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School-Based Mentoring for At-Risk Elementary Students

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School-Based Mentoring for At-Risk Elementary Students

Allen Gurney
Shauna B. Valentine
Gary Wall

K. Richard Young, Paul Caldarella, Lynnette Christensen
Presentation Overview

- Introduction
- Pilot
- Results/Conclusions
- Nebo Implementation
Risk Factors

- Low family income, large family size, poor child-rearing techniques & parental criminality linked to juvenile delinquency
  
  (Howard, Dryden, & Johnson 1999)

- Strained family relationships, family conflict, poor communication skills contribute to rates of depression among children
  
  (Merrell, 2001)
EBD Under-Identified?

- Estimated 10-20% of school-age children experience mental health concerns (Mash & Dozois, 2002) - many are not identified and do not receive interventions.

- Students identified with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (EBD) constitute just less than 1% of the school-age population (Wagner et al., 2005).

- Of those students identified as EBD, approximately 65% are 12 years of age or older (U.S. Department of Education, 2001).
EBD Students experience…

- Fewer positive outcomes
- More frequent removal from class
- Less academic instruction than any other group of students with disabilities
- Years of academic failure and peer rejection before evaluations and diagnoses are begun

(Lane, Gresham, & O’Shaugnessy, 2002; Jolivette, Stitchter, Nelson, Scott, & Liaupsin, 2000)
EBD Continued…

• Teachers report
  – Students with EBD among least desirable to have in class
  – They are not prepared to address needs of EBD students

• Results
  – More than 50% drop out

(Lewis & Sugai, 1999; Soodak, Podell & Lehman, 1998; Cheney & Barringer, 1995)
Common School Interventions

- Reactive
- Punishment
- Suspension and expulsion
- School psychologists or counselors
- Special education services
Secondary Level Interventions

- Interventions for small groups at risk for school failure
- For students unresponsive to universal interventions
- 7%-10% of student population

(Sugai, Horner, & Gresham, 2002)
Foundations of Mentoring

- Homers Odyssey
- Extended Families
- Heroic Legends
- Sports
- Business
- President Bush $450 million
Rationale

• For healthy development children need positive relationships with adults (Scales, 2003)

• Children may be discouraged from forming natural relationships with clergy, neighbors, and other adults (Rhodes, 2005)

• Studies of resilience among youth from at-risk backgrounds alerted scholars to protective functions that can be fulfilled by relationships with non-parental adults (Werner, 1995)
What is a Mentor?

- Greater wisdom or experience
- Offers guidance or instruction intended to facilitate growth and development

“There is an emotional bond between mentor and mentee, a hallmark of which is a sense of trust”

(Freedman 1992)
Benefits of Mentoring

- Self Esteem
- Attitudes Toward School
- Peer and Parental Relationships
- Relationships with Teachers and Administrators
- Academic Achievement
- Behavioral Improvements

(Hancock, 2003; Rhodes et al, 2005; Keating et al 2002)
Advantages of School-based Mentoring

- Less Costly
- Identify More Children via the School Context
- School Resources Staff Administration
- More Convenient for Volunteers
- Time Commitment
- Mentors Feel Safer
- Establish Community Support within School
“The goal of true mentoring is the development of the youth—not necessarily the solution of specific problems” (Ambrose, 1998)
Pilot Program

Question:
Is school-based mentoring an effective intervention for elementary students at risk for emotional and behavioral disorders?
Setting

- Elementary School in Central Utah
  - 532 Students
  - Over 50% free or reduced lunch
  - Ethnicity
    - 75% Caucasian
    - 21% Hispanic
    - 2% African American
    - 2% Other

- Student Support
  - Principal
  - .50 School Facilitator
  - .25 Psychologist
Student Selection

- **Systematic Screening For Behavior Disorders (SSBD)**
  (Walker & Severson 1992)
  - Screens All Students
  - Internalizing & Externalizing
- Suggests Risk Level
  - Primary, Secondary, Tertiary
Student Participants

• N = 17
  76 % male
• Ethnicity:
  70% Caucasian
  24% Hispanic
  6% African American
• Age:
  Range 6-11yrs., M = 8.5yrs (sd = 1.84)
• Free or Reduced Lunch = 81%
• SSBD results:
  Critical Events: range 1–6, M = 2.73 (sd = 1.62)
  Adaptive: range 25-44, M = 33.67 (sd = 5.05)
  Maladaptive: range 14-45, M = 29.60 (sd = 8.47)
Mentor Recruitment

• Sources
  – Principal and staff, PTA, volunteers
  – Businesses
  – Community groups
  – Church out-reach programs
  – Retirement communities
  – Word of Mouth
Application and Screening

- Basic Demographics
- Brief Questionnaire
- References
- Background Check
# Profile of Mentors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>20-30</th>
<th>31-40</th>
<th>41-50</th>
<th>51-60</th>
<th>61-80</th>
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<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA/BS Degree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD MD</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mentor Expectations

- Time commitment
- Reliability and Consistency
- Optimism
- Honesty
- Supportive Acceptance
- Avoid preaching or lecturing
- Good example
- Training
Mentor Skills Training

- Communication skills
  - Clear and specific
  - Recognize differences
  - Supportive and accepting
  - Maintain eye contact
• **Listening skills**

  - Listen 70% of the time
  - Listen, then respond
  - Listen, don’t assume
  - Listen, don’t shut down

• **Questioning skills**

  - Open ended
  - High quality questions
• Effective praise

Specific
Sincere
Contingent
Immediate
Mentor Activity Training

• **Social Skills Instruction**
  
  *Addressing topics such as—*
  
  • Showing gratitude
  • Following instructions
  • Making good choices
  • Accepting responsibility for actions
  • Apologizing
  • Dealing with anger
• **Goal Setting**
  * Student selects goal
  * List what will be done to accomplish the goal
  * List how one will know when goal is achieved

• **Problem Solving**

  * Define the situation
  * List options
  * List disadvantages of each option
  * List advantages of each option
  * What is the best solution
Matching Process

- Collaborative
  - School Personnel
  - Mentoring Coordinator
- Gender
- Application/Interview
- Similarity of Interests
- Personality
- Need - Experience
Typical Mentoring Session

- Call to school ensure attendance
- Sign in at office
- 10 min check in
- Work on goals academic/social activities
- Review progress
- Plan future visit
- Entry in mentoring journal
Pilot Program

Question:

Is school-based mentoring an effective intervention for elementary students at risk for emotional and behavioral disorders?
Evaluation Design

- 1 Group
- Pre-Test/Post-Test
Measures of Outcome

- Qualitative Data
  - Log and Journal
  - Social Validity

- Quantitative Data
  - Social Competence
  - Anti-social Behavior
  - Academics
  - Attendance
## Mentoring Journal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Attitude</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Goal(s)/Progress</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sample 1</td>
<td>Very Cooperative Happy, Ambious to see me</td>
<td>Gave her a “Believe” star and talked about setting goals. Filled out “Let’s Get To Know You Better This Year” sheet.</td>
<td>Set two goals: (1) Be nicer to her sister and (2) Listen better in school. Will check on goals next week.</td>
<td>(Mary) was very willing to open up and address some concerns she has, especially when her step sister visits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample 2</td>
<td>Proud</td>
<td>We worked on spelling words and handwriting. We read books.</td>
<td>Set a goal of improving handwriting and spelling.</td>
<td>Had great writing. Needed help to do his book.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample 3</td>
<td>Quiet: Happy to see me</td>
<td>Revisited numbers. Punched out valentines. Read a book and talked about how to make friends, how to always remember to do your best.</td>
<td>Worked on writing numbers correctly. She is remembering not to reverse her numbers.</td>
<td>She remembered we were going to read a book.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Analysis of Journals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic-related</td>
<td>44.5%</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>40.8%</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games, puzzles, etc.</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Top 3 Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conversations</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>36.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading activities</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>32.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal setting</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Total # of visits: 233
- Mean visits per student: 14.24
School Social Behavior Scales (SSBS)

- **Teacher Rating**
  - 64 Likert-scale items
  - Nationally normed
  - Evidence of reliability & validity

- **Social Competence**
  - Cooperates with other students
  - Shows self control
  - Sensitive to others feelings

- **Antisocial Behavior**
  - Is physically aggressive
  - Is easily irritated
  - Gets into trouble at school
Home and Community Social Behavior Scales (HCSBS)

- **Parent Rating**
  - Companion to the SSBS
  - 64 Likert-scale items
  - Nationally normed
  - Evidence of reliability & validity

- **Social Competence**
  - Cooperates with peers
  - Shows self control
  - Sensitive to others feelings

- **Antisocial Behavior**
  - Is physically aggressive
  - Is easily irritated
  - Gets into trouble at school or in community
Social Competence

Social Competence Total T-Scores

- SSBS: Pre = 44.00, Post = 49.27
- HCSBS: Pre = 49.75, Post = 52.82
Antisocial Behavior

Anti-Social Behavior Total T-Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SSBS</th>
<th>HCSBS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre T-Score</td>
<td>58.94</td>
<td>48.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post T-Score</td>
<td>53.00</td>
<td>47.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SSBS and HCSBS Mean T Scores, Standard Deviations, and Paired Sample t-Tests.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre Test</th>
<th>Post Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSBS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Comp Pre-Post</td>
<td>44.00</td>
<td>6.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-Social Pre-Post</td>
<td>58.94</td>
<td>9.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCSBS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Comp Pre-Post</td>
<td>49.27</td>
<td>8.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-Social Pre-Post</td>
<td>48.25</td>
<td>7.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05  **p < .01
Academics

Academics Homework Citizenship

Academics Total: 3.05
Homework Accountability: 2.67
Citizenship: 3.21

Grade Level Standard

Pre Intervention
Post Intervention

Academic Total: 2.11
Homework Accountability: 1.87
Citizenship: 2.61
## Academic Mean Scores, Standard Deviations, and Paired Sample t-Tests.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Post-mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Skills</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>-6.12***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Comprehension</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>-5.98***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Expression</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>-6.55***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>-4.03**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>-3.56**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Total</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>-7.62***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework Accountability</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>-3.29**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>-3.63**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**p < .01    ***p < .001
Attendance

![Bar chart showing attendance data](chart_image)

- **Absences**
  - Pre: 2.44
  - Post: 4.19

- **Tardies**
  - Pre: 8.63
  - Post: 5.63

The chart compares attendance metrics before (Pre) and after (Post) an intervention.
Recap of Quantitative Results

- Increased Social Competence
- Decreased Anti-social Behavior
- Improved Academics
Social Validity Surveys

- All participants
- End of program
- Perceived changes in student
- Satisfaction
- Suggestions
Student Survey

100% responded that they would like to be in the mentoring program again

71% noted help with academics as the most important part of having a mentor

What did you like about having a mentor?

“A friend”
“Someone to trust”
“We talk, she listens”

“She’s nice, knows about me and cares”
Teacher Survey

100% noted positive changes for those students who were mentored.

“I wish more of my students could benefit from it”

“Self-confidence has dramatically increased this school year”

“I love that Martin truly looked forward to this time, as was shown by the big smile on his face each time she appeared at our door. This is worth more than completing 100 assignments on time!!”
Mentor Survey

69% would like to participate again.
40% would like more information on student needs.
36% wanted more contact with the teacher.

“They have touched my life for good”
“I like feeling that I can make a difference in a child’s life”
“It is very rewarding to help a child set goals and achieve them”
“I like seeing them become more self confident”
Parent Survey

83% said they would like their child to participate in the program again.

“He appears to feel better about himself”

“It helps them cope with problems and be better students!”

“We love the program!”

“Boost in self-confidence”
Limitations

- Data from just one school
- No control group
- Small number of participants
- Brief intervention
- No measure of relationship strength
Common Difficulties

• Issues
  – Mentor sporadic or drops out
  – Teacher/academic schedule
  – Students behavior extreme

• How to address
  – Training
  – Monitoring/supervision
  – Ongoing support
Future Directions from Pilot Study

- Addressing limitations
- Replicating the evaluation
- Extending the program
- Developing and refining mentoring materials
Extending Pilot

Nebo School District
Implementation

- Nebo School District, Central Utah
- 26,000 Students
- 26 Elementary Schools
- 11 Secondary Schools
- 2 Alternative Schools
Implementation

- 3 year DOE, Department of Drug-Free Schools Longitudinal Study
- 5 Elementary Schools
- 20 Mentors per school
- 100 Mentor Matches
- Adopt BYU-PBSI program structure
Nebo Legacy Mentor

Mentors Wanted to make a difference.

NEBO LEGACY MENTORING PROGRAM
School Selection

- Cities of Payson and Santaquin
- 2/3 of Hispanic over 25 years no high diploma
- Per capita income lower: $8,249 vs $14,588
- 71.5% Free and Reduced
- Crime Rate higher than Utah or National average
Partners

- Faith Based Groups
- Parent Teacher Association (PTA)
- Payson Community Groups (Police, Retirement Centers, Chamber of Commerce)
- School system (Retired teachers, bus drivers)
Organization

Nebo School District Student Services Administrators

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS)

Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

Program Director

Program Coordinator (PC)

Brigham Young University-Public School Partnership Positive Behavior Support Initiative (PBSI)

Evaluator

SMC 15-20
4th, 5th, & 6th Grade Students

SMC 15-20
4th, 5th, & 6th Grade Students

SMC 15-20
4th, 5th, & 6th Grade Students

SMC 15-20
4th, 5th, & 6th Grade Students

SMC 15-20
4th, 5th, & 6th Grade Students
Marketing

- Faith Based
- Community (Chamber of Commerce, Service Groups, Retirement Centers)
- Retired Teachers
- Advertisement, Movie Theaters, newspaper.
- Post Cards, Brochures
Becoming a Mentor

Mentoring is the BEST volunteer opportunity in America.

...Why?

You can:

- support a young person on the brink of success
- help a student build a promising future
- have fun and rewarding experiences
- foster good relationships between adults and youth in your community

Looking for a hero...
Nebo Legacy Mentor

Mentors Wanted

to make a difference.
Resources

Dubois & Karcher, (2005), *Handbook of Youth Mentoring*, Sage Publishing

www.beamentor.org

www.mentoring.org

www.ppv.org

www.nebo.edu/mentor/index.php
http://education.byu.edu/pbsi/
www.nebo.edu/mentor/index.php

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lynette_christensen@byu.edu

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