

JOURNAL of the
INTERNATIONAL
TELEMENTOR
PROGRAM

Telementor

MAXIMIZING YOUTH POTENTIAL™

■ SPECIAL ISSUE!

Effective Guidance

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GET TO KNOW ...

mentor

Al Harrington

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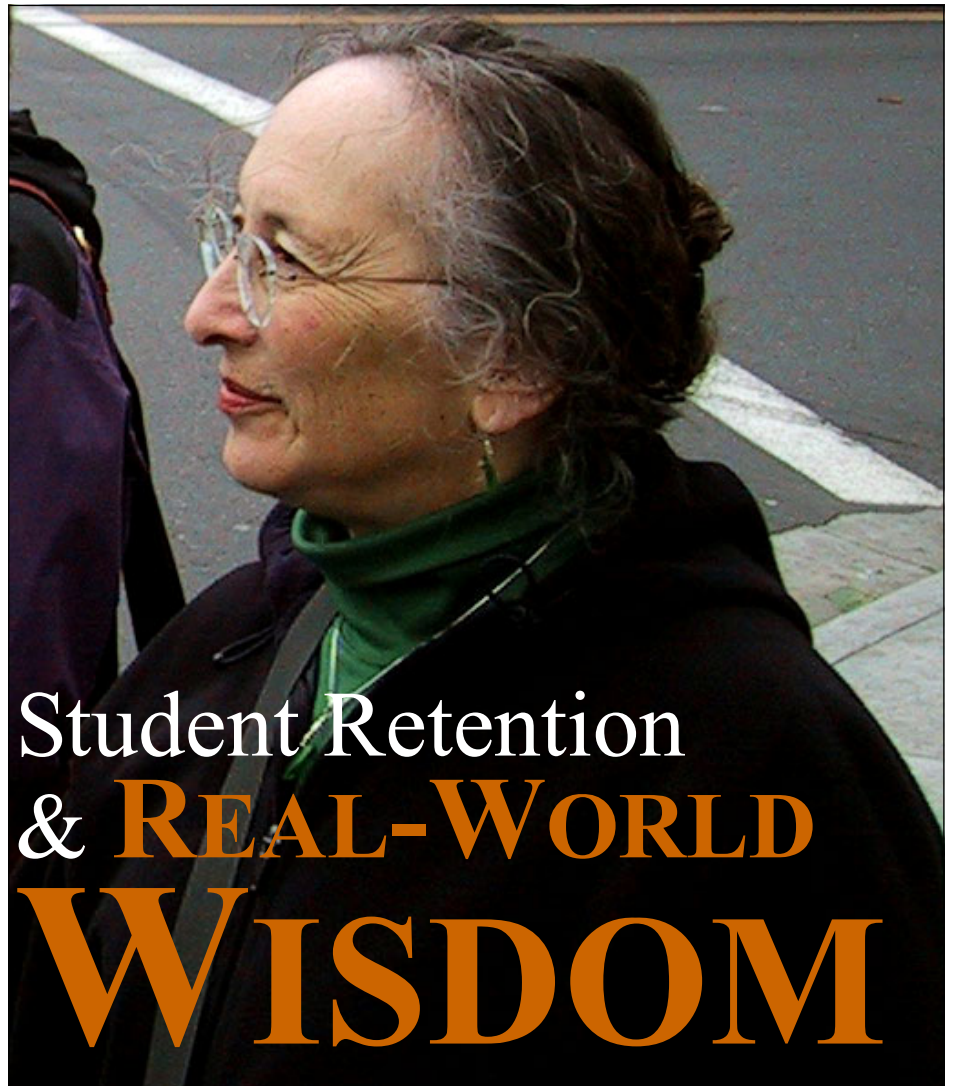
FROM THE FOUNDER

Because They Are Interested!

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MENTOR PROFILES

10 Inspiring Professionals!
... open this issue of
Telementor and read on!



DON'T MISS OUR **SPONSORS** ON PAGE 12

■ **Students Express Their Gratitude**
“Thank you for the compliment. It really means a lot to me to hear a professional say things like that and that you care about my success.” **See page 10**



DEDICATED MENTORS
such as Merck's Karla
Childers make a big difference
in students' lives.
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FROM THE FOUNDER

Sitting in for Founder/Director David Neils this issue is Dr. Jim Knight, one of the country's foremost experts in instructional coaching and director of the Pathways to Success project, a GEAR-UP Program at the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning.

WHETHER IT'S DOLPHINS in the Pacific Ocean or video games, telementoring links up people with expertise to children with a specialized interest. And it's a good example of the Internet's potential to help out a large pool of



students. A lot of students need a successful model, someone who's already been through it and done well. Telementoring provides that. It develops and brings an interest to the student, and lights their fire, for whatever their interest is.

I've heard all kinds of great stories of people moved by telementoring and for whom the program has made a real difference. For example, with help and inspiration from their mentors, a number of inner city students have created small business plans to win the state championship business competition or come in the top two or three every time.

In Kansas, our project focuses on children who live in poverty. In many cases, there's just not a lot of community support for them to stay in school. Telementoring is a way to link them up and to remind them of why they *do* want to stay in school. It's an efficient way to mentor. It's hard to find hundreds of mentors who want to work with inner-city students in a fairly small community of 100,000 people. I'm talking about inner city Topeka. Doesn't sound like it, but it is. And there just aren't hundreds of people sitting around waiting to volunteer.

Telementoring, however, is pretty painless, it's on the Internet, and it's a lot less to ask of someone compared to taking several hours out of their day to go down to the school, get the time off, drive in, and park. People *want* to do all that, but there's just not time in their schedules. And in a face-to-face mentoring situation there is some intimidation factor involved as well. Relative to live visits, it can feel safer via the Internet.

Indeed, the ITP gives energy to something a student might not be that aware of. They're passionate about something and linked up to someone

who really knows their material, a mentor. Then they realize, 'Oh, man! I really *am* interested in marine biology!'

More than anything else, the program is really able to help students follow their passion. Especially today, when there are so many paths, there isn't a lot they get turned on about. A mentor can

With telementoring, you're going to have students who are more engaged in learning, more driven by their interests. That's huge.

help a child find his interests and can tap into and unleash other things, too: more presentations, more topics. It's *generative*. It creates more and more. More than anything else, you want to have students with a passion for learning. What a cool thing that you can have people sitting at their desk at work and making a real difference. In some cases, they're the perfect person to do it, with their expertise. The reward you feel for providing such a service as a mentor is not insignificant. Telementoring brings together those who need to be brought together. In some cases it turns around a student's life.

What distinguishes ITP from other programs is that idea of linking together people around the thing the student is most interested in. Many times, you have to help them become interested. That, too, is something that telementoring can do.

With telementoring, you're going to have students who are more engaged in learning, more driven by their interests. That's huge. Pursuing their interests with a mentor at hand, students are better prepared to graduate from high school and move on. Parents and students gain at least that much; the corporate world gains graduates from high school and ultimately from college who aren't just punching a clock, but are keenly interested in what they're doing. The corporate world also happens to provide mentoring as a service. You cannot underestimate what providing such a service does for people who need it, or what that means for one's own morale.

In Kansas, we've done telementoring since 1999. More than 1,500 of our students have gone through the telementoring program. For the vast majority, it's been something they're very positive about, and it's made a big difference. It's rare that the students see it as work, although they get more work done when they're doing projects using telementoring than in any other area, and they do it because they're interested. ■

Telementor

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INTERNATIONAL
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Founder/Director
David Neils

**Program
Coordinator**
Zac Burson

Editor/Writer
Victor Rivero

www.telementor.org
3919 Benthaven Drive
Fort Collins, CO 80526
Direct: 970-206-9352
Toll Free: 877-376-8053
staff@telementor.org

The International Telementor Program facilitates electronic mentoring relationships between professional adults and students worldwide, and is recognized as the leader in the field of academic based mentoring.

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Corporate America's Heart & Soul

Looking for more? See why these people mentor BY VICTOR RIVERO

HERE ARE THE FACTS:

■ **1.1 million students drop out of high school every year**
A student drops out of high school every 29 seconds.
That's 1.1 million per year – or 6,000 a day.

■ **1/4 high school students don't graduate on time**
More than a quarter of high school freshmen fail to graduate from high school on time.

■ **2/3 jobs require college education**
Over two thirds of new jobs being created require college education or advanced training.

■ **3 in 10 college freshmen repeat high school classes**
Although 80 percent of tenth graders plan to earn a college degree, three in ten college freshmen have to repeat high school courses and nearly half fail to graduate.

■ **65% of convicts are dropouts**
Sixty five percent of U.S. convicts are dropouts. (Lack of education is one of the strongest predictors of criminal activity.)

■ **70% of 8th graders can't read at grade level**
Seventy percent of 8th graders can't read at their grade level – and most will never catch up.

■ **High school graduates don't have skills needed**
The majority of employers and college professors say today's high school graduates do not have the skills to succeed. The majority of high school graduates say they regret not learning more in high school.

■ **US home to 14% of college graduates**
In 1976, the U.S. was home to 30 percent of the world's college graduates. Today it's 14 percent.

■ **US ranked 19th in graduation rate**
America's high school graduation rate ranks 19th in the world. (Forty years ago, we were first.)

Isn't it time to *do* something about it? The professionals on the following pages think so. And there are hundreds of others just like them that *are* doing something about it. Read their stories to see why you should not wait another moment—connect up with the ITP now. It's easy. Look what they did and know that you, your company or your organization can do the same. Then call program director David Neils at 970-206-9352 ... Read on ... ►

Source: Strong American Schools



■ Al Harrington

POWER & VALUE: “What we're able to do as mentors in this format is actually reach kids in a different way, even as an adult, when most adults aren't able to reach them. We're working professionals, so they get an idea of what we do in our daily environment. In our discussions with them, we encourage them to continue with school and get out there into the working world.

RESULTS: “The student was just so excited, she wanted to go to college right now. That felt pretty good! When we started, she wasn't sure. After the project, she was thrilled and really committed. Another time, a student just really had something click inside and said, ‘This is something I can use for the rest of my life’.

WHY ITP: “I've always enjoyed helping youth and this is a great way to do it. I can do it during the work day. HP encourages it and even promotes it. It's very easy to work into my schedule and I don't have to drive anywhere. The whole ITP staff are great and make it very easy. ►

BRIDGING THE GAP: “There’s a gap between work in school and work in the real world. While this may be nothing new, ITP bridges that gap, and shows that adults can also be cool sometimes, and not just chat about work stuff. The program gives them another type of adult with whom they can interact.

UNIQUE: “Without being face-to-face, it’s difficult for students to express their feelings and talk about things.”

“What I love most about working with youth is when that ‘click’ happens, when they really get something. As a mentor, it blows you away!”

Online, they can take their time in composing it, add structure to it, and ITP staff and other adults can help. It just works a lot better this way than some of the other mentoring programs that I’ve seen.

BENEFITS: “This program gives students a view into the working world they may never see. With the ITP, students get to interact with the working world and find out how things work in the real world. For teachers it provides extra resources they may not have had before. My wife, being a teacher, expresses her difficulty in scheduling anyone into her classroom at all. I doubt you could get 30 adults into a class in an entire year. Students and teachers now have access to these adults as real resources. It’s just good to give back to the community. Participating in the program says that we are all responsible for this, our future. We are reaching out. We are taking responsibility and effectively doing something about it.

BACKGROUND: Al Harrington is senior analyst for HP. He’s been working there for 19 years, done development, programming, testing, systems support and more. He started with the ITP in 1996. His wife is a teacher for 5th-7th grade math “which she enjoys, and really enjoys curriculum,” says Al. They have two kids, 9 and 13 years old. “Having a teacher at home, she sometimes doesn’t want to work with homework all day. So I do. And I apply what I do with mentoring students to my own children, so that has helped me as a father,” he says. As for job morale, Al says: “As a mentor, a message you receive can make your day! What I love most about working with youth is when that ‘click’ happens, when they really get something. As a mentor, it blows you away! Work can be so hectic sometimes. It’s nice to put everything on hold and write my message to a student. It gets my mind off things. It can be a nice escape!” ■

■ Cat Schwartz

POWER & VALUE: “For students, the program is an effective way to complete their special projects and learn the value of teamwork. The program ties in specifically to completing a project and enables the student to do just that. It also develops effective communication skills. Students and mentors relate to each other in a remote, nonverbal environment. This uniqueness of the online mentoring is very challenging. You have to pay attention to what’s being asked in all the individual e-mails, and be proactive in e-mail conversations throughout the project. Even tapping in twice a week, your focus and attention on the history of the project and how it got started helps to understand where the person is coming from.

RESULTS: “Relations between student and mentor are available from anywhere in the world. That’s neat: it’s all electronic. It’s worldwide. It has no place, no time or distance. This is a model for other mentoring programs. There are others, but this is the only electronic one that I know of for high school and younger.

WHY ITP: “Everyone has their parents and teachers, but I never had anything like this. I like to mentor. These mentoring moments help me to give back to children and young adults. I can help them with their self-esteem and help to reaffirm their goals and accomplishments.

BRIDGING THE GAP: “The ITP helps support learning and encourages it. Most of all, it assists in creating an educational environ-



ment that may not be present at home, where parents may not have the technical expertise, or the student may not have the kind of encouragement at home, and may be in an environment where parents don't believe it's that important. The mentor can then help provide, not in totality, but help support that environment and be the subject matter expert.

BENEFITS: "All these different parties form relationships. They don't even have to be long-lasting, but they help students through the project. You need others to help you be successful in life -- you can't do it all yourself. It's a new avenue, or not necessarily new, but a new standard in how to do that. Because, the Internet, e-mail and text messaging is so prevalent now, the trend is to go toward more and more online. I don't know why more schools aren't taking advantage of this. They should follow this model. It's really how corporations work these days, and if more corporations knew about it -- they would sponsor something like this in a heartbeat.

FURTHERMORE: "From my corporate viewpoint, you can really tell that administrators and teachers are very dedicated, that they would like to see all their students become professionals. I get that from the e-mails I exchange within the program. Kudos to them for being patient.

BACKGROUND: Catherine "Cat" Schwartz, is an HP Product Manager, a 17-year company veteran, with 3 years as an ITP mentor. "I'm a world traveler, but there are still quite a few more places I haven't seen." Cat's words of wisdom for students: "Keep busy with something that you truly enjoy doing. Want to be successful? Work hard all the time at it. I'm always busy focusing and working on my goals, both short- and long-term. Just like in sports, the game is to increasingly become better through practice. Usually, winning tells you that you're doing the right thing. If you're not winning, it's not the end of the world; don't give up. It's just not your time yet. But you can and will win." ■

"People are busy, commutes are long, and although many adults would like to be more present in the lives of their children and the children in their community, doing so can be challenging. As a working mother, I would not otherwise have the time to be a 'live' mentor." ■



■ Jeany Haggerty

POWER & VALUE: "You may be the only professional resource that a student participating in a program has.

WHY ITP: "I can find the time to be part of this program, and through it I can assist a child who might otherwise get little adult assistance with his or her studies for whatever reason.

BRIDGING THE GAP: "People are busy, commutes are long and although many adults would like to be more present in the lives of their children and the children in their community, doing so can be challenging. As a working mother, I would not otherwise have the time to be a 'live' mentor.

BENEFITS: "I've had a few thoughtful students who have asked some interesting questions. Finding a delicate way to address these questions, point a student in the right direction or, in some cases, to simply correct a student -- can be challenging sometimes. Figuring out the best way to handle these situations as they arise is a useful exercise for any professional.

BACKGROUND: Jeany Haggerty has been a senior reporter for IFR magazine (owned by Thomson Financial) for seven years. Currently, she works from her home in Utrecht in the Netherlands, but started in IFR's New York office. She's also worked for IFR from London. Previously, she was a reporter and an editor based in New York, and in London for another publication. Jeany, 32, has been involved with ITP for about 12 months; she's from New York, and received her Masters degree in International Journalism from City University in London in 1997. As a reporter, she received a National Press Club award for analytical writing in 2000 for a series of stories on a new derivatives market. ■

■ Jennifer Brister

POWER & VALUE: “The ITP connects students with passionate professionals who want to make a difference in students’ lives. As an engineer, I feel it’s necessary to help students in math or science who may not have access to a family member or family friend who has the background to help them with their math and science assignments. The ITP allows me to fulfill this desire. It’s not only good for the students, but for the mentors. We have a lot of life and practical experience to share. Many of the projects allow us to flex some long-neglected mental muscles.



RESULTS: “I did have a positive impact on a mentee a while back who was experimenting with drug use. Through our conversations, she revealed her problem and her teacher was able to intervene and start getting her some help.

WHY ITP: “I’m making a difference in some of my mentees lives. The projects don’t always go as I hope, but in the end, the students understand some practical aspects of planning, taking responsibility, and taking pride

in your work that I try to put across. I don’t think of myself as helping the student to only get through the one project, I hope that I can impart on them some common sense that will carry into their lives. Getting students excited about math and science is good, but sometimes I sense that some of the students need to get excited about life and living. Despite the project, if I feel some excitement coming from

“If I feel some excitement coming from the student, it’s enough happiness to carry me through an entire week no matter how rough my own life has been.”

the student, it’s enough happiness to carry me through an entire week no matter how rough my own life has been.

BRIDGING THE GAP: “I get the feeling that some have no idea what professional life or mindset is like. I’ve experienced at work the culture shock that happens when a person who has not had professional experience interviews at my company. They’re disastrous because the interviewee displays improper behavior -- in subtle ways, like not asking for help in technical interviews or being totally dependent. Then there are basic approaches to problem solving or interpersonal interactions that some interviewees don’t know; poor grammar and spelling, and talking about inappropriate subjects. The ITP gives students the chance to interact multiple times a week with professionals. While guiding them through the projects we introduce to them many of the creative problem solving skills that we use in our everyday work lives as well as share anecdotes about what it’s like to be in and work in the professional world. I haven’t had a student near graduation age yet, but I hope that some day, a few of my mentees will ask me to write college recommendations or to refer them for a job at my company.

UNIQUE: “In order to get your message across, good written communication skills are a must. Through ITP students get to communicate and get multiple examples of professional e-mail communications by interacting with their mentors.

BENEFITS: “These students are our future employees, so we better train them well. ‘Nough said!’

FURTHERMORE: “Often times when I find myself in a monotonous grind at work, guiding the students through their projects really gets my creative energy up. I feel it makes me a much happier and more effective employee because it puts me in a creative mode. I’m able to escape the grind because I’ve thought of a creative way out of some of work problem due to tangent thoughts spawned by the student’s project.”

BACKGROUND: Jennifer M. Brister has spent more than 8 years at HP as a mechanical engineer, has her BS in Mechanical Engineering from UCSD and her MS in Structural Engineering from UCI. She is a Hardware Engineer for HP at their San Diego Site in the ICE Lab. ■

■ Kuljit Rai

POWER & VALUE: “The ITP is a pioneering venture that realized the power of the Internet and its value for mentoring. It would be difficult for me as a mentor to provide mentoring to kids in Ohio or Arkansas by being there in person, or scheduling phone conversations. Being an ITP mentor, a student and I can work on projects on our own time. The ITP should be proud to have blazed a new trail for the ‘mentoring’ journey. Imagine being on a journey with *no* milestones, *no* rest stops and *without a map!*”

WHY ITP: “I work with the Internet everyday in my job as well in managing my life. ITP makes it easy for me. The organization that runs the ITP is top-notch, an added advantage for mentors.

BRIDGING THE GAP: “Specific to the US, our public schooling system is in serious trouble. It’s been choked by the politically controlled ‘funding’ process. And the ITP very successfully adds to limited and overworked teaching resources.

UNIQUE: “Mentoring, as an experience, is boxed into a one-on-one, in-person type of setting between student and mentor. ITP changes all that. It matches students and mentors who otherwise may not have been able to connect. I always had mentors, but those were people that I knew in person or that I was told to go follow. Not with the ITP. I didn’t know any of them, but the weeks we

spend working together online helped me get to know them a little bit.

BENEFITS: “A better-prepared workforce, better-equipped students going on to a higher education, and better leaders of tomorrow. I say that based on my own ITP mentoring experience, and having seen



the range of topics in which ITP mentors have been involved,” says Rai.

BACKGROUND: Kuljit S. Rai is a Global Supplier Manager for Logistics at Sun Microsystems, Inc.. A 24-year veteran of the high-tech industry, Kuljit has a BS in Business Management and is a 5-year ITP mentor. “I do some nonprofit work in support of the American Cancer Society and other work devoted to research for Crohn’s Disease and Colitis,” he adds. ■

■ Rickey Ono

POWER & VALUE: “The program enables a structured framework for students to connect openly with professionals in a non-intimidating manner. For the student, ITP fulfills the need

to obtain coaching, recommendations, and feedback from an experienced working professional outside of their normal network of teachers, friends, and family. For the mentor, ITP fulfills the need to help students by sharing knowledge and life’s experiences, as well as providing the opportunity to diversify one’s understanding of people in different environments -- e.g., age, social, economic, geographic, cultural, etc.

RESULTS: “The following excerpts that I received from students say it best: Adam: ‘Thank you a lot for helping me through this tough time in this class.’ Aaron: ‘Thank you for the compliment. It really means a lot to me to hear a professional say things like that and I was thankful that my mentor cared about my success.’ Quincy: ‘I had a pretty fun time talking to you and you helped me a lot. Thank you very much for being my mentor and my friend.’ It’s probably a stretch to consider my interactions



with students to be life-changing, but it's clear that the students appreciated the experience, nonetheless.

WHY ITP: "I feel inspired by the enthusiasm that the students generally exhibit. I'm constantly impressed that students as young as seventh graders have put thought into their future. I enjoy connecting with them, keeping them motivated on their project, and hopefully making the experience enlightening and fun.

BRIDGING THE GAP: "The ITP is a virtual experience that uniquely minimizes communication barriers due to differences in age, financial, geographic, cultural, race, and gender. The awareness resulting from the ITP projects are mutually beneficial to both the students and mentors.

UNIQUE: "The program allows students to utilize technology to enhance their written communication skills. The interactions with mentors complements their teacher/student,

"The interchanges with mentors also allow the students to get a perspective from a working professional to complement their knowledge from teachers and textbooks, and it helps to emphasize the value and purpose of their education."

parent/child, and peer-to-peer relationships. The interchanges with mentors also allow the students to get a perspective from a working professional to complement their knowledge from teachers and textbooks, and it helps to emphasize the value and purpose of their education.

BENEFITS: "Under ITP, all stakeholders win! Students gain knowledge from interacting with professionals outside of their normal network; teachers win because they can expand their network of assistants who can work with the students on the project at hand; parents win because their child expands their knowledge and social interactions; administrators win because ITP enables a unique, fun, and motivational learning experience; the corporate world gains by nurturing future employees," Ono says.

BACKGROUND: Rickey Ono, Business Planning Manager, is a 22-year HP employee. "I'm not sure how long I have been a mentor, but I've worked with 14 students (and only doubling up on a couple of projects). I also mentor under the Big Brothers Big Sisters program and I'm the host of a monthly crafts event at Ronald McDonald House at Stanford," he says. ■

■ Rani Cochran

POWER & VALUE: "This program empowers both students and mentors to define goals and discover the tools to reach those goals. I'm not all that bloody altruistic. I mentor because it just really feeds me. I do it for myself. Every time I help a student, I get all that good energy right back at me.

RESULTS: "One of my students began a career-definition project thinking that he would grow up to be a mechanic. Early in the program, he realized that he was interested in international law, particularly as it relates to underserved populations. By the end, he had planned his high school and college program, knew where he wanted to get his undergraduate and graduate education, and he knew which scholarships he would apply for," she says. "Because my contact with that student ended at the close of the project, I don't know what's actually become of him. It's highly likely that he changed goals. But what would not have changed is the courage, self-awareness, and knowledge of learning tools that he gained in those brief weeks of mentored work.

WHY ITP: "Such experiences keep me in touch with young spirits and give me the energy to tap into exactly those personal strengths the students are discovering in themselves.

BRIDGING THE GAP: "I serve myself best when I help to train the young people who are going to be running the world and taking care of me in my old age. Also, when you save a life, you save an entire universe -- this is a paraphrase of an old Talmudic truism. But why focus on the ills? Why not talk about how it's all going to get better working with one person at a time?"

UNIQUE: "In my mind, the 'boundedness' of the telementoring program makes it a unique experience: You work with a student on a project but then you have no more contact. Also, it's all done online; no in-touchness, no physicality. You can't see them, shake their hand or read their body language. But this only intensifies the need for very clear communication on both sides. If you're studying science, or even art -- the written word becomes very important. And how old is *that* as a technology? At the same time, you're using the most modern technology to communicate and to learn. That's pretty amazing.

BENEFITS: "Besides the skills they learn and the chance to focus on clarifying their thinking on whatever the topic is at the moment, what they get at that crucial age is a sense that some absolute stranger, with no stake in the game, is interested in and cares about them. Not a parent with per-

“Whether you’re developing a whole new computer or mowing the lawn ... one little thing finds its way into your soul — and you can build on that and make it through the drudgery and difficulty. If you can just hold onto the thrill then you can get through it.”

formance expectations. Or a teacher. Or peers with all their pressures. But some complete and total stranger who, for 10 or 12 weeks, provides to them their time and thought. That’s an incredible gift. It gets the student thinking, ‘I’m worth it!’

FURTHERMORE: “I transferred from publications to hardware engineering management. So I herd cats. I’m the ringmaster for a bazillion-ring circus of software engineers, hardware, finance services; *everyone* lands on my desk. You name it. I’m the curtain between customers and engineers. I field the questions so the engineers are never bothered. You could say that I’m the curtain that separates Toto from The Wizard.”

BACKGROUND: Rani Cochran, a 4-year ITP mentor, is a Hardware Engineering Program Manager with Sun Microsystems, and has been in her current position for three years. For 22 years, Rani was in computer publishing as a writer and production person and manager. Prior to this she was a musician and teacher for 30 years. At just 10 years old, she had her first concert. “I’m a classical guitarist,” she tells me. “I love Segovia!” I say to her. “In fact, I got to study with Andre Segovia,” she says.

WORDS OF WISDOM: On lessons from Segovia that transfer to mentoring: “I found that all of my music education translated into my job shifts and into all the work I’ve done in the computer world and as a teacher. Segovia taught the value of really looking at established procedures before throwing them away and starting fresh. Learn from what came before, *before* you innovate. And I learned the value of systematic thinking. Any musician knows that. A musician must have both the big picture as well as attention



for details. I have to find the nugget of the project that makes me want to spend the energy,” she says. “There’s one phrase in a piece of music that moves you to your core. If you hold on to that, you can do all the hard work around it. But that’s true in every job, whether you’re developing a whole new computer or mowing the lawn. One little thing finds its way into your soul -- and you can build on that and make it through the drudgery and difficulty. If you can just hold onto the thrill then you can get through it. Working with different types of music through different centuries reinforced an idea I already knew: diversity is the spice of life. And finally, you have to work *with*. Even as a soloist, someone sold the tickets, cleaned the theater, ensured the lights were working and checked the sound system.” ■

■ Kendra Yoder

POWER & VALUE: “ITP has the power to inspire students to reach for their dreams, to gain confidence in their abilities and to realize their value and ability to impact the world in a positive way.

RESULTS: “The following student quotes capture this better than anything I could say,” says Kendra. “I wouldn’t have been able to find out all the information without you. You have led me on the right paths and hung in there with me as I was getting a little behind on everything and you just kept giving advice to help me out. Every message you write to me holds some new piece of information or advice that I am sure to carry on with me the rest of my life!” ~ Kaelee “I really hope that my dream to become an optometrist turns into a reality. I really appreciate your support and comments toward my decision to work toward this career field. I can’t wait to start working to help out the community. I really enjoyed working with you on this project, and this class has taught me an enormous amount of information. It really helps students learn how to plan out their life, where they are going with their future, and how they’re going to get there.” ~ Melissa



“You have been a wonderful mentor and have helped me further my education about an accountant. I would like to thank you and your friend for the many things you have helped me accomplish during this session. I really enjoyed my time in telementoring. I learned many new things and met someone who helped me tremendously.” ~ Shernelia

WHY ITP: “I had several mentors who chose to guide me and

help me achieve my goals. Without them, my life and career choice would look very different today. I chose to become involved with ITP in order to have the opportunity to

“For some students the ITP offers an opportunity, for the first time, to interact with professionals in the ‘real world’ who have a genuine interest in them and are dedicated to seeing them succeed.”

return this gift.

BRIDGING THE GAP: “ITP can help students overcome the obstacles that exist in their life by providing one-on-one interactions that engage them in taking charge of their futures.

UNIQUE: “For some students it offers an opportunity, for the first time, to interact with professionals in the ‘real-world’ who have a genuine interest in them and are dedicated to seeing them succeed.

BENEFITS: “The program enables students to see how important education is in helping their dreams come true in the ‘real world’ and provides the opportunity for students to benefit from one-on-one ‘real-world’ guidance in planning a career, designing a science fair project and in developing life-long habits for future success.”

BACKGROUND: Kendra Yoder is a Systems Engineering Analyst in the department of Quality Assurance at Merck. In her current position for a year and half, she’s been at Merck for 7 years. Her previous position was as an Analytical Chemist. Kendra has been involved in ITP for more than five years now and has thoroughly enjoyed every minute of the student-mentor experience. ■

■ Madhav Wunnava

POWER & VALUE: “The ITP has refined my own mentoring skills. I now better understand students and their needs. It’s a good opportunity for youngsters to communicate better with adults.

RESULTS: “Before doing the “*7 Habits of Highly Efficient Teens*” project, I never evaluated myself seriously. Before starting the project, I found that I lacked many habits which I was about to try to convey to my student. So I started to practice these on myself! By the time the project started, I was far more comfortable in preaching these

traits! A hero is a person who sets a good example by his character and behavior, not by merely talking or preaching. There's a wonderful feeling that comes from watching students choose



their careers and discovering how they can make these dreams a reality.

UNIQUE:

"I'm a person who likes to explore new things, whatever the end result might be. After receiving a company-wide e-mail, the thought

arose: let me see if I'm of any use to others. I'm sure that either I would teach, or I would learn. One or both would definitely happen! I don't know how much change I've brought about in my students, but they, for sure, are helping me improve. But my satisfaction comes from being able to assist others in accomplishing their goals.

BRIDGING THE GAP: "The ITP is preparing students with confidence to face the future ahead. Many times I became a child myself, eagerly opening my mailbox to see messages from my students. Even in the depth of my work, I felt relaxed and rejuvenated reading their messages. This online mentoring experience opens up all the ways a child can reach an adult and clears up their doubts about what they can accomplish. Many times, they can also get answers to the 'big questions' for their age.

BENEFITS: "In the state of world affairs today, students should have strong moral and ethical values to define the future. Peace doesn't come from a campaign or a big banner; it comes from each individual's mind.

BACKGROUND: Madhav's first visit to the US came in November 2006 when he visited New York City's Central Park. Madhav Wunnava works on Bansankari Balaji Paradise street in Yelchenahalli, Bangalore, India. ■

"Many times I became a child myself, eagerly opening my mailbox to see messages from my students. Even in the depth of my work, I felt relaxed and rejuvenated reading their messages."

■ Karla Childers

POWER & VALUE: "It provides students an opportunity to interact in a meaningful way with a wide array of professionals from a variety of backgrounds. It's an experience that offers students access to new ways of looking at everyday academic challenges, as well as insight into career paths they might not have otherwise considered.

RESULTS: "On my current project, I'm working with a dynamic young student who is bright, full of energy and enthusiasm. We're

collaborating on a science research project and having a great time! She recently sent me a message expressing frustration, stress and self-doubt. I was touched by her openness and felt the responsibility of sending a thoughtful reply that would encourage without patronizing her. After rewriting a couple of drafts, I sent my reply and told her that I knew we'd be able to work together to find a solution.

How happy I was when she responded with renewed enthusiasm and appreciation and new life breathed into her quest for more information! Here, for me, was an example of how helpful having a mentor can be and the importance of having a safe place to voice concern and self-doubt, so that the concerns can be looked at in an open way and dealt with effectively. ►



MENTORING SUCCESS

WHY ITP: “I was looking for ways to continue the mentoring and tutoring activities in which I found so much joy as a college student. Through the Merck Institute of Science Education, I found the ITP. I remember during my first project getting a phone call from the program’s founder and director, David Neils. He’d called to discuss a particular issue on the project, but we also ended up talking about his vision and philosophy, and why we both believed it was so important to offer students encouragement and direction that they were not necessarily receiving in conventional academic programs. I knew from that conversation that this was a high-quality program with only the best interests of the students at heart, and I was convinced this was a program with which I wanted to be associated.

BRIDGING THE GAP: “The ITP can provide a bridge between students who are isolated geographically, economically, or socially and individuals who might be viewed as having limited access to certain technology, education or cultural influences.

UNIQUE: “It differs from the programs I was affiliated with in college because of the online, instead of face-to-face meetings. At first, I was curious as to how this was going to work, but I’ve found it to be a very effective way of modeling good communication skills and helping students learn about the use of technology in research.

BENEFITS: “This program develops in students a heightened sense of real-world problem solving and a better sense of what they find interesting and challenging. Projects have focused on career exploration and science research, both of which I never had a chance to participate in as a middle school student. Wish I would’ve had the opportunity to interact with someone in the so-called ‘outside world’ to gain

a better perspective of what was available and what was even possible. Having grown up in a sheltered, small town and taken several routes along the way to my final career, I can so vividly see how beneficial it is in helping students find their voice—and direction for their future.

BACKGROUND: Karla Childers, 3-year Merck employee, started as a bench chemist in Process Research, and recently

“This program develops in students a heightened sense of real-world problem solving and a better sense of what they find interesting and challenging. I can so vividly see how beneficial it is in helping students find their voice—and direction for their future.”

transitioned into project manager for internal sourcing, acting as a technical liaison between internal project teams and external vendors. “During my twenties, I spent quite a bit of time traveling and learning a lot about people and the world as a cruise director and social hostess for a large cruise line,” says Karla. “I put myself through school in my late twenties and graduated with a degree in chemistry when I was 33 years old.” She’s been involved with ITP since 2004, and currently resides in New Jersey with her husband of two years. They have two cats. ■

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