

Thirty years of research validate mentoring as the single most effective intervention for at-risk students. “One-on-one tutoring is the instructional strategy that makes the largest impact on student achievement,” Robert Marzano writes in *What Works in Schools: Putting Research into Action* (2003). Just as important, mentoring can be a powerful and positive force in the life of a child and his/her family, school and community.

With the societal changes today, youth have “cravings for belongingness, connectedness and meaning which point to the need for more significant others to guide, support or coach” (Pascarella 1998). It has been suggested by Walker (1996, cited in Lauland, 1998) that the number of young people in our country who could benefit from having a mentor is estimated at five to fifteen million children. Recent nationwide studies of mentoring programs support that mentoring is clearly an effective strategy for reaching at-risk students and keeping them in school:

Tierney, Grossman and Resch (1995) report:

37% decrease in skipped classes

53% less likely to skip school

The Commonwealth Fund’s survey (McLearn, Calasanto (and Schoen 1998) reported:

62% of students improved their self esteem

48% of students improved grades

49% of students got into less trouble in school

35% of students improved family relationships

The mentoring bond—the one-on-one caring relationship between a mentor and mentee—has been a positive and helpful relationship for hundreds of years. Not only in the area of academic achievement, but in social and emotional gains, mentoring has proven to bring positive impact for students who need it most.

Area of benefit	Findings	Citing
Mentoring makes a significant difference in the life of a child	Resiliency research shows that those youth who became successful adults had received three “protective factors” from the home, school or community. Those factors were caring and support from another person; high expectations of the youth; and opportunities for participation in meaningful activities.	Benard 1991
	Resilient children often had at least one significant adult in their lives.	Garnezy 1985
	Minority children of low income, divorced or separated parents are less likely to drop out if positively influenced by extended family or caring adults.	Rutter 1987
	Favorable effects of mentoring held true across diverse types of program samples, whether mentoring was provided alone or with other services.; in general or more focused programs; for youth of various demographic backgrounds. Stronger effects were found for those who had more frequent contact with mentors; whose relationships lasted longer; and for programs that offered training for mentors and structured activities for mentors and mentees.	DuBois (in press)
	Developmental-ecological theory states that the way children interact with the significant influences in their environment such as parents, peers and classrooms determines their degree of success in meeting development challenges such as adaptation to school.	Coll and Garrido 2000
	Mentors in formal, structured mentoring programs are more likely than informal mentors to influence the lives of youth.	McLearn, Calasanto, Schoen and Shapiro 1998
	Social interaction can improve mental abilities: something may be beyond what a young person can do when problem solving on their own, but within their reach while working under adult guidance or with more capable peers.	Vygotsky 1978

Area of benefit	Findings	Citing
Mentoring makes a significant difference in the life of a child <i>(continued...)</i>	Adolescents' capacity for critical thinking and self-awareness can be increased through meaningful conversations with mentors. Mentors can help youth test their ideas and stretch their thinking and sharpen their cognitive skills that they may not otherwise use in daily conversation with peers or family. They can incorporate what they have learned into their existing knowledge base.	Rogoff 1990
	Mentors can give lower income youth who may have limited contact with positive role models outside their immediate families a positive role model and concrete example of career success and demonstrate qualities youth may want to emulate. Youth can observe and compare their behaviors to those of the mentor and then begin to adapt their own behaviors or adopt new ones.	Blechum 1992; Larson 2000
Benefits mentees	Overall, youth participating in mentoring relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • had positive academic returns: better attendance and better attitude towards school. • Increased retention and participation • Enhanced self-confidence • Higher self-worth and motivation • Promotion of competence, self-assurance and support in new situations • Improved problem solving skills • More positive social attitudes and relationships 	Jekielik, Moore, Hair and Scarupa 2002 Bein 1999; Pascarelli 1998; Shumer 1994 Pascarelli 1998 US Department of Education 1996; Miller 1998; Roberts & Cotton 1994; Tester 1997 Hamilton and Darling 1989 Pascarelli 1998 Jekielik, Moore, Hair and Scarupa 2002
	Mentoring can prevent damage to the learner's self-esteem from failure, by attributing that failure to a factor that is adaptable, rather than to a lack of ability or bad luck, both of which negatively influence motivation.	Burns 1995
	Research has shown that mentoring is one of the five short-term interventions for reversing the high dropout rate of high school students.	Dondero 1997
	Mentors who engage in academic activities with their mentee reported slightly higher levels of closeness and instrumental supportiveness than those who did not.	Herrera, Sipe, and McClanahan 2000
Benefits to mentors	Mentors gain a feeling of accomplishment and personal satisfaction. Helping at-risk youths can also enhance self-esteem and provide a sense of usefulness, especially for senior citizens.	Farmer 1999
	When mentors come from business organizations, there are positive outcomes for the organization itself, i.e., in productivity. Mentors who are mature men feel a sense of being needed and being recognized professionally.	Carruthers 1993
	Mentors feel they have a positive impact on youth: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 85% of mentors cite at least one problem they believe was helped through mentoring: • 62% who mentored a youth with negative feelings about him/herself think they alleviated these feelings • About 50% think they had a positive influence in schools problems: skipping school (52%); poor grades (48%), getting into trouble at school (49%) or out of school (47%) or substance abuse (45%) 	McLearn, Calasanto, and Schoen 1998

Area of benefit	Findings	Citing
L2 strategies support effective and satisfying mentoring relationships	<p>Mentors can help youth identify or become part of a more desirable social or higher achieving peer group. Through role modeling.....and skill building...mentors can have an influence on youth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L2 content supports local and state curriculum and aligns with national standards. Participating L2 students have consistently demonstrated academic gains. 	Rhodes 2002
	<p>Mentors who engage with youth in challenging, goal-directed activities are more likely successful than those who primarily “get to know” the youth. Emotional relationships grow out of adults’ validation of youths’ effort and ability. “Ironically, relationships were built when building a relationship was not the main purpose of getting together.”</p> <p>Predictors of mentoring relationship quality include engaging in academic activities, meeting more than ten hours per month and joint decision making.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L2 programs focus on academic skills in reading and math; sessions can be implemented to meet school and community schedules, including meeting daily, bi-weekly or weekly. 	<p>Darling, Hamilton and Niego 1994</p> <p>Herrera, Sipe and McClanahan 2000</p>
	<p>When mentors offer support and advice in non-judgmental ways, and listen and respect youth viewpoints the mentor/mentee relationship is more satisfying.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L2 trains mentors how to accept answers in non-judgmental ways and to correct and/or suggest alternatives in non-threatening ways. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Research has found that the most successful tutors often have well-rehearsed scripts for responding to student errors. ○ Timely feedback throughout the learning experience (“formative” as opposed to “summative” assessment) could drastically improve student achievement. The gains in achievement appear to be quite considerable...amongst the largest ever reported for educational interventions. • L2 trains mentors to offer praise consistently and appropriately <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The most powerful single modification that enhances achievement is feedback. ○ Tutors are trained to offer genuine praise for real effort. Research shows a smile, praise, hand on the shoulder, encouragement, acknowledgment, and silence can have a significant effect on children’s behavior. • L2 strategies such as predicting, discussion and supporting hypotheses allow mentees to share their ideas in a risk-free environment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It is important to have a classroom environment where students feel comfortable questioning, challenging, suspending judgment and demanding reasons and justification as they deal with mathematical and real-world content. 	<p>Sipe 1996 (Styles and Morrow 1992)</p> <p>McArthur, Stasz and Zmuidzinas 1997</p> <p>Black and William 1998</p> <p>Hattie 1992</p> <p>O’Leary and O’Leary 1997</p> <p>O’Daffer and Thornquist 1993</p>

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L2 strategies support effective and satisfying mentoring relationships <i>(continued...)</i>	The key to effective mentoring relationships is trust. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L2 strategies such as the warm-up chat prior to every lesson gives mentors and mentees an opportunity to develop bonds. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Working with a partner promotes more positive attitudes and high achievement. 	Grossman 1999 Johnson, Johnson, Johnson and Roy 1984; Johnson and Johnson 1986
	Studies reveal that a consistent and dependable presence is important to the mentoring relationships. If the pair does not meet regularly, the potential to influence the youth can never be realized; inconsistency may damage a youth's ability to trust. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L2 programs are structured to provide consistent meeting times and predictable lesson structure. 	Grossman 1999; Johnson, 1998; VanPatten, 1997; Network Training and Research Group, 1996; Sipe, 1996
	Study shows that mentors who attended fewer than two hours of pre-match orientation or training reported the lowest levels of satisfaction with matches; those with six or more hours of training reported the strongest relationships. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L2 provides intensive training for mentors that includes active engagement in learning as they practice and role-play actual tutorials. They build a learning community to provide continued support. 	Herrera, Sipe and McClanahan 2000
	Programs which meet with and have mentors who are contacted regularly by trained staff are more likely to have mentoring relationships that meet regularly and are more satisfying. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L2 trains program staff to support and facilitate mentoring sessions and to support mentors. • L2 organization provides ongoing support to program facilitators and administrative staff. 	Grossman 1999; Johnson 1998; VanPatten 1997; Losciuto et al., 1996
	Tutors provide tutees with much-needed role models. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L2 uses strategies such as modeled reading and read alouds to promote reading comprehension and fluency and to motivate students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ By listening to good models of fluent reading, students learn how a reader's voice can help written text make sense....Reading to children also increases their knowledge of the world, their vocabulary, their familiarity with written language ("book language") and their interest in reading. ○ Interactive read alouds encourage children to verbally interact with the text, peers and teacher. This approach to reading aloud provides a means of engaging students as they construct meaning and explore the reading process. 	Hedin 1987 Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement (CIERA) 2001 Barrentine 1996

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