
YOUTH MENTORING

Energising the community to
support young people

Key Questions

What do we know about young people in 2008?

What contribution can mentoring make?

What does research tell us about best practice?

YOUNG PEOPLE **in** **2008**

Young people are portrayed as having the time of their life or struggling with life in their times.

Richard Eckersley(2008)

Time of their lives?

over all the evidence points to a conclusion that young Victorians are faring well across the broad domains of health, learning, development, safety and well being with 70% rating their health as 'excellent' or 'very good.'

A 2008 report **The State of Victoria's Young People** prepared by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and Department of Planning and Community Development

Struggling with life in their times ?

Modernity's Paradox

Research indicates that in spite of the increasing economic prosperity and globalisation enabling greater success to opportunities many of the key indicators of the health development and well being young people are not improving and many are worsening.

Fiona Stanley ,Margot Prior, Sue Richardson
Children of the Lucky Country?(2002)

Social Context for young people

- Fractured families
 - More complex society
 - Messages from the media
-

Issues for Young People

- **Education sector**

Disengagement issues

- **Health Sector**

- Mental Health issues

- Substance Abuse issues

- **Police**

- Antisocial behaviour

- **Welfare sector**

- Abuse

- Housing issues

- Domestic violence

RESEARCH FINDINGS

- A large number of students experience social and emotional difficulties
- Social and emotional health decreases from primary to secondary school

The State of Student Social and Emotional Health Report
Australian Scholarship Group 2007

RESEARCH FINDINGS

‘although the last three decades has been one of unambiguous prosperity for the country’s success, it has come at a price. The report showed that the long and unsocial hours demanded by changed working patterns for many Australian workers has resulted in added pressure and reduced child wellbeing for many families ‘

An Unexpected Tragedy Report. 2007
Relationships Forum Australia

RESPONSES

‘the totality of the evidence suggests that fundamental social, cultural, economic and environmental changes in Australia and other Western societies are impacting adversely on young people’s health and wellbeing.’

Eckersley, R. 2008 (in press). The health and well-being of young Australians: Patterns, trends, explanations and responses.

RESPONSES

'The present generation of young people is one of the most vulnerable in the history of Australia.'

Michael Carr Gregg

young people 'starving in paradise'

Martin Seligman

Resilience

Focus on Protective and Risk Factors

‘
dual strategy which looks at
reducing risk and promoting
protection.’

Michael Resnick

Resiliency

- Social competence
- Problem solving skills
- Mastery
- Autonomy
- Sense of purpose
- A future

GARMEZY1998

Educational Research

REPORTS

- The Full Service Schools Program (2001e)
- Under-age School Leaving (Brooks, Milne et al. 1997).
- The Building Relationships. Making Education Work (2001a)

RESEARCH STUDIES

- Holden and Dwyer (1992) ; Dwyer, Stokes et al. 1998; James, St Leger et al. (2001)
- (Osterman 2000)

Henry J et al (2003) *Connecting through the Middle Years Phase Two Evaluation*
www.eduweb.vic.gov.au

FINDINGS

the search for a 'common thread' that runs through projects which have been successful is a

spotlight on one-to-one relationships between a student and an adult.

Henry J et al (2003) *Connecting through the Middle Years Phase Two Evaluation* www.eduweb.vic.gov.au

VICTORIAN EDUCATION POLICY ON WELLBEING

LEVEL ONE Primary Prevention

The establishment of strategies to develop a student's sense of belonging to a school community and their ability to deal with their life circumstances **including the establishment of a 'one-to-one relationship with a caring adult.**

The Framework for Student Support Services in Victorian Government Schools.
1998

PROGRAMS IN SCHOOLS

- ADVOCACY PROGRAM
- CONNECTING IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOLS PROGRAM

Both based on teachers establishing one to one relationships with students in schools

WHAT ARE THE PRESSURES ON
TEACHERS?

HOW CAN THE COMMUNITY BE
INVOLVED?

Mentoring

‘a structured and trusting relationship that brings young people together with caring individuals who offer guidance, support and encouragement aimed at developing the competence and character of the mentee.’

Opportunities for meaningful interaction between youth and important adults are decreasing yet relationships are essential for healthy human development.

Benefits

- the enhancement of social skills and emotional well being
- the improvement of cognitive skills through dialogue and listening
- the fact that the mentor can act as a role model and advocate

Rhodes ,J (2002) *Stand By Me.The Risks and Rewards of Mentoring Today's Youth*

RESEARCH RESULTS

Aseltine et al (2000) looked of interventions aimed at reducing drug and alcohol use in a group of 400 6th grade students young people in a community organization **Across Ages** in Springfield Massachusetts. Interventions were:

- A mentoring program
- A community service with elderly
- A life skills curriculum in a school

Mentoring Program was most effective

Aseltine, R, Dupre, M & Lamlein, P 2000, 'Mentoring as a drug prevention strategy: an evaluation of Across Ages'

Areas which need to be looked at are:

- **PRACTICES**

in the establishment of programs which make them effective and sustainable

- **QUALITIES AND PRACTICES** of adults who make successful relationships with young people

- **EFFECTIVE EVALUATION** to identify benefits and impact of mentoring

BEST PRACTICE

PROGRAM

- **effective screening**
- **appropriate training**
- **support of the mentors**

Sipe, C 1998, '*Mentoring adolescents: what have we learned?*',

THE RELATIONSHIP

- **development of an emotional bond**
- **focus of the relationship.**
- **length of the relationship.**

Rhodes, JE and DuBois DL (2006) *Understanding and facilitating the youth mentoring movement*

STANDING TALL

School Based Mentoring Program



Genuine engagement with learning and with others within the school environment is a key to positive outcomes across a range of immediate and long term health, academic and life outcomes.

DOING IT DIFFERENTLY: IMPROVING YOUNG PEOPLE'S ENGAGEMENT WITH SCHOOL
Centre for Adolescent Health
Brotherhood of St Laurence
Anglicare Victoria

In Australia ,the entire nation's social, cultural and economic will being is in jeopardy when so many of our young people either leave school early, or complete their school in with a narrow and unsatisfying education.

Australian Curriculum Studies Association 1996

Standing Tall Understandings

- School and community ownership are essential
 - Community/school partnerships
 - Early intervention
 - Focus on individual needs
 - Importance of length
-

PARTNERSHIPS WITHIN SCHOOL

- School council
 - Administration
 - Welfare personnel
 - Teachers
 - Students
 - Parents
-

PARTNERSHIPS

outside the school community

- Community members – mentors, committee members
 - Business organizations
 - Tertiary institutions
 - Community policing
 - Churches
 - Community groups
 - Funding bodies
-

Where are we now?

- Trained 100 mentors
 - Set up 133 relationships
 - Have expanded to three Primary schools
 - Have set up relationships with students from
Grade 3-Year 12
 - Expansion into other schools in the South West
-

Evaluation

Based on the belief that for young people to have productive lives and become resilient they must have certain needs met.

These are the

- The need to belong
- The need for mastery
- The need for independence
- The need for generosity

Brento,L,Brokenleg,M &Van Bockern,S, 1990 ,*Reclaiming Youth at Risk*, National Education Service , Bloomington, Indiana.

If these needs are met students will demonstrate certain behaviours and attitudes. These are

BELONGING

- Friendly,
- Co-operative,
- Trusting

MASTERY

- Motivated
- Persistent

INDEPENDENCE

- Confident
- Takes responsibility
- Self discipline

GENEROSITY

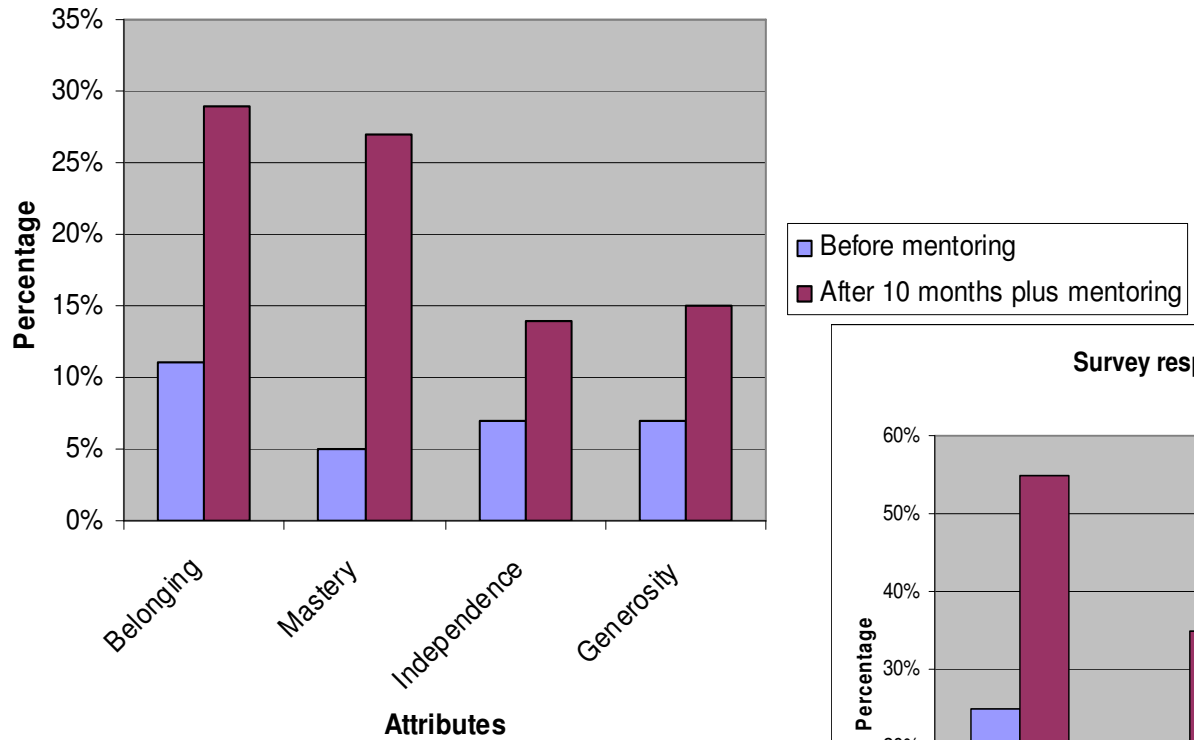
- Caring
- Loyal
- Empathetic
- Pro-social

Evaluation

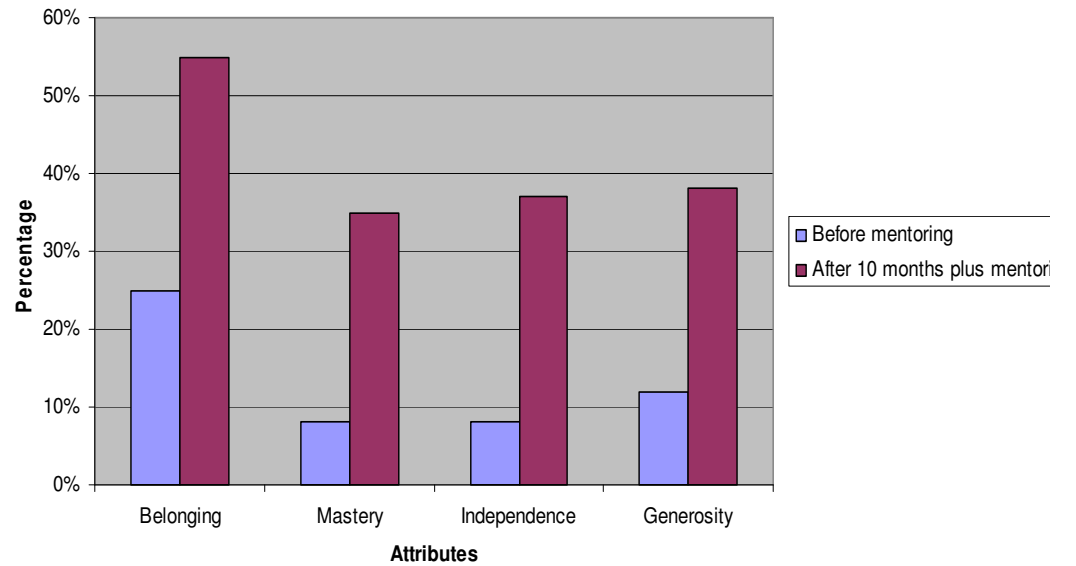
Mentors and teachers were asked to record and shifts they had observed after 10 months of mentoring

RESULTS

Survey response - Teachers - Observed positive attributes



Survey response - Mentor - Observed positive attributes



Paradigm Shift

support for young people

From

'It takes a whole community to raise a child'

- Family
- schools
- agency



To

Energising the whole community

Total responsibility to professionals



Utilising the life experiences and wisdom of members of the community

Focusing on just

- educational outcomes
- health outcomes
- welfare outcomes



**Holistic approach-
government departments
and agencies working in
partnership for the best
outcomes for young people**

Challenges for mentoring

- **Community support**
- **Sustainability**
- **Resources**

What can we do?

- Community ownership
 - Effective practices
 - Good marketing
 - Partnerships
 - Thinking outside the box
-

VISION

Mentoring in the South West

A mentor for every young person who could benefit

When I dream alone ,it is just a dream

*When we dream together, it is the beginning
of reality.*

*When we work together, following our dream,
it is the creation of heaven on earth*

(Adapted Brazilian Proverb)
