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Mentor Partnerships between Colleges and K-12 Schools: Perspectives from College Students Who Mentor

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Mentor Partnerships between Colleges and K-12 Schools:

Perspectives from College Students Who Mentor



Objectives

- Highlight ideas for building mentor partnerships between colleges and K-12 schools
- Present tips for establishing positive rapport, serving as constructive role models, and fostering trusting relationships with mentees
- Offer perspectives on mentoring and lessons learned from current and past mentors



Partnering with K-12 Schools

- Approached by school personnel during field experiences
- Contacted by former students now teaching or counseling
- Developed mentor partnerships at requests of schools
- Researched best mentoring practices
- Based partnerships on schools' distinct needs

“Everyone needs a coach, whether it’s a top level executive, a graduate student, a homemaker, a homeless person or the President of the United States”

– Anthony Robbins

Finding Strong Mentors

- Partnered with The Citadel's African American Society
- Announced mentoring opportunities in education courses
- Sought recommendations from Tactical Officers
- Spoke to students one-on-one
- Developed online application process



Utilizing Best Practices

Assigned School-Based Prescriptive Mentoring
(Anastasia, Skinner, and Mundhenk, 2012)

- Paired with specific mentees needing assistance with academics, time management and organization, and/or positive attention

Natural School-Based Developmental Mentoring
(Anastasia, Skinner, & Mundhenk, 2012)

- Worked to establish rapport, build trust, and serve as positive role models while participating in recreational activities

“Mentoring brings us together – across generation, class, and often race – in a manner that forces us to acknowledge our interdependence, to appreciate, in Martin Luther King, Jr.’s words, that ‘we are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied to a single garment of destiny.’ In this way, mentoring enables us to participate in the essential but unfinished drama of reinventing community, while reaffirming that there is an important role for each of us in it.”

– Marc Freedman

Knowing What to Do

- Set a good first impression
 - Look confident, wait for invitation (if appropriate)
- Ice-breaker activities (bingo, basketball, etc.)
- Learn their names
 - Introduce yourself (practice good manners)
- Establish relationship with staff/faculty/teacher
- “Two-deep” rule



Establishing Positive Rapport

- Be optimistic
- Make the student feel safe
- Provide opportunities for them to speak
 - Listen > Talk
- Do not be judgmental
- Present necessary challenges that are actually attainable



Building Trusting Relationships

Students need to feel as though the mentor cares them; students are the primary focus

1. Actively show that you care
 - a. Learn about them and their situation
2. Be consistent
 - a. Show up every time (can lose any progress)
3. Be relatable
 - a. Demonstrate you can help
 - b. Show you know what you're doing
4. Establish goals
 - a. Keep students on track and looking forward
5. Be approachable/reachable
 - a. Establish a safe way to contact you



Covering Topics and/or Skills

- Organizational Skills
 - Binders (hole-punch, dividers) vs. folders (inhibit organization)
- Time Management
 - Agenda/planner, thinking ahead (sports practice)
- School Skills
 - Study: type of learner, flashcards, stress ball, music
 - In class: stay awake, quiet, respectful, don't talk back
- Life Skills
 - Conflict resolution, patience, leadership, responsibility, adulthood
- How to make a paper airplane

Mentoring is a brain to pick, an ear to listen, and a push in the right direction."
– John Crosby

Outcomes/Impact: K-12 Students

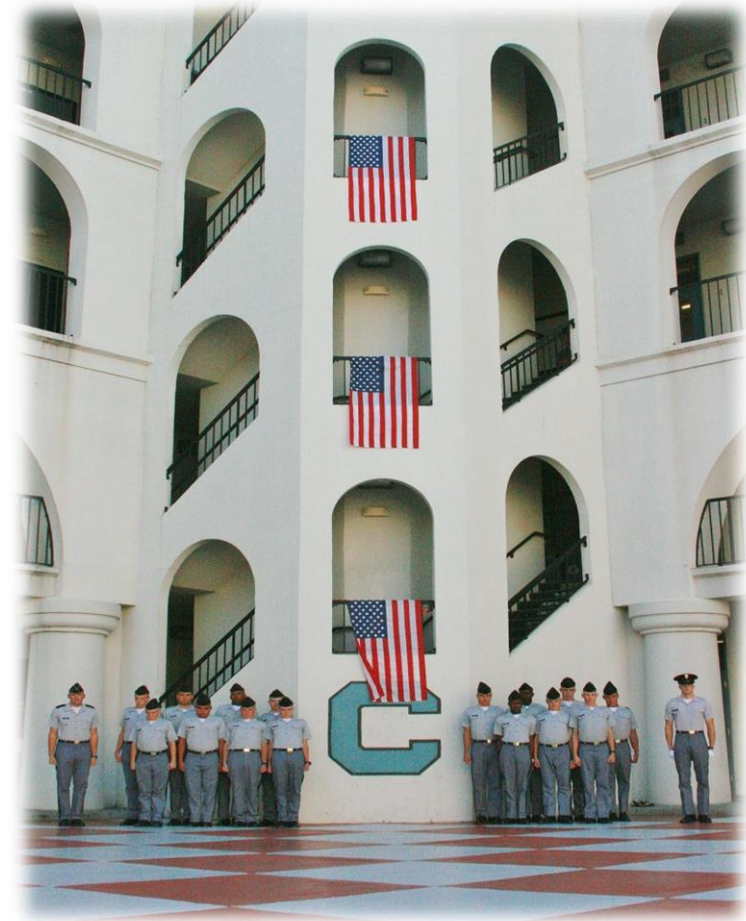
- Provided opportunity to connect and talk about their dreams with successful college students to whom they could relate
- Increased organizational abilities
- Allowed opportunity for one-on-one assistance on assignments in areas of difficulty
- Learned/improved skills for completing tasks
 - Life: conflict resolution, patience, leadership, responsibility, adulthood
 - School: study habits, how to read critically, linking subject material to real life (and other subjects)

Outcomes/Impact: College Students

- Learned importance of being a constructive role model and building positive relationships
- Provided opportunity to serve local community
- Provided satisfaction of seeing students progress
- Learned that students rise to expectations
- Taught preservice teachers the importance of teaching organizational skills to their future students
- Allowed preservice teachers experience with students with exceptionalities
- Improved preservice teacher communication skills with students

Lessons Learned

- Work out logistics before visit (call ahead)
- Have goals for each visit (create a plan)
- Learn names quickly (both ways)
- Visit once weekly (consistency is key)
- Be interactive (“guide on the side”)
- Have high expectations (they will meet them)
- Be supportive (listen and give advice when appropriate)
- Be understanding (lots of pressures, including sleep)
- Make mentoring a priority (stay engaged; have an impact)



Ideas for Replicating

- Look for opportunities to build relationships with local schools
- Listen to needs of school
- Review research on mentoring
- Develop partnership based on needs and best practices
- Find positive, reliable mentors; think of personalities and goals when matching with schools
- Help with logistics
- Provide tips to mentors (lunch meetings, emails, etc.)
- Follow-up with schools (emails, phone calls, visits, etc.)
- Follow-up with mentors (emails, lunch meetings, etc.)
- Be willing to make changes if needed

References

Anastasia, T. T., Skinner, R. L., & Mundhenk, S. E. (2012). Youth mentoring: Program and mentor best practices. *Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences*, 104(2), 38–44.

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