

# CONTENTS

Introduction: Developing a Mentor Program .....	4
Chapter One: Preliminary Planning and Organization .....	6
Establishing that a need for a mentorship program exists. ....	6
Making a commitment to develop and implement a quality mentorship program. ....	6
Selecting a coordinator(s) for the program. ....	7
Establishing a time line. ....	8
Reviewing research, books, and articles and/or visiting programs already in operation. ....	8
Defining the target protege population and defining their roles. ....	9
Defining program goals and objectives. ....	10
Getting appropriate financial commitment and developing a budget. ....	11
Creating a sense of ownership for the program. ....	11
Developing the administrative design for proposed protege placements. ....	11
Summary. ....	11
Chapter Two: Mentor and Protege Identification and Selection .....	12
Establishing multiple criteria for selecting proteges. ....	12
Preparing a tentative evaluation plan. ....	14
Designing an individual placement procedure which is flexible across varying ages/grds. ...	14
Developing detailed plans for seeking mentors and mentorship sites. ....	16
Finding the mentors. ....	16
Holding meetings to orient and train mentors. ....	18
Summary. ....	21
Chapter Three: Mentor-Protege Matching .....	22
Interviewing each mentor and each protege. ....	22
Using an individualized approach for each mentor-protege match. ....	22
Developing agreement on expectations. ....	23
Summary. ....	23
Chapter Four: Program Implementation and Operation .....	24
Developing a clearly defined and defensible credit policy if credit is offered. ....	24
Preparing the proteges with related courses. ....	24
Providing orientation and training seminar(s) or class(es) for the proteges. ....	24
Fostering open communication. ....	25
Stressing differentiated and individualized experiences. ....	25
Summary. ....	25
Chapter Five: Evaluation .....	26
Formative and summative evaluation. ....	26
Protege self evaluation. ....	27
Summary. ....	29
Conclusion .....	29
Index .....	64
Suggested Readings on Mentoring .....	66
References .....	68

## INTRODUCTION DEVELOPING A MENTOR PROGRAM

An important component of any school's program for gifted and talented students should be mentoring. Mentoring is an educational process in which students are teamed, usually one-on-one, with an older person who has some talent, knowledge, or expertise to share. Recognized as important facilitators for the gifted and talented (Feldhusen, 1985; Torrance, 1984; Cox and Daniel, 1983; Cox, Daniel, & Boston, 1985), mentors help these youngsters in positive and productive ways, especially as stimulators and counselors for talent development.

Lambert and Lambert (1982) describe the special relationship that should develop between mentor and protege as an in-depth sharing relationship characterized by a series of learning experiences which result in a highly individualized and personal relationship, and which influence other areas of the student's life. Lambert and Lambert suggest that those areas of impact include not only expertise but also values, problem solving techniques, and general life style. Torrance (1984) also suggests that a mentor does several things for, or in behalf of, the protege such as encouraging and supporting the expression and testing of ideas, protecting the individual against negative reaction from peers and superiors long enough for the person to test and modify ideas, and keeping life situations open enough for originality to occur and persist. Runions (1980) also describes the nature of the mentorship in motivational terms suggesting that a realistic expectation is that the protege will become more resourceful and also more responsible for his or her own learning.

Seeley (1985) notes that mentorships become a viable means of extending classroom instruction into the community. Thus, instruction and learning become much more dynamic than is possible within the confines of the school alone. Cox and Daniel (1983) envision as possible goals of a mentorship program a combination of experience, career education, and cooperation between the school and the person providing the mentoring experience in the real world. Mentoring experiences place proteges in the "real world" where they face "real" problems and situations and are called upon to produce "real" products.

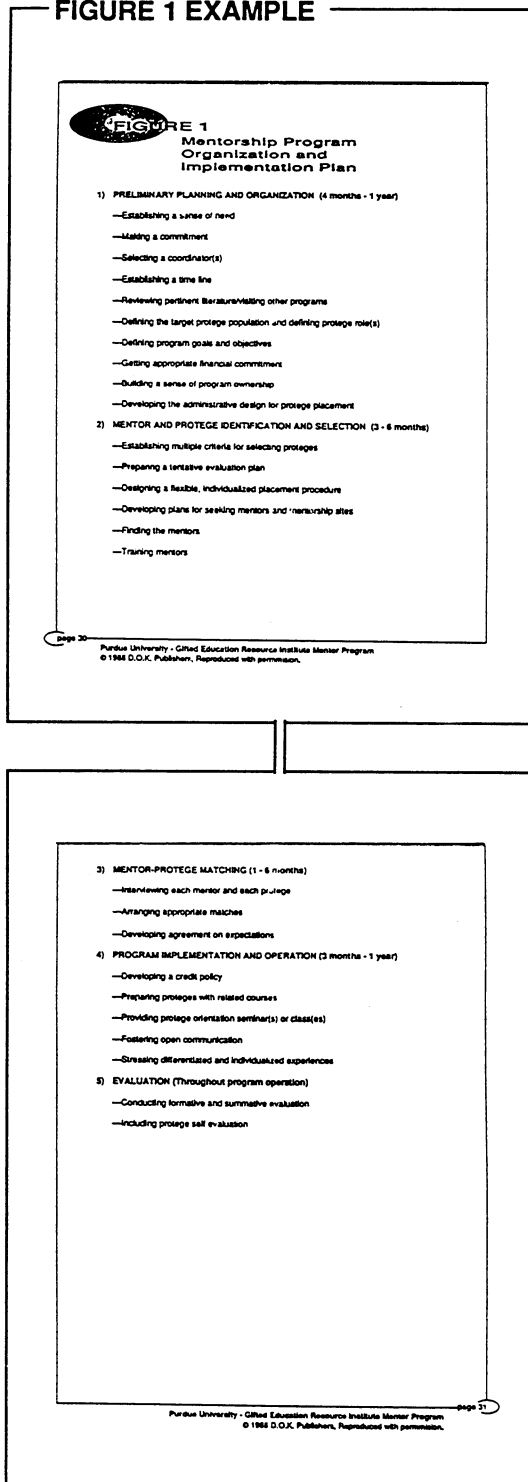
Before such potential can be realized, the schools must have in place a suitable mentorship program to serve the needs of the gifted and talented. However, schools have often been reluctant to develop a mentorship program because of a fear that it might be too difficult, too

costly, or too time consuming. Our own experience indicates that the fear is unwarranted. Through experience in planning, implementing, and working with the Purdue Mentor Program over the last three years we have learned that a mentorship program can be developed and operated without excessive cost or difficulty. Mentorships are no more difficult to plan and implement than other program options for the gifted. A mentorship program should also be relatively cost effective for schools, especially if weighed against the numerous student benefits and the increase in community educational involvement. Finally, excessive difficulty and unnecessary effort can be avoided by following a detailed, step-by-step outline of the procedures for establishing a mentorship program.

This book describes a basic five-stage plan for organizing and implementing a mentorship program for the gifted and talented within a school or school district. Mentorships should not constitute the total gifted program, but should simply be one component of a more comprehensive program. By following these stages, it should be possible to develop a new and exciting program option for the gifted and talented.

Figure 1 presents an outline of the five major stages, suggested time allocations for each stage, and the basic steps within each of those stages. There will be some overlap of stages and steps, and thus overlap of the suggested time allocations. Generally at least six months, but possibly up to one year, of planning and organizing may be necessary before mentorships can actually begin.

FIGURE 1 EXAMPLE



# CHAPTER I: PRELIMINARY PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION

## *Establishing that a need for a mentorship program exists.*

Without a sense of need, no one acts and no program plan receives more than passing notice. Once realized, this need can be the impetus for all that follows. This sense of need may be defined as a strong feeling shared by a considerable number of people who are willing to work together in developing a new program. Parents or teachers can be prime movers in instigating action for such a program and driving its movement forward.

A needs assessment questionnaire can be used as the first step. The needs assessment should be directed to the community, parents, school staff, teachers, and administrators to

determine what they perceive as the needs of gifted students, what arrangements would be most desirable, and what resources are available. Figure 2 presents an example of a simplified needs assessment which assesses these needs.

FIGURE 2 EXAMPLE

**FIGURE 2**  
**Needs Assessment**

This needs assessment has been developed in order to inventory the needs of gifted, talented or high ability students. Please complete the questionnaire and return it within five days.

Please check the appropriate blank below.

<input type="checkbox"/> parent	<input type="checkbox"/> elementary level
<input type="checkbox"/> teacher	<input type="checkbox"/> middle school (junior high)
<input type="checkbox"/> administrator	<input type="checkbox"/> high school
<input type="checkbox"/> student	<input type="checkbox"/> other (please specify) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> community member	

If you have a child, what is the name of the school your child attends?  
\_\_\_\_\_

If you are a student, the name of the school you attend?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Should mentoring experiences be offered to gifted students in our schools?  
 Yes  No

If yes, check the following which you feel are most appropriate:  
Mentoring experiences should be:

- a) for high school students only
- b) for junior high/middle school and high school students
- c) for elementary, junior high/middle school, and high school students

Page 22 Purdue University - Gifted Education Resource Institute Mentor Program

## **Making a commitment to develop and implement a quality mentorship program.**

Once need has been established, a commitment is needed to move forward in starting the program. This commitment is most likely to be acted upon if it is made by people who can effect educational decision making. Public school administrators and school board members are certainly in such a position. Parents also may be a powerful moving force. Effective lobbying for support with the school board and the administration should lead them to a decision to begin and support a mentorship program.