment of mentoring relationships. In DuBois, D. L. & Karcher, M. J. (Ed.s) *Handbook of Youth Mentoring* (pp. 100-117). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.