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ARTICLE

Role of Mentoring In School Education

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Abstract

It is well understood that young minds need constant support and care from adults in their process of growth. Sometimes such support is not available to a child so a formal program has to be organized in schools or community. The idea behind mentoring is that supportive adults can serve as mentors (guides) and can help students avoid high-risk activities and make smooth transitions to adulthood. It is an important personality development tool. It is collaboration between the mentor and mentee having a common field. The mentor is empathetic towards mentee and gives the right direction and solves his issues-personal or social. This paper highlights importance of mentoring at school level. A school based mentoring is a structured program utilizing school resources and time which is gaining momentum these days. Proper mentoring program can help child to excel in academics, reduce school dropout rates, solve emotional problems and in turn aid in making a child responsible citizen of the society. Well educated and dedicated volunteers can serve as mentors. Students can be referred for mentoring by teachers and parents and pairs of mentors and mentees should be made properly. It can extend beyond academic sessions to get complete benefits and evaluation should be done at the end. In Indian context this concept is still not well established and much work has to be done in this area. Mentoring in school education is an innovative supplement to the traditional school learning. It provides potentially struggling students with another avenue through which they might feel more confident about their school work, improve their attitudes and commitment to learning, and develop more fully as a person.

“The question is not "can you wear your father's shoes?". The question is "can you walk in your father's shoes?" It is one thing having a mentor and it is another thing to become like your mentor.”
Israelmore Ayivor

The Concept of Mentoring

Mentoring is the support and motivation given to a child so that he may manage his own learning, can become capable to maximize his potential, develop his skills, improve his behavior and becomes a responsible person in future.

It is well understood that young minds need constant support and care from adults in their process of growth. Sometimes such support is not available to a child so a formal program has to be organized in schools or community. The idea behind mentoring is that supportive adults can serve as mentors and can help students avoid high-risk activities and make smooth transitions to adulthood. It is an important personality development tool. It is a collaboration between the mentor and mentee having a common field. It is the assistance given on mutual respect, the mentor is empathetic towards mentee and gives the right direction and solves his issues-personal or social.

Need of Mentoring In School

- At school level the child is very tender and mouldable. Proper mentoring can shape up his whole future and his life.
- It has prime importance, especially at the teenage when the child is very sensitive and prone to adapt various wrong habits.
- They tend to lose interest in academics.
- They cannot handle peer pressures.

Importance of Mentoring

- In school, mentoring gives assurance to young mind that someone cares for him.
- To adapt to the ever changing competitive world school children need support and encouragement at various levels which can be done by proper mentoring.
- The friendly attitude of the mentor will help the students to discuss freely issues which they might not discuss with the parents and teachers.
- Mentors motivate students making them goal-oriented and focused.
- It can shape up their whole future and life.

Role of a Mentor in School

- He should serve as a role model for students
- He can boost up the self-confidence of the mentee by encouraging and inspiring him.
- He allows the mentee to explore new ideas and develops positive attitude in him.
- He gives the mentee a chance to look more closely at himself (introspect) and his issues .thus giving a direction to his life.

Objectives of Mentoring in School education

- To prevent behavioral problems in students.
- To help develop a balanced personality and better adjustment skills.
- To reduce school dropout rates and in turn reduce burden of unemployed youth on society.
- To help face competitive world of today with confidence.

Benefits in Schools

- Mentors help students in school thus reduce school drop-outs. Students who meet regularly with their mentors are less likely than their peers to skip a day of school. Mentoring is done at a proper time by checking absenteeism and problem behaviors students are likely to maintain interest in academics and do not leave school.

Many factors are to be blamed for drop outs like Criminal behavior, aimless life, substance abuse, low morale, family issues, grade- retention, strict school environment, less extra curricular activities, unaware of importance of education, gender bias, first generation learners, poor economic condition and children of single parent. These factors individually or combined with other factors can contribute to school dropouts.

- Youth in mentoring relationships cultivate better attitudes and behaviors at school and are more likely to attend college than their counterparts.
- Students at the age of 9 and 15 need mentoring the most as at this sensitive stage they can get distracted from their studies. Moreover if they are in a wrong influence, they can show unacceptable behaviors. To keep them focused and goal oriented,

mentoring is very essential at this stage. In turn they can become productive citizens of the society.

- A healthy mentoring relationship with a mature adult can remove these factors and can build up a child's future. Thus the mentor can benefit the child not only in academics but also can correct problem behavior and improve psychological and physical health.
- Mentoring should be kept separate from teaching and in any educational setup separate mentors should be appointed. Mentors will then be able to understand their importance and work efficiently. The shortage of mentors has created a mentoring gap which has to be filled by dedicated people.
- Mentoring sometimes is believed to have positive effect on self-esteem and social skills, but not on academic outcomes.
- Mentors help with homework and can improve their mentee's academic skills like spoken English, reading and difficulties in subjects like mathematics etc.
- They can also provide students with career guidance and help them excel in their field of interest.
- Mentors help improve a young person's self-esteem and make them confident thus in turn aid in their all-round development which is the aim of education. Youth who meet regularly with their mentors are less likely than their peers to start using illegal drugs
- Mentors provide teens with a valuable place to spend free time thus they are not misguided.
- Mentors teach young people how to relate well to all kinds of people and help them strengthen communication skill and succeed in future endeavors.
- Students are more likely to be active in sports and extra-curricular activities.
- Students are confident enough to accept leadership positions in future.

School-based Mentoring-This program operates in the school campus and is beneficial for the students going to school.

- It is an innovative addition to the traditional learning that takes place in schools, providing potentially weak students with another opportunity to feel confident improve their attitudes to learning, and develop as a capable citizen.
- It is performed at school and uses school facilities.
- It should extend beyond academic session to benefit students even during summer vacations.
- It is systematic unlike community based mentoring. It involves teachers who refer students for mentoring and then focus in solving their academic issues like homework related issues.
- Teachers, volunteers and retired personnel can guide and assist students as mentors.
- Peer Mentoring (by senior students) is also effective only after they are oriented about how it can be conducted.

Mentoring Programs at Schools

Mentoring program are far at risk if students are identified by the teachers. It can be organized in schools. Mentoring sessions according to the requirement can be conducted by volunteers after school or as per the school calendar and at times even after school. Teachers and parents can give guidance for it

Who can work as mentors?

- Volunteers (retired teachers, defense personnel, government servants), who have sound educational backgrounds, can carry out such responsibilities properly
- Employed mentors can be hired by schools for this purpose.
- They should have proper training example specific programs abroad.
- Reasonable qualifications is very essential for it.
- Good academic knowledge of mentor is essential so they can guide the mentee well.
- Dedicated and interested people should only opt for such assignments.
- People who can devote sufficient time can only perform the task properly.

How Mentorship can help?

- Mentors can help by improving academic performance of mentee by helping in home work, assignments through a focused study program.

- By sharing emotional problems related to friendship, opposite gender relations related problems and family related issues mentors can help them.
- By identifying and correcting behavioural disorders like aggressive behaviour and overcoming depression their psychological problems can be solved.

Steps Involved in Mentoring

- The Student Referral is given by teachers or parents.
- Mentor Recruitment is done by participant screening and training is given where needed.
- Making Matches of mentor and mentee is done according to the need.
- Match Supervision and Support is rendered by the school.
- The End of the School - Year and Match Closure by appropriate feedbacks of the sessions is done in schools.
- Program Evaluation is done to see whether the child is benefited and needs further mentoring or not.

Advantages of this Program

- It shows improved academic performance.
- An improvement in weaker subjects and written and oral language is seen.
- It improves the quality of class work done.
- It reduces disciplinary referrals, fighting, and suspensions in schools.
- It increases students' perceptions of scholastic competence
- It has low cost of operation and can utilize school facilities.

Disadvantages of this program

- The problems in solving 'off - school -time' issues.
- Where there is difficulty in finding place in already busy school schedule.
- It may not be as effective as community sponsored full time mentorship programs due to lack of continuity after academic session
- It cannot be an intensive program thus a long lasting relationship of trust cannot be developed which is the essence of mentoring.

Mentoring approach in Indian context

In today's Indian progressive society mentoring is getting lot of importance. But the point is whether it is fulfilling the desired aim to benefit the youth or not. Proper tools and guides should be used for the whole process and considerable time should be provided to it in the school curriculum. It should be performed to get results not just to complete a task. Funds should be raised, policies should be made and awareness should be generated in the community regarding the same. New mentors should be trained properly. Pairing of mentor and mentee should be done according to the need.

To conclude we can say despite some challenges, school-based mentoring is an innovative supplement to the traditional school learning. It provides potentially struggling students with another avenue through which they might feel more confident about their school work, improve their attitudes and commitment to learning, and develop more fully as a person. . This intentional relationship building could dramatically improve the lives of children and their ability to achieve, the culture of schools, and the fabric of communities. It is also a critical link in the chain of outcomes for our youth that helps them become more productive and active citizens, ready to seize the opportunities that lie ahead.

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