**Problem Statement:**
Research opportunities for students in human development (HD) are often related to funded projects with specific timelines and product requirements which may limit students to working on mentors’ existing projects that allow minimal student influence.

**Project Based Learning (PBL):**
- Guides learning through project goals for which students tackle complex questions or tasks by positing and implementing possible solutions (Jones, Rasmussen, & Moffitt, 1997).
- Provides a framework for students and faculty to align interests while helping students develop proficiency in human development research.
- Offers students a ‘first-hand feel’ of particular work scenarios and requires students to take an active role in the development of the project.
- Used frequently other fields, PBL experiences in the training of developmental researchers is rarely detailed in the extant literature.

**Methods:**
Home Visiting Interest Group (HOVIG) began as a PBL research project with four university students and a faculty mentor involved in an ongoing group-based PBL project facilitated and hindered engagement. We also asked questions about perceived challenges and benefits. Researchers participating in HOVIG responded to these questions via email. One author then sent out the surveys to the authors asking them to identify themes and provide quotes that represented each theme. All in 2015, two more graduate students were asked to complete the survey.

**Research Questions:**
- Does mentoring have a place in the HD PBL research process?
- What are the challenges of participating in a PBL research project?
- What are the benefits of participating in a PBL research project?

**Study Design:**
A qualitative case study using descriptive data to illustrate the experiences of university students and a faculty mentor involved in an ongoing group-based PBL research project in the HD field.

**Home Observation of Parenting and Early Development (HOPED):**
This professor guided, student run project tests an established observation measure of parent and child interactions (PICCOLO) with parents of younger infants (4-9 m) in relation to children’s concurrent and later development (14 m). Some students also gain home visiting experience.

**Parenting Observation Skills Training (POST):**
Two teams of four student researchers are learning the PICCOLO & HOVRS-A+ observational measurement tools. Each team is led by one graduate student, reliable on the measure and knowledgeable about the theory underlying the research constructs.

**Research Methodology:**
- Building this project from the ground up showed student researchers the utility of using literature to identify unanswered questions in the field. The steps of research became clear when students needed to plan and prepare for data collection with people rather than using extant data.
- “We were able to see it from the writing of the IRB and slowly we saw a glimpse of the big picture, the potential, and how this little project fits into the big picture. Better than any class I’ve had because it is applying everything in a hands on way.”
- “I get to explore my interests and start to see how those interests might turn into a career after graduation.”

**Implications:**
- Multiple possible mentors, depending on the topic.
- New student researchers present new mentoring opportunities.
- Everyone feels they belong and the long-term goals are team driven.
- "Motivated students can test ideas and learn collaboration together. Additionally, the professor can be efficient in teaching a group of learners rather than solely focusing on one person at a time.”

**Collaboration:**
- Smaller group with interest driven teams made work more efficient.

**Mentorship:**
- Project tasks, when learned can be taught to a less experienced member.
- Professor models mentoring behaviors and passively in the group context.
- "I get to mentor, be mentored on research, and be mentored on how to mentor. There is a tiered structure that provides each piece of mentorship opportunity, which is rewarding in preparing me for the next step of my education."