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What an individual can learn and how he learns it, depends on what models he has available.

Seymour Papert

We are beginning to believe what has never ceased to be said: that lessons in lesson-books are not the whole of education.

Janet Stuart

Step One: Agreeing on Definitions

Men-tor (mĕn'tōr', -tər). *Greek Mythology*. Odysseus' trusted counselor under whose disguise Athena became the guardian and teacher of Telemachus. [Latin *Mentor*, from Greek *Mentor*, name probably meaning "adviser," "wise man." See men-¹ in Appendix.*]

men-tor (mĕn'tōr', -tər) *n.* A wise and trusted counselor or teacher: "*Moore and Kierkegaard have become mentors of two different philosophic movements.*" [French, from *Mentor* a character in Fénelon's *Telemachus* (1699), modeled after Mentor.]

Figure One

"The question is," said Alice, "whether you can make words mean so many different things."

Lewis Carroll

Step One: Agreeing on Definitions

In the Neanderthal stage of program discussions, it will be quite helpful if the participants agree on some basic definitions. Insuring that everyone is speaking the same language will facilitate communication and save needless (sometimes endless) debate at a later stage.

Often people start out using the same words, but not necessarily "speaking the same language." The terms "mentor," "mentoring," and "mentorship" have appeared in many different ways in articles, books, and brochures describing programs. "Mentorships" have included everything from helpful visits by older students or parents giving slide shows to extended individual internships under the direction of experts. "Mentor program" descriptions range from learning centers about careers to field trips to full-time resident apprenticeships. The words are used in so many different ways that it is really essential for you to begin by clarifying your own beliefs and attaining consensus about working definitions. We hope that the Mentor Glossary in this section will be a helpful guide for you.

When we began our work in the project that led to this book, it was with some skepticism. It seemed likely that the current trend towards interest in mentors was just another catchy educational phrase -- a fad that "trendy" people and "slick" media would discuss for a year or so.

As we began to become more involved in reading about programs, studying research and evaluation reports, and talking with people who have been involved in mentorships and mentor programs, the importance of the topic became much clearer.

A strand or theme emerged: the importance of having someone (or a series of someones) who really care about you, your creative talent, and its development.

This strand, and the powerful role that mentoring can play in it, just could not be dismissed. In his summary of the findings of a 22-year study, Torrance (1984) reported, for example, that persons who have had mentors were more creatively productive than persons who did not have mentors, in relation to both the quantity and quality of their achievements. Those who had mentors also successfully completed more education than those who had not had mentors. The mentor's role has been described in many ways by educational writers and researchers (see Figure 1) but the common strand is one of the caring nurture of creative talents and accomplishments. Torrance also described many important things the mentor can do for creatively gifted young people; these are summarized in Table 1.

Role of the Mentor

<u>Boston (1978)</u>	<u>Mattson (1980)</u>	<u>Torrance (1984)</u>	<u>Bloom Et Al, (1985)</u>
Adviser	Tutor	Builder of Self-Confidence	Learning the Language
Guide	Director	Developer of Thinking Skills	Learning the History
Teacher	Advocate	Nurture Creative Growth	Learning the Rituals
Competent	Devil's Advocate		Learning the Techniques
Role Model	Supervisor		Professional Skills and Attitudes
	Friend		Contacts, Opportunities, Choices
			Entering the Field/Marketplace

Table 1

THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS MENTORS CAN DO FOR
CREATIVELY GIFTED YOUTH

(Torrance, 1984)

Help them to:

1. Be unafraid of "falling in love with something" and pursue it with intensity and in-depth. A person is motivated most to do the things they love and can do best.
2. Know, understand, take pride in, practice, use, exploit and enjoy their greatest strengths.
3. Learn to free themselves from the expectations of others and to walk away from the games that others try to impose on them.
4. Free themselves to play their own game in such a way as to make the best use of their strengths and follow their dreams.
5. Find some great teachers and attach themselves to these teachers.
6. Avoid wasting a lot of expensive, unproductive energy in trying to be well-rounded.
7. Learn the skills of independence and give freely of the infinity of their greatest strengths.