International Telementor Program
Full Program Evaluation
October 2010- November 2012

Mentor Comprehensive Report

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Program Overview

The International Telementor Program (ITP) creates matches between industry professionals from ITP sponsor companies and students while targeting specific communities around the world. ITP creates project-based online mentoring for students and teachers in classroom and home school environments with a focus on serving a diverse student population. Since 1995, over 28,000 students have been served through nine countries.

Parameters of this Program Evaluation Research

This independently conducted program evaluation covers two program years (2010 – 2012). Specifically, this program evaluation research includes mentor survey results from the aforementioned years. This program evaluation report is divided into three specific areas: (a) content areas impacted for students by mentors, (b) mentor perceptions of additional areas impacted for students; and (c) overall benefits of mentors in the ITP program.

Content Areas Impacted

Based on the comments in this report, mentors highlighted that the following content areas were impacted by their relationships with students:
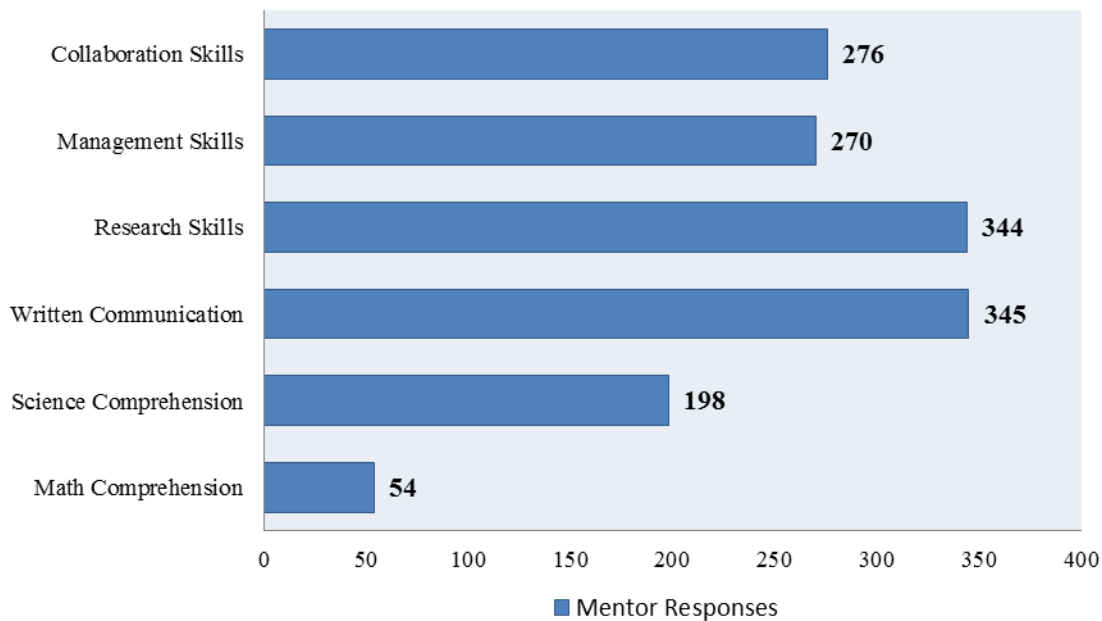
These results highlights significant impact by a large number of mentors in areas such as collaboration skills, management skills, research skills, written communication, science comprehension. While math comprehension was the lowest rated item, students still learned a great deal in this area.

Mentor Perceptions of Additional Areas Impacted

Mentors reported in the survey results that they also assisted students in the following areas: (a) awareness of professional support networks; (b) desire to research and plan for postsecondary education; (c) awareness of postsecondary opportunities and (d) knowledge of the professional work environment.
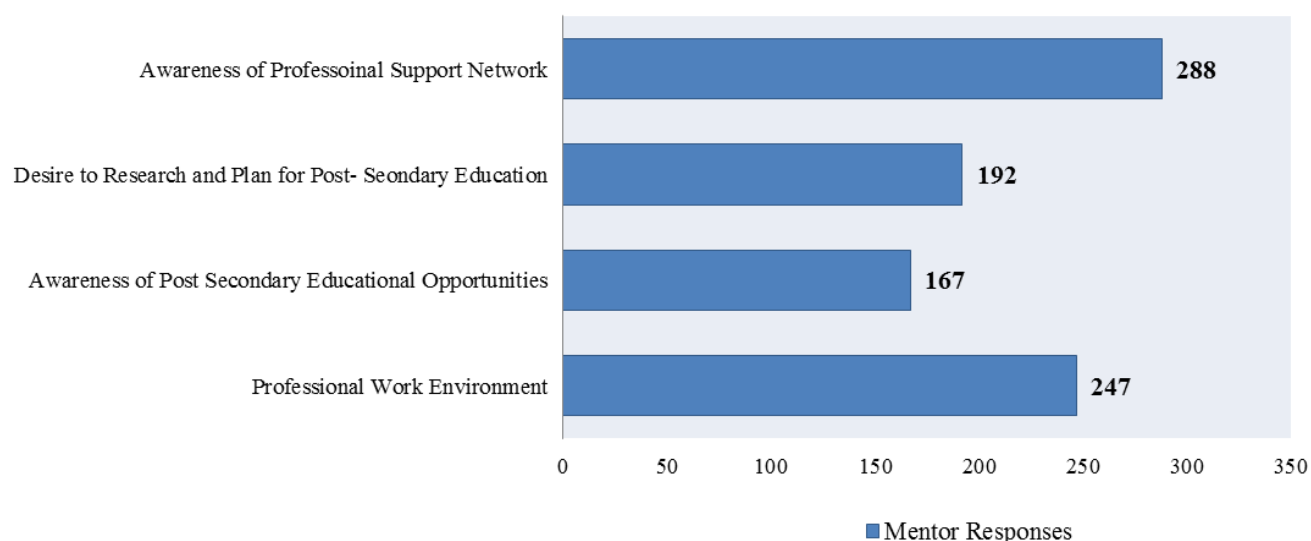
Benefits of Being a Mentor in the Program

Mentors were asked about the most rewarding benefits of serving in this capacity with the ITP program. Below is a sampling of responses from mentors:

- *"Being able to learn along with the student and being able to take part in his educational growth."*

- *"Seeing the enthusiasm and excitement in the student."*

- *"The most rewarding aspect was getting the thank you note at the end and hearing about the impact I as a mentor had."*

Based on these sample of responses, mentors were very enthusiastic about being involved with students in the ITP program.

About the Researcher

Chance W. Lewis, Ph.D. is the Carol Grotnes Belk Distinguished Professor and Endowed Chair of Urban Education at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Also, he is the Director of the Urban Education Collaborative. If there are any questions related to the research results, Dr. Lewis can be contacted at (704) 743-4207 or by e-mail at chance.lewis@uncc.edu.

MENTOR EVALUATION REPORT

Q1: Please indicate the student skill areas that you feel you influenced through this project.

Total Number of Student Respondents = **428**

*Figure 1.* Most Influenced Student Skill Areas, Telementor 2010-2012
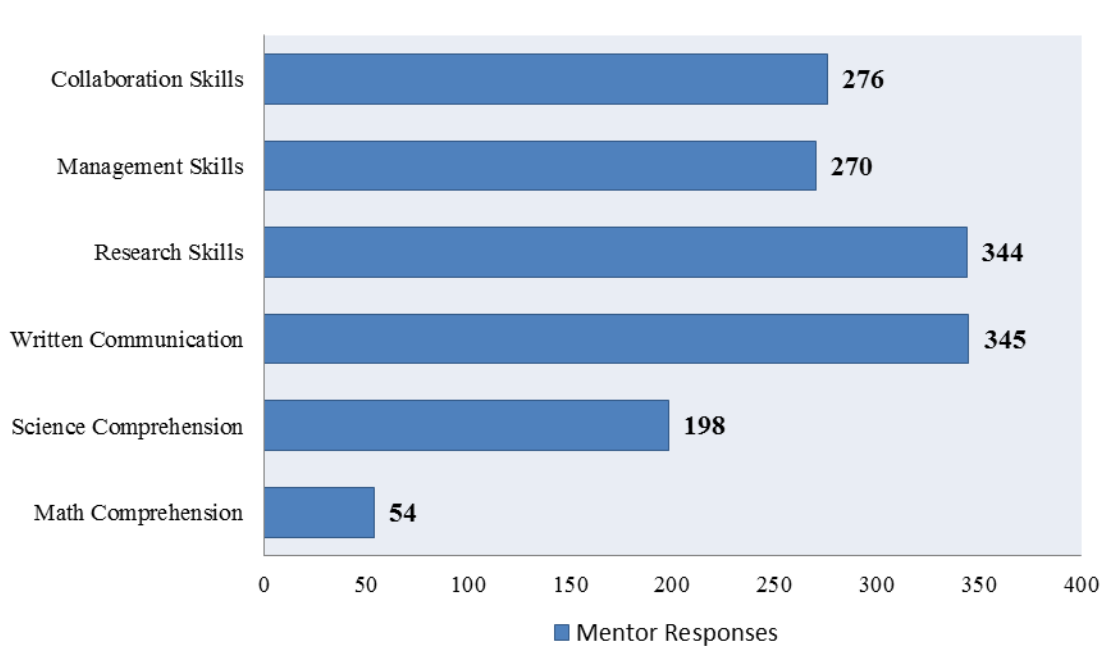
In Question 1, mentors were asked to indicate the student skill areas that they felt they influenced through this project. According to Figure 1, 276 mentors indicated they influenced collaboration skills; 270 mentors indicated management skills; 344 research skills; 345 written communication; 198 science comprehension and 54 math comprehension. Based on these results, mentors highlighted that they felt that they had improved some significant areas. However, the data does show that the lowest area of influence was the area of math comprehension. The evaluator encourages the ITP program to work with mentors on effective ways to influence math comprehension through the project-based learning.

Q2: Please indicate if your mentoring support aided your student in the following areas.

Figure 2. Areas Aided by Mentoring Support, Telementor 2010-2012
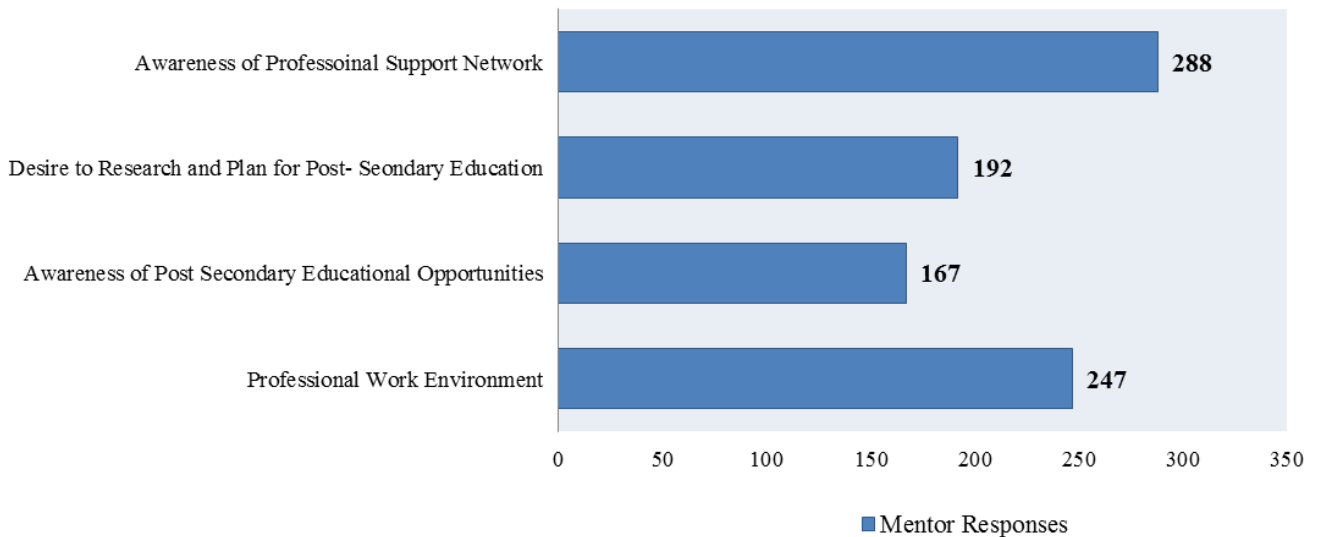
Question 2 asked mentors to indicate if their mentoring support aided their students in the areas highlighted in Figure 2. According to Figure 2, 288 mentors indicated they aided students in awareness of *professional support network*; 192 mentors indicated they supported a *desire to research and plan for postsecondary education*; 167 supported an *awareness of postsecondary educational opportunities*; and 247 mentors supported students by mentoring about the *professional work environment*. Based on these results, mentors highlighted that they provided support in significant areas. The evaluator encourages the ITP program to build on these strengths with mentors to further enhance the student experience in the ITP program.

Q3: The _average_ quality of the messages received from students throughout the project.[1]

(3.51)

1 = "Poor Quality"
5 = "Above Average Quality"

In question 3 of the survey, mentors were asked about the quality of messages from students throughout the project. Based on a scale of 1 = "Poor Quality and 5 = "Above Average Quality," mentors provided an average of 3.51 indicating that messages received from students were of average quality. Based on these results, the ITP program should work with students on their writing skills to improve the quality of messages sent to mentors.

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[1] Individual data on mentor responses were not provided in the _Mentor Survey Summary_.

Q4: Did your student share a final project (presentation, research report, plan, etc.) with you for this project?

Total Number of Student Respondents = **428**

Figure 3. Student Sharing of Final Product with Mentor, Telementor 2010-2012

	Yes	No	Not Applicable
■ Final Product Sharing	133	261	34
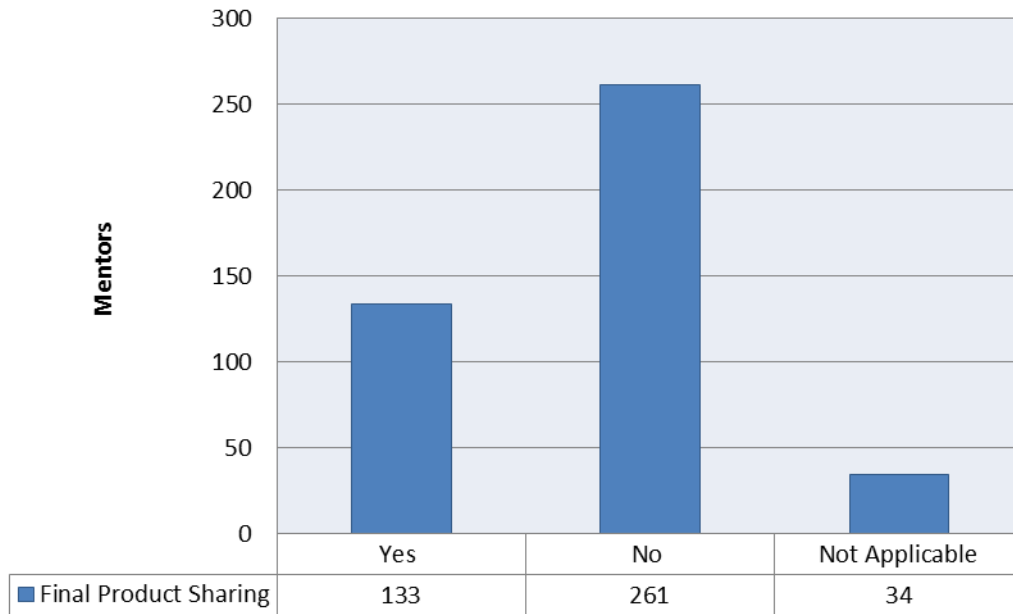
Question 4 asked mentors if their students shared a final project (presentation, research report, plan, etc.) with them for this project. According to Figure 3, the majority of mentors (261 vs. 133) indicated that their students did not share their final projects with them at the conclusion of the project. Based on these results, the ITP program should build in a requirement that students should share their final projects with the mentors who have assisted these students in the creation of these projects.

Q5: *Average* level and quality of assistance received from the teacher throughout the project.

(3.84)

1 = "Low Quality, Infrequent"
5 = "High Quality, Frequent"

In question 5 of the survey, mentors were asked about the level and quality of assistance from the teacher throughout the project. Based on a scale of 1 = "Low Quality, Infrequent" and 5 = "High Quality, Frequent," mentors provided an average of 3.84 indicating that the quality of assistance received from the teacher was of average quality. Based on these results, the ITP program should work with teachers on increasing their assistance throughout the project.

Q6: *Average* level and quality of assistance you received from ITP staff throughout the project.

(3.82)

1 = "Low Quality, Infrequent"
5 = "High Quality, Frequent"

Question 6 asked mentors about the quality of assistance you received from the ITP staff throughout the project. Based on a scale of 1 = "Low Quality, Infrequent" and 5 = "High Quality, Frequent," mentors provided an average of 3.82 indicating that the quality of assistance received from the ITP staff was of average quality. Based on these results, the ITP program should work with their staff on increasing the quality of assistance provided to the mentors.

Q7: Things either the teacher or the ITP staff do to make a similar project more successful.

Selected Mentor Responses:

- *"The ITP staff can stop using the teacher's email to communicate. The teacher did an outstanding job in this class -- communicating effectively and frequently with mentors as a group and me individually when I had questions. I thought this was an excellent class that produced excellent learning for the students and hope that it's repeated with mentoring."*

- *"Expand number of weeks project lasts."*

- *"As a mentor, I would like to be more involved in the project through interactive video with the teacher and the class as a group."*

- *"Make it possible for students to post documents, not just messages, for feedback."*

- *"An overall schedule being shared in advance and being adjusted based on changes throughout the project timeframe, taking into account vacations, testing and other things that interrupted work on the project. Time allowed for project may not have been enough considering the scope. Setting forth clear mentor expectations, often I did not know my role and just did what I thought I should."*

- *"I think it would be helpful to know what the average student messages/progress is to better be able to gauge how my assigned student is progressing on the project. I sometimes have difficulty knowing how well my student is doing compared to his/her peers. Perhaps this isn't important but it may better help my expectations of what to expect from the student in terms of quality messages and responses on the project."*

- *"I don't think mentor participation should be part of the grade or at least a significant part. I think if the student is willing then it will be pretty obvious after a few interactions that there will be a chemistry that forms. If it doesn't then sadly, the student loses out. I think forcing a student who is either too busy or not interested will create a negativity towards science in general and research specifically."*

- *"Communicate better the requirements of the project. It was difficult to provide two messages a week, when there were times that I was unaware of what's being asked of us. When clear direction was provided, it was much easier to communicate with the student. Also, this project was originally planned for half the school year, but ended up running a full school year. The communication regarding the commitment to the project needs to be better.."*

- *"Release the documents exchanged between the student/mentor more frequently"*

Q8: Feedback regarding the quality of the student's final project as well as suggestions for improvement.
Selected Mentor Responses:

- *"My student's final project was of high quality, and she definitely put some time into the final product. Some of my suggestions were ignored (I think because of a time constraint), but she did a great job at taking my advice and taking it a step farther to add her own spin."*

- *"The quality of the poster exceeded my expectations. It was very helpful to see photos of the poster. The conclusions drawn from the data in the research paper were jumped to without sufficient data. Some exposure to basic statistics would be helpful."*

- *"The student's final project (presentation) was well-researched and interesting; it showed the student's creative and fun side in addition to the information that was obtained from her research."*

- *"I was expecting a business proposal or a market survey for a new product. While this may have happened behind the scenes, it was not obvious to me that the process to bring a "signature drink to market" were met. The brochure was clever, but it was not clear that how the analysis was completed. I do not rule out that I may have misunderstood the assignment or may be missing information."*

- *"The student I mentored did not share her final project other than to say it "came out ok". Getting information out of her about the status of her project was difficult…."*

- *"I asked my student about her final project a few times, but never received anything"*

- *"Unfortunately the student did not share his work in enough time for me to help him. His paper and posters were shared after they were already turned in. I was able to help out with some research suggestions. It may be helpful to give the students deadlines for sharing projects to telementors. His project was thoughtful and well executed."*

- *"I was very impressed by the skills of the student with PowerPoint and her thoughtfulness of the project. I would suggest that the teachers provide an example of a good final project to the mentors at the beginning of the semester - I find it difficult to determine what the appropriate level of detail/etc is expected in this age group."*

- *"The project was very interesting. Admittedly, at first I didn't think the project was very involved and might be too simple for a multi-year project, but after watching the presentation and reading the proposal I am much more impressed. If the project works out, it has a lot of potential."*

**Q9**: Overall experience in the program.

(4.11)

1 = "Negative"
5 = "Positive"

Question 9 asked mentors about their overall experience in the program. Based on a scale of 1 = "Negative" and 5 = "Positive," mentors provided an average of 4.11 indicating that their overall experience was above average in the program. Based on these results, the ITP program should work with mentors on ways to continually improve their experience in the ITP program.

Q10: Would you consider mentoring new students in the future?

Figure 4. Future Mentor Considerations, Telementor 2010-2012

4%
(n = 15)

Yes
No

96%
(n = 413)
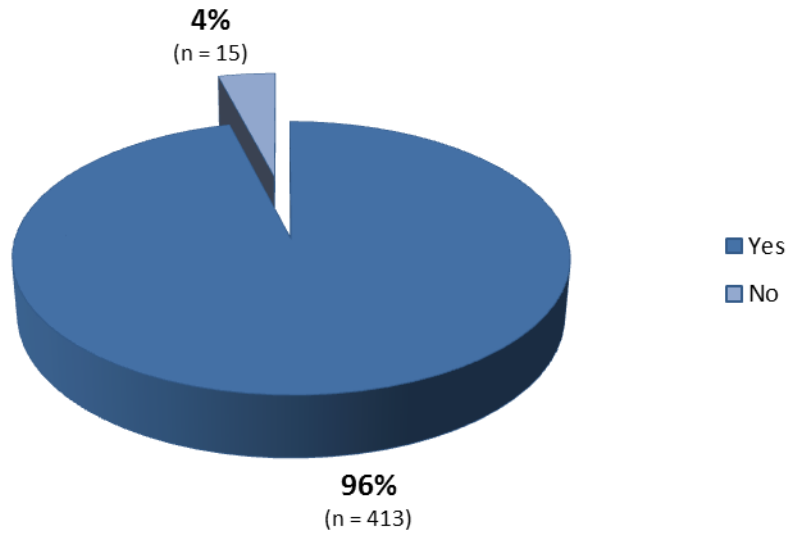
In Question 10, mentors were asked if they would consider mentoring new students in the future. Four hundred thirteen (413) or 96% of the 428 mentor respondents noted that they would mentor new students in the future. Only fifteen (15) or 4% of the 428 mentors mentioned that they did not have an interest in mentoring new students in the future. Based on these results, the evaluator encourages the ITP program to develop an exit survey with mentors who do not plan on mentoring new students in the future to ascertain the reasons for such a decision.

Q11: Why or why not?

Selected Mentor Responses (see Q10):

- *"I am on the fence for mentoring in the future. Because of my work and the location of my work place, working with and meeting the mentee from Fort Collins was very inconvenient. In the future, it would help if the mentees were located in Loveland. Also, I feel very restricted in the amount of advice I can provide since it is all delivered through text. If we are to use only text I feel maybe an instant message system might be more beneficial so both mentor and mentee could get instant feedback."*

- *"I would consider it, but for more technical engineering/science projects, I think it would be more productive to be able to help the students in person, by meeting them at their school or my company's campus on a scheduled basis to help them, perhaps once or twice during the semester. My student specifically had difficulty with building an electronic circuit, which is difficult to explain to a middle schooler via email. Alternatively, it would be nice to know teachers or parents of students who have specific knowledge of areas the students are researching (either engineering or science), so that I could recommend those people to my student, since that's simpler from a liability/security context."*

- *"Mentoring is always a very rewarding experience when both parties are actively involved. I think telementoring is a great way to get professionals involved in mentoring young students since it does not require face-to-face time. Sometimes meeting face-to-face is better/required, however, the way these projects & the website are designed, I found it very easy to communicate regularly with my student & see her progress on the project."*

- *"Yes, I would consider mentoring again because I believe it is a good cause. For whatever reason I feel like I'm only getting 10% of what I'd like to provide across to the student, but that's better than 0% and I can't really afford a more hands-on mentoring program with work being so busy."*

- *"Yes, I will continue to participate -I enjoy the interaction with the students and the possibility of opening their minds to new horizons."*

- *"I will be more selective, as this was another poor experience that left me feeling ineffective. Telementoring is probably not a good fit for students who need more assistance."*

- *"Certainly. Finding time to mentor continues to be challenging, but I still want to work with one student per semester/marking period. I really enjoy the opportunity to interact with students and have a chance to make a difference in their lives."*

- *"The time commitment compared to the difference I felt I was able to make was pretty negligible, and I just can't afford to commit my limited time to anything that isn't super impactful."*

Q12: **The most rewarding aspect of participating.**
Selected Mentor Responses:

- *"Being able to learn along with the student and being able to take part in his educational growth."*

- *"Seeing the enthusiasm and excitement in the student."*

- *"The most rewarding aspect was getting the thank you note at the end and hearing about the impact I as a mentor had."*

- *"Seeing the accomplishments of the students in the final project."*

- *"Seeing the student come up with independent ideas and their passion for the subject matter."*

- *"Helping the student with input and feedback."*

- *"The messages from the student"*

- *"The final message with student voicing how he felt the program helped him. and all the little successes along the way."*

- *"Seeing the process and end result of a child's work and creativity."*

- *"Seeing the personal development and passion of the student as she sought knowledge and a method of presenting it."*

- *"Helping a student in thinking about their future."*

- *"Knowing that the information I was providing was useful and helpful for someone else's future."*

- *"I loved watching her product get better every week."*

- *"Students actually listening to my feedback"*

| Q13: **The most difficult aspect of participating.** |
| --- |
| Selected Mentor Responses: |

- *"It was often hard to keep posting messages when the student doesn't send you an update or a draft of what he or she is working on. I often felt like I was reviewing at the last minute and that many of my comments couldn't be incorporated because the deadline for the student to submit was so close to when he sent me the files/documents to review."*

- *"Being unable to assist my student with direct technical issues."*

- *"Communicating with the student, understanding how to help him."*

- *"Having issues with posting some of my documents."*

- *"Lack of communication from the student, and very little content in the message I did receive."*

- *"Providing worthwhile/meaningful responses."*

- *"Offering too much help."*

- *"The inconsistent participation by the student."*

- *"Insuring that timelines were maintained."*

- *"Not all messages were clear and at times I didn't know how I could help."*

- *"Dealing with the website. We had some difficulties."*

- *"Playing telephone over the internet. It would have been much easier to do this if I could have actually met with the student on something like Skype because that way, we could actually discuss what is happening much much faster than sending messages like we do."*

- *"The lack of communication."*

- *"Not being sure exactly what the teacher is telling this specific student - to help reinforce what they are being told."*

- *"Assessing what is possible - i.e. what resources and time are available to the student and thus what kinds of projects are reasonable."*

- *"Being so far away and so hands off."*

- *I found it difficult/not rewarding to engage in an email-only conversation…."*

- *"Nothing was too difficult but I'd probably say staying consistent with messaging was the most challenging."*

Q14: First time you've been part of a formal mentoring program.

Total Number of Student Respondents = **428**

Figure 5. First-Time Mentors, Telementor 2010-2012

17%
(n = 74)

Yes
No

83%
(n = 354)
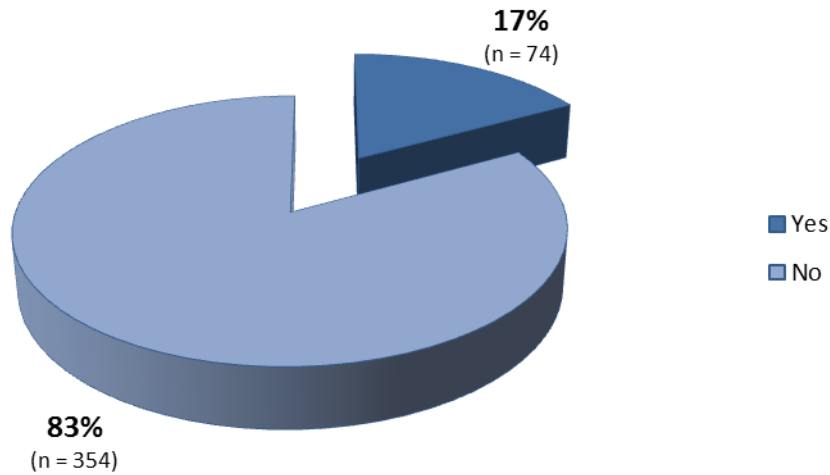
In Question 14, mentors were asked if this was the first time they had been part of a formal mentoring program. Three hundred fifty-four (354) or 83% of the 428 mentor respondents noted that this was not their first experience in a mentor program. Seventy-four (74) or 17% of the 428 mentor respondents mentioned that this was their first experience in a formal mentoring program Based on these results, the evaluator encourages the ITP program to recruit new mentors for the ITP program.

CONCLUSION

This report documents data from mentor respondents who participated in the International Telementor Program (ITP) from October 2010 – November 2012. Overall, mentors reported a positive experience in working with students to assist them in navigating their academic journey through their secondary school experience with firm aspirations for pursuing postsecondary options and careers after their educational attainment. However, mentors noted several areas where improvements can be made. The evaluator suggests that the ITP program carefully review the results on this report and make the appropriate changes for future improvement of the program. All data provided in this report was provided by the ITP program.

Any inquiries related to the content provided in this report should be addressed to the lead evaluator, Dr. Chance W. Lewis, Carol Grotnes Belk Distinguished Full Professor of Urban Education, Director, The Urban Education Collaborative, The University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Dr. Lewis can be reached by e-mail at chance.lewis@uncc.edu or on the web at http://www.chancewlewis.com.