

EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHER MENTORING ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

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MENTORING PROGRAM AT DR. F.J. DONEVAN C.I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

This project was initiated to provide support for students who may have and are having difficulty connecting to their school community. The Provincial Government introduced a Student Success Program in June 2006. The mentoring program which was in its third year at Dr. F.J. Donevan C.I. was expanded to include a group of Grade 8 students entering Grade 9 in the fall of September, 2006. These students were identified as possibly being at risk of not succeeding in Grade 9. The second phase of the project was expanded to include all Grade 9 and 10 students who were identified by their teachers as having academic difficulty.

The core objectives of the mentoring initiative were:

- To connect the student with a teacher mentor
- To monitor the student's academic, learning skills and social / co-curricular success
- To monitor the student's connection to their school community

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METHODOLOGY

The Effectiveness of Teacher Mentoring on Student Achievement was a quantitative and qualitative study. Three questionnaires were designed and administered to the students and to the teacher mentors. Data was also collected and analyzed from each reporting cycle. The surveys were designed to monitor the effectiveness of the project and the report card data was used to set up goal setting plans for improvement. The student inventory questionnaire was used to match at risk students with a teacher mentor. Each teacher/mentor was assigned one to three students to mentor. Teachers who were academic mentors would meet with any given number of students to address the academic concerns of the students.

Key Findings

General

- Teachers and students claim the program has had an impact on student learning
- Students and teachers would like to be paired with a teacher/mentor to whom they already have a connection to
- Time is a major factor in providing opportunities for the program to be successful
- Time missed from a regular class to attend a mentoring session or an academic mentoring session was a concern for some staff

Specific

- Students recognize the importance of the mentoring program
- Teacher mentors recognize the importance of the mentoring program
- Staff recognize the importance of early intervention for students making the transition from Grade 8 to Grade 9

Recommendations

- Both aspects of the mentoring program: the academic mentoring and the individual mentoring should continue
- More time should be spent in discussion with the Grade 8 teacher to establish a goal plan for the students who may have difficulty adjusting to high school
- More release time is needed for individual teacher mentors and academic mentors in order to develop stronger trust relationships with the students they are mentoring

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

To assess the impact teacher mentoring has on improving struggling students' connection to their school community and to use data to analyze their academic and learning skills growth.

Initiatives:

The provision of one-on-one support for twenty-nine at risk (Grades Nine and Ten), students at Dr. F.J. Donevan C.I.



BACKGROUND

High failure rates among students in Grades Nine and Ten at Donevan C.I. provided the impetus for administrative personnel to look closely at the needs of these students. The analysis revealed that a segment of our Grades Nine and Ten students were at risk of failing two or more courses in a semester. These students often had poor attendance and were deemed at-risk of not being successful in their transition to Grade 9. This data led to implementation of an academic mentoring program for Donevan students in 2005. For the 2006-7 school year, the Provincial Government required all Grade 8 students deemed at risk of not succeeding in the transition to Grade 9 be identified. At Donevan, we expanded our academic mentoring program to include these students. In September these students completed a questionnaire (see appendix) and based on the results of the questionnaire, they were connected to a teacher mentor.

Current Research Consulted

In establishing the program, some of the educational research consulted included: Harbors of Hope, W. Hulley, *Professional Learning Communities*, W. DuFour, Marzano's work on *Instructional Strategies, Classroom Management, Differentiated Learning, Effective School Research* and The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens, Covey.

DATA COLLECTION METHODS & ANALYSIS

The following timelines were followed in order to implement the program and to gather data for analysis:

September 2006 to January 2007

Students for the Individual Mentoring component of the Mentoring Program were chosen. These students were recommended by their Grade 8 teachers. As well, Donevan staff provided a list of current Grade 10 students who experienced difficulty in Grade 9 and who they believed would benefit from the individual mentoring program.

Administration reviewed the report card data from the end of 2005-6 school year and also recommended students for the individual mentor program.

Administration asked for staff volunteers for the mentorship program both as individual mentors and academic mentors. Individual mentors would meet with the students he/she was mentoring on a frequent basis (decided upon by the mentor and the mentee) to work on learning skills, time management, and goal setting, as well as providing advice for any problems encountered during the transition to high school. The academic mentors would meet with students requiring academic support at least once before each reporting cycle. (see attached description in the appendix). Twenty staff members volunteered to be either individual mentors or academic mentors.

Interview Process for Individual Mentoring

Students recommended for the mentorship program were then interviewed by the Mentorship program Co-ordinator. The program was explained to the students and to their parents. If the student was interested in participating in the program, an interest survey (see appendix) was completed by the student. The questionnaire was designed to gather information about the student's attitudes towards academic, social, and personal interests and or issues. Students were then matched with a teacher mentor based on teacher-student rapport, teacher mentor availability and most importantly the individual needs of the at-risk student. Each mentor was assigned one to three at-risk students. The mentors were provided with a copy of 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens, by Steven Covey to use as a resource with the mentee.

Academic Mentoring Program

Before each reporting cycle in October, November and January for semester one and in March, April and June for semester two, students were identified for the Academic Mentoring Program in Grades 9 and 10. The academic mentors would then meet with the students identified for their specific curriculum expertise and work with these students on: completing assignments, time management, reviewing concepts and study skills. The students were recommended by their classroom teachers for the academic mentoring session and provided a list of assignments and/or concepts the students needed help with.

Another component of the Academic Mentoring program involved providing support for students who may be at risk in passing the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test. Students wrote a mock test and fifty students were identified as needing extra support. Academic mentors then met with students in weeks before the OSSLT to provide extra practice and timely feedback for suggestions for improvement. At the time of this report, forty of the fifty students were successful as reported on the May preliminary OSSLT results.

Specific Data Collected

- Teacher mentors recorded the frequency and content of the meetings with their students by means of log/journal entries
- Data was collected as anecdotal information through discussion with teacher mentors and the mentor students
- Numerical data was collected and tabulated at the end of semester one for analysis of student achievement. The following information was tabulated for the at-risk students in the mentor program:
 - Student lates
 - Student absences
 - Number of credits earned
 - Student averages



Results

The following data tables summarize the semester one results of consolidated reports for marks, lates, and absences. The results for all twenty-nine mentor students involved in the individual mentorship program are included in the data tables.

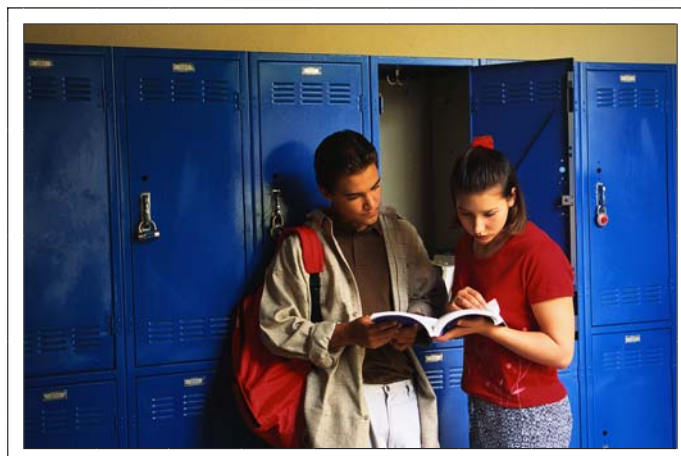
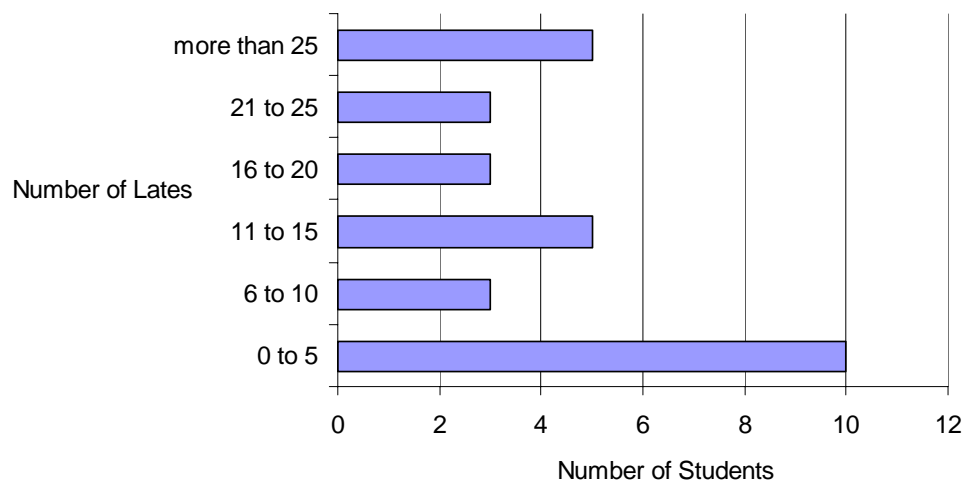


Table 1 – Lates for Semester One

Number of Lates	Number of Students	Percent of Students
0-5	10	34%
6-10	3	10%
11-15	5	17%
16-20	3	10%
21-25	3	10%
>25	5	17%

Fig. 1. Lates for Semester One**Table 2 - Absences for Semester One**

Number of Absences	Number of Students	Percent of Students
0-5	11	38%
6-10	13	45%
11-15	2	7%
16-20	2	7%
21-25	0	0%
>25	1	3%

Fig. 2 - Absences for Semester One

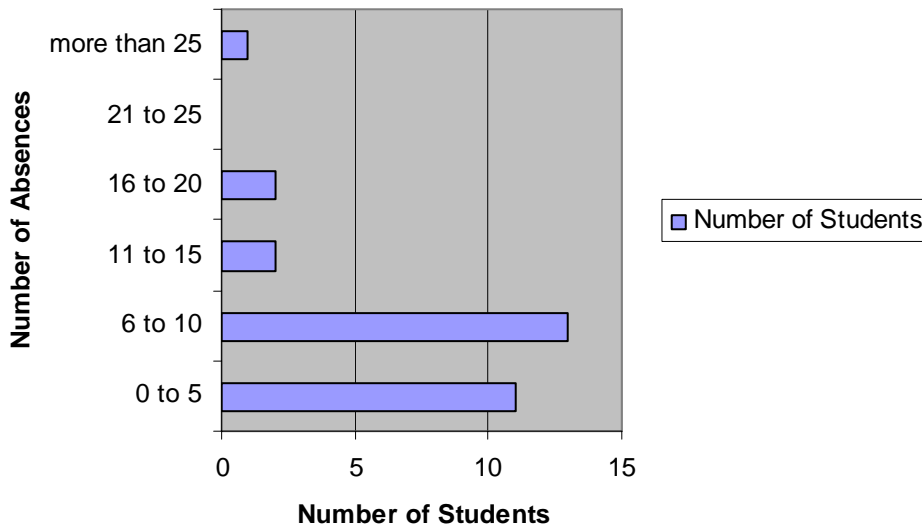


Table 3 – Credits Granted for Semester One

Credits Granted	Number of Students	Percent of Students
Four	26	90%
Three	3	10%
Two	0	0%
One	0	0%

Fig.3. Credits granted for Semester One

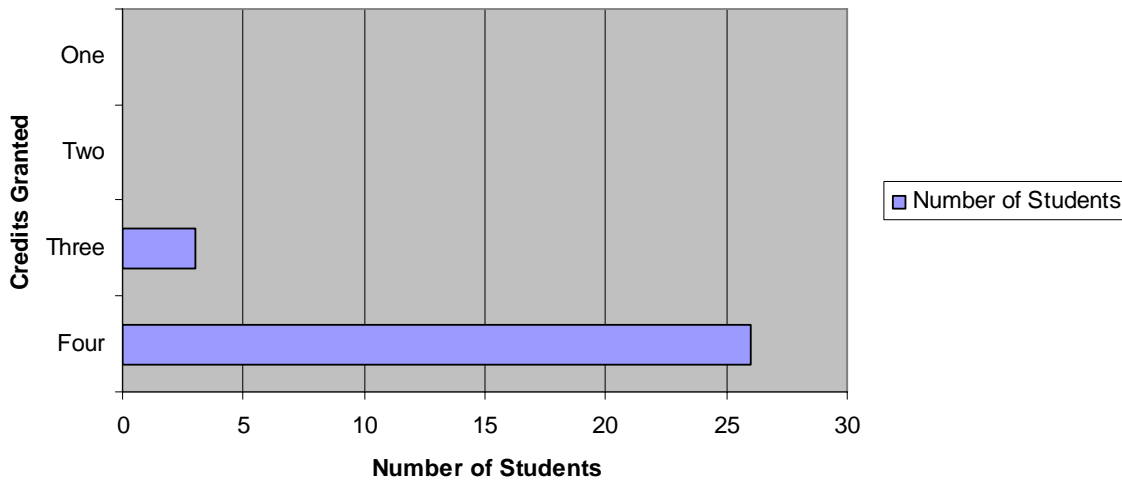
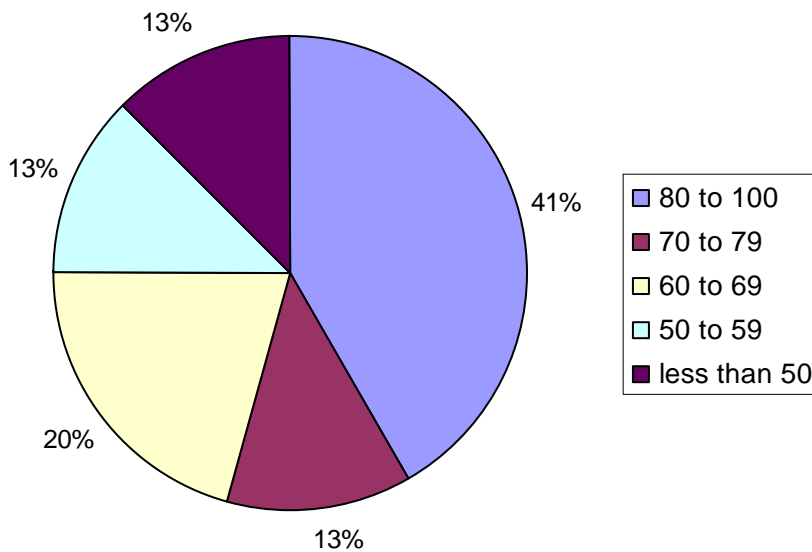


Table 4 – Student Averages for Semester One

Average of Four Courses (%)	Number of Students	Percent of Students
80-100	10	34%
70-79	3	10%
60-69	5	17%
50-59	3	10%
<50	3	10%

Fig. 4 – Student Averages for Semester One

Teacher Reflections on the Mentoring Program

Teachers were asked to fill out a survey in June about the mentoring program. 60% of the teachers surveyed agree that the students benefited from the mentoring program in the areas of time management and organizational skills.

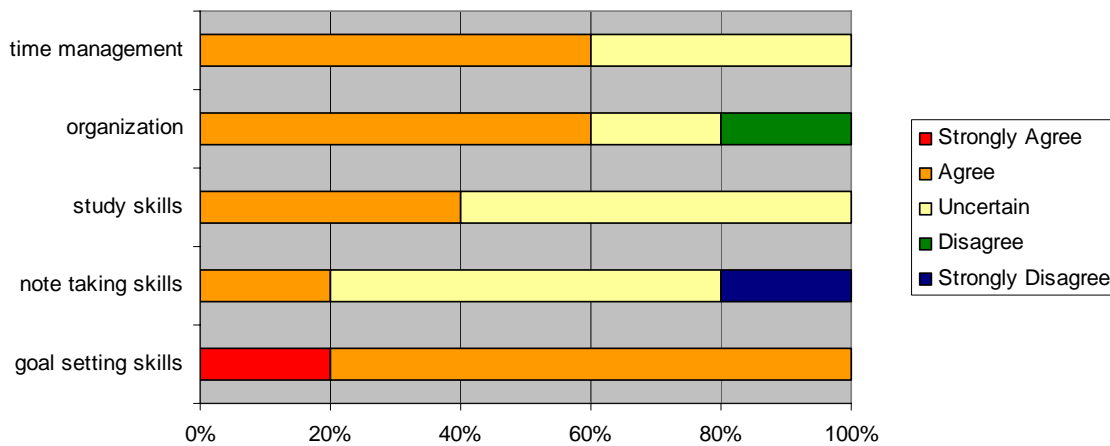
40% felt that the program helped students improve their study skills, and 20% felt that it helped in notetaking skills. 100% of the teachers surveyed felt that the students benefited from the goal setting that they worked on together.

“Perhaps students should make a choice of the teacher they want to work with.”

The teachers feel that to improve the program, they should be the student’s teacher in at least one subject area or there should be a matching process where students request a particular teacher or vice versa. This will help build a better connection with the student.

Fig. 5 Teacher Evaluation on Mentoring Program

(n = 7)



When asked if the mentoring program had a positive effect on the students outside of academics, 86% agreed that the students benefited from the program. 86% of the teachers agree that Donevan C.I. should continue the mentoring program.

Fig. 6 Teachers who believe that mentoring has a positive effect on students outside of academics (n = 7)

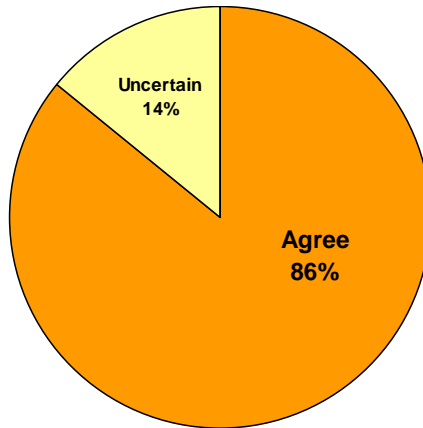
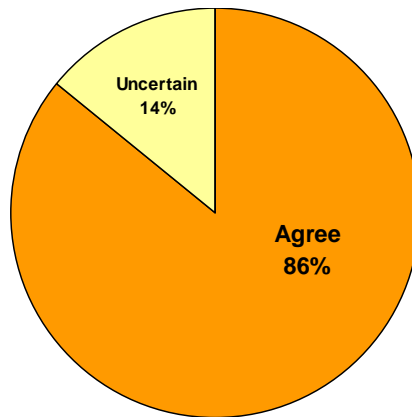


Fig.7 Teachers who believe that Donevan should continue the mentoring program (n = 7)



Student Reflections on the Mentorship Program

19 students were surveyed in the mentorship program. More than 80% of the students feel confident working with their mentor.

When students were asked, what one trait they liked best about their mentor, they responded:

"She was determined to help me even if I was stubborn"

"He was my coach"

"She was my teacher"

"Understanding and not judging"

"Always willing to help me out with everything"

"Respectful"

Fig.8 - Areas of Benefit as a result of the Mentorship Program (n = 19)

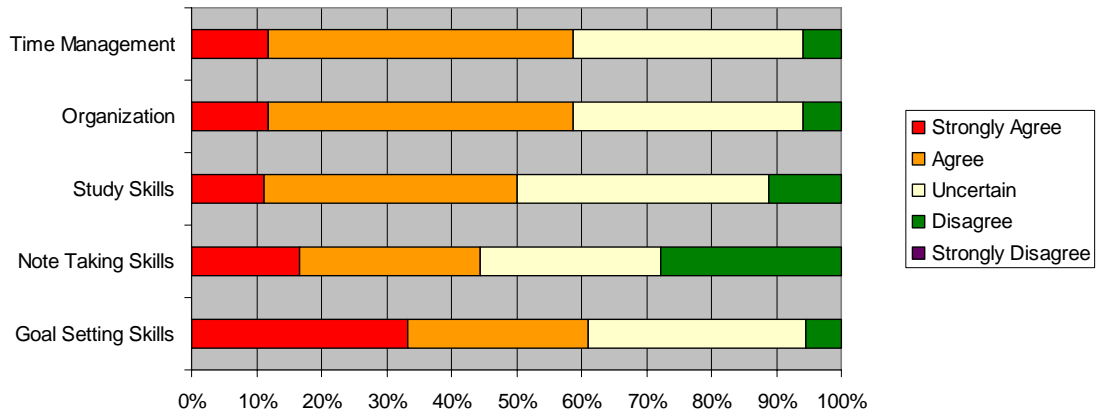
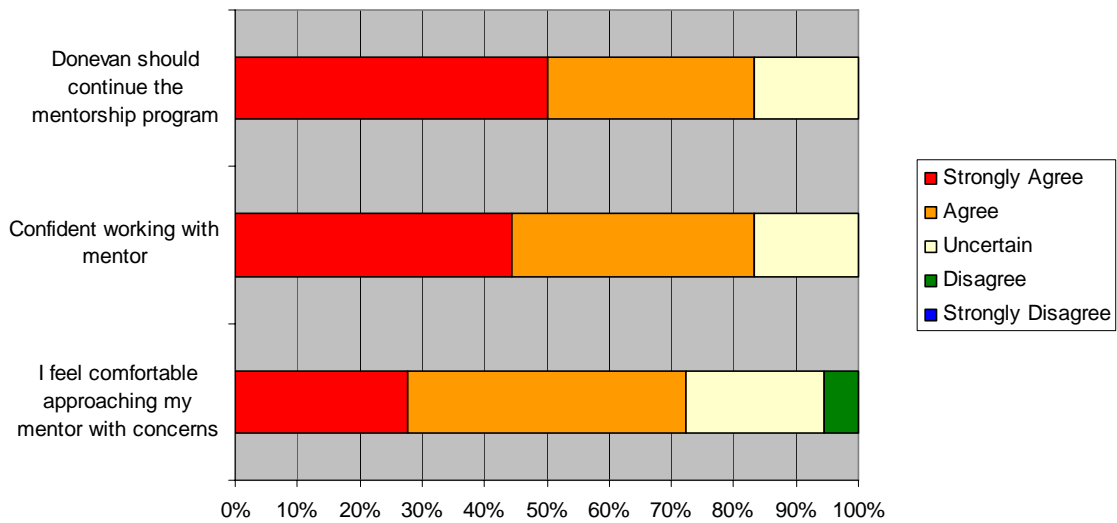


Fig. 9 - Students' views on mentorship program (n = 19)



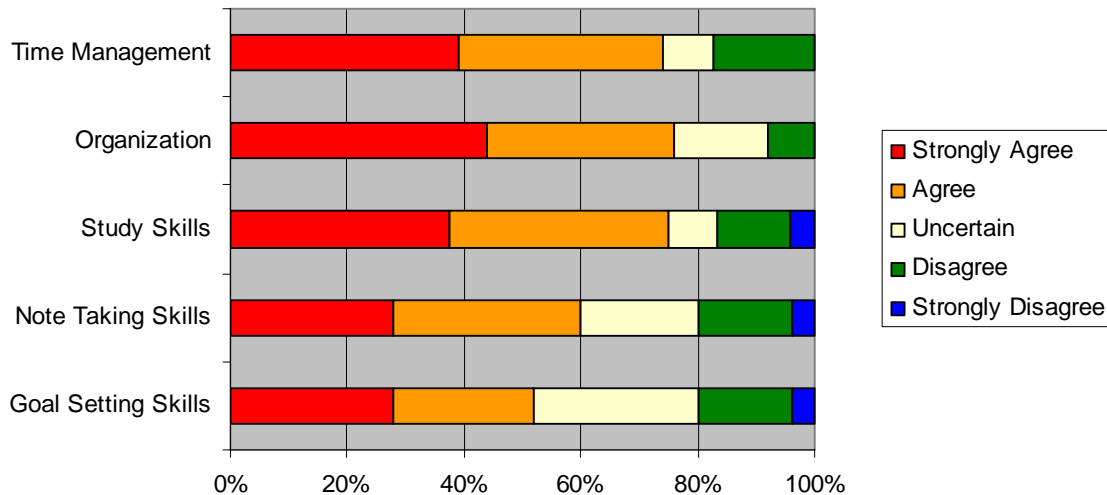
Student Reflections on the Subject-Specific Mentorship Program

Two teachers over the course of three days mentored 26 students in the Subject-Specific Mentorship Program in the areas of Mathematics and French. Students were given a survey at the end of the mentoring session. Students were asked if they could benefit from extra help in the following areas: time management, organization, study skills, note taking skills, and goal setting skills.

Table 5 - Subject Specific Student Areas of Extra Support Needs (n = 25)

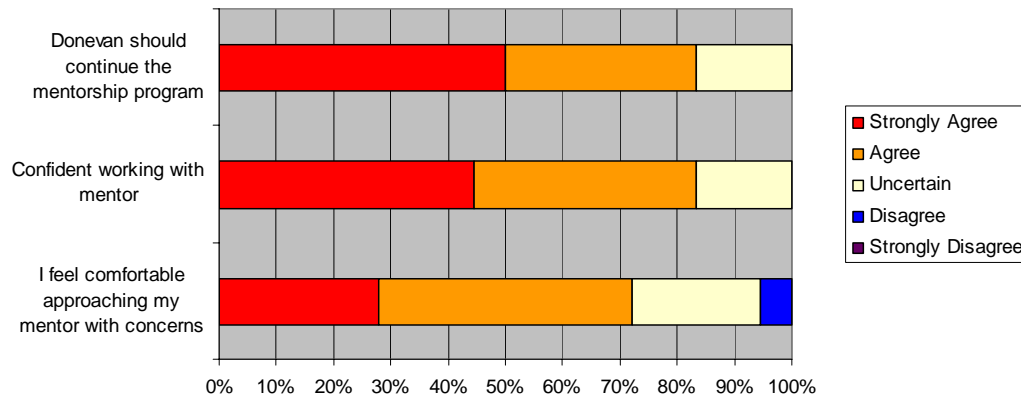
Area of need	% that agree
Time management	71%
Organization	76%
Study skills	75%
Note taking skills	60%
Goal Setting skills	52%

Fig. 10 - Student Reflections on Areas of Benefit in the Subject Specific Mentoring (n = 25)



Students seemed to have a very positive attitude towards the subject specific mentorship program. They were able to catch up on missed assignments, and get one-on-one help with their mentor.

Fig.7 Students' views on the Subject-Specific Mentorship program (n = 25)



Reflections:

The hard data found in the tables indicates the following:

- 83% of the mentored students missed 10 or fewer classes
- 44% of the mentored students earned an overall semester one average of 70% or higher
- attendance for semester one was solid
- the number of student lates should be monitored more closely as the teacher mentor works with his/her student
- the number of credits earned and the student averages reveal a successful semester for our mentor students

The anecdotal information collected reveals very positive feedback from the mentored students. These students indicated that the academic support that they have received has been invaluable in attaining their semester one marks. The mentored students have indicated a desire to receive academic support for semester two. In general teacher mentors have reported very positive interactions with the at-risk students. In a few instances the at-risk student has not been receptive to the extra attention that accompanied additional monitoring and support. In one instance, a teacher mentor felt that continuing to mentor an at-risk student was ineffective.

Action/Recommendations

- Continue to provide academic support mentoring
- Expand the individual mentoring program to allow for time for teacher mentors to meet at least once bi-weekly with their students and to be available to provide more intensive support.
- Begin to mentor students in areas of concerns such as:
 - Decreasing the number of absences and lates
 - Provide more workshop activities for students in areas of: time management, study skills, career opportunities and course selections
 - Modify how teacher mentors are matched with students
 - Both aspects of the mentoring program: the academic mentoring and the individual mentoring should continue
 - More time should be spent in discussion with the Grade 8 teacher to establish a goal plan for the students who may have difficulty adjusting to high school
 - More release time is needed for individual teacher mentors and academic mentors in order to develop stronger trust relationships with the students they are mentoring

Key Findings

General

- Teachers and students claim the program has had an impact on student learning
- Students and teachers would like to be paired with a teacher/mentor they already have a connection to
- Time is a major factor in providing opportunities for the program to be successful
- Time missed from a regular class to attend a mentoring session or an academic mentoring session was somewhat of a concern for some staff

Specific

- Students recognize the importance of the mentoring program
- Teacher mentors recognize the importance of the mentoring program
- Staff recognize the importance of early intervention for students making the transition from Grade 8 to Grade 9

Appendix

Mentoring Proposal

School Year 2006-2007

We are planning to modify the current mentorship model for next year. Students in our current mentorship program were each assigned a teacher mentor to provide extra assistance during the school year. Next year we will continue to offer students the same individual assistance and in addition to this we feel it is important to have other teacher mentors assigned to specific focuses. The 2006-2007 Mentorship model is outlined below.

Position	Number of Teachers Involved	Focus
Individual Student Mentors	20 plus (as required)	2 to 3 students to monitor per teacher
Academic Support Mentors	Approx. 6	Subject specific support in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mathematics • Science • French • English • Social Sciences • Arts • Family Studies
Attendance Mentors	Approx. 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide counseling to students with poor attendance • Provide parent contact early in a semester
School Safety Mentors	Approx. 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a contact for students who are bullied • Work with the student Crime Stoppers program • Play a visible role with the Grade Nine Police Assembly • Work to develop the materials for the respect and character education focus



Student Evaluation Form of
the Subject Support Program



Place a checkmark under the most appropriate response.

Feedback Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I feel that I am more confident with the subject material as a result of the support that I received.					
The extra subject support that I received will result in a higher course mark.					
I feel that I could benefit from extra support in the following areas:					
• time management					
• organization					
• study skills					
• note taking skills					
• goal setting skills					
I felt comfortable receiving the extra support. (i.e. Did you feel comfortable leaving class to get the help?)					
Donevan should continue the Subject Support program.					

The course that I received subject support in was:
 My Name is :

Other Comments:



TEACHER Evaluation Form of the MENTORING PROGRAM

1. Place a checkmark under the most appropriate response.

Feedback Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I feel that the student has benefited from the mentoring program in the following areas:					
• time management					
• organization					
• study skills					
• note taking skills					
• goal setting skills					
Aside from academics, the mentoring program has a positive effect on the students.					
Donevan should continue the mentoring program.					

2. Please answer the following.

1) Did you find “7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens” helpful? Yes / No

2) Do you have any suggestions/improvements for the program?

3) Other Comments: