

Kosciusko Leadership Academy  
White Paper Project  
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EDUCATION  
TO  
CAREERS:  
CLOSING THE GAP

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## INTRODUCTION

As American society has changed, so has its structure that impacts our youth greatly. Formally, young people looked to their parents as role models. Young men and women were trained for the "family" business and their career paths were clearly outlined. However, the nuclear family has changed. Families are no longer closely knit role models are not always readily available and career choices have increased greatly. Society today has many single parent homes, in which the parent contends with daily problems of balancing a job, children and financial obligations. In many cases, children are left to their own devices in determining their future career path.

There are many contributing factors as to youth not being successful in society today. Youth are blamed for not having good study and work habits to succeed in school and in the work force. Employers are blamed for not hiring youths and for lack of commitment in providing on-the-job training. Schools are also blamed for not responding to the industry's skill needs. Also new technologies and changes in work organization have placed considerable pressure on the education system to teach students up to date technological and team work skills, offering instruction in skills employers might encourage youth to stay in school and pick higher education or careers.

Mentoring programs are defined as a supportive relationship between a youth and an adult who offers support. The mentor provides guidance and concrete assistance as the teenager encounters a difficult period or enters a new life experience. The mentors offer new career options and emphasize skills for teenagers. Even businesses recognize the value of pairing experienced workers with teenagers. Young people are influenced

through their relationships with others. Mentors provide youth with role models needed to become proficient in planning and worrying for the future.

Well-planned and organized monitoring programs are advantageous. They assess the needs of young people and determine specific goals and objectives that are measurable. They can utilize resources available within a community, school or business for the benefit of all. A mentoring program can assist a student in developing employable skills. There are 3 skill sets: basic academic skills (such as communication, thinking, learning, literacy), personal management skills (positive attitudes, responsibility and adaptability) and team work skills (the ability to work with others).

One important point to remember is that mentoring programs are supplemental to regular education programs. They are not designed to duplicate or replace teaching strategies. They provide individuals with opportunities for growth and positive change. It also provides the protege with greater involvement in the educational setting. The partnerships between schools and businesses are essential to broadening and enriching the learning community for both students and instructors. Schools must do all they can to prepare all students for successful and rewarding employment after they complete their education. These developments have fundamentally altered how schools and businesses interact. School curricula must be adjusted to reflect the skills that every student will need to enjoy satisfying, productive employment experiences and to face the challenges in the workplace. Schools need to have real-world setting through which students can develop and pursue meaningful career and education plans after high school. Teachers are finding that school to work transition programs are transforming the classrooms; teachers must now integrate academic skills with those required for successful employment. By working

closely with schools, businesses can ensure that future members of the workforce are well-prepared to function in high-performance workplaces—environments that demand teamwork, problem-solving and complex reasoning skills.

While many different type of mentioning programs are documented, the emphasis of this one is clearly career-oriented. Mentors are expected to impart career-related information and demonstrations of their work, as well as explore the culture of their organization and their professional field. They are expected to be sound community role models. They may offer guidance about present and future curriculum issues and academic assignments. Optimistically, they may even assume the role of a friend.

### Methodology

Warsaw Community High School sophomores were approached during classtime and asked to volunteer for a 9-week job mentoring program. This age group was selected because research has indicated job mentoring programs are more effective at shaping future career-oriented behavior and developing self awareness and confidence than with older students. This is particularly true for at-risk students. The protege completed a personal profile detailing and justifying their career interests. Faculty members and counseling office personnel were asked to review the profiles and select approximately 15 students who seemed to describe a sincere career interest and had good attendance records. A cross-section of students were chosen ranging from those with outstanding academic records to protégé's who have been identified as being at-risk in some required subject. Students were briefed that they would not be paid for their invested time and they would be expected to document portions of their experience.

The KLA team assumed the project from here coordinating communication with the students and looking for volunteer mentors in the business community whose backgrounds and work assignments matched the students' interests. In many instances, the Human Resources Department was extremely valuable in targeting likely participants. To date, 13 protégé's out of the original 15 have been successfully placed throughout the community. We were unable to locate mentors with matched interests for the other two. Training for the volunteer mentors was held by the KLA, team stressing the time commitment and a dedicated interest to this partnering program as well as offering previously successful mentoring methods. In instances where the mentor anticipated potential schedule conflicts, a team approach was adopted whereby more than one mentor would participate. Guidelines for this approach were also outlined. Any mentor unable to attend training was visited by a KLA member to cover the requirements of the program and receive suggestions for successful partnering. Examples of the training material are contained in Appendix A. The source of this material came from past research offered by communities who had successfully implemented this type of program.

Mentorships began the week of April 12, 1999 for most individuals. Protégé's are meeting with their job mentor on the business site for at least 2 hours per week. The majority of these meetings will take place after school hours and continue throughout the remainder of the school year.

Students are required to keep a weekly journal of their experiences as well as complete several pages of documentation regarding various aspects of their identified career. They will submit this information for review by KLA and the school at the end of the program. Examples of these forms are contained in Appendix B. We have asked the

protege to complete this 9-week program even if they decide they do not want to pursue this interest any further. Mentors, likewise will complete a weekly log of activities, assignments and events. Additionally, they will complete an evaluation form of the program. (See Appendix C) We believe their candid input will assist the school in deciding whether a program of this type can be launched on a broader scale.

Participating companies or agencies are listed in no particular order:

- R.R. Donnelley & Sons
- Kosciusko Community Hospital (Occupational Therapy and Pharmacy)
- Dr. Joe Thallemer
- City of Warsaw Police Department
- City of Warsaw Mayor's Office
- Wedding Traditions
- Think Young Styling Studio and Spa
- Madison Elementary School
- Robert's Signs
- Kosciusko County Animal Shelter (2 placements)
- Warsaw Chemical
- Othy Manufacturing

As the project progresses, the KLA team has assumed a caseworker and liaison role between the student and the mentor, coordinating schedules, transportation and fielding questions. Follow-up with each occurs on a regular basis and surfacing issues are brought to the school's attention immediately. Documentation and information collected from both the protégés and the mentors will be assembled by KLA in June and presented to the Warsaw Community High School and Administration.

## **OUTCOMES**

In conclusion, evaluation of the results from this KLA white paper project, "Education to Careers: Closing the Gap", will be discussed. In other words, were project goals and objectives met? What effect did the program have on participants, if any? What must to be kept in mind here is that if the participants do change during the eight-week

period that it may be the result of the program or from other factors not related to the program. Some of the goals included... Promoting achievement in academia, Boosting self-esteem, Increasing economic self-sufficiency, and to Expanding academic and career options.

**Promoting achievement in academia** Since a percentage of students were At-risk in a required field, all too often they experience failure in school. However, by participating in activities designed to compensate for this deficit they can improve their chances for success and increase the likelihood that they will graduate from high school. For example: ninety percent of the proteges will increase their standardized test scores in math and reading after two hours of weekly tutoring during the school year. The students in our pilot program are spending up to two hours each week at their assigned local business as well while participating.

**Increasing self-esteem** The constant failure, ambiguity of post high school careers, or perceived lack of concern from adults or authority figures, such as parents and teachers, can negatively affect a young person's self-image. This program should help to decrease some post high school career stress, and in turn increase self-esteem. It was emphasized during mentor training that as soon as they were unable up make a session or felt they could no longer participate in the program that they let their caseworker know. The caseworker would then notify the student and attempt to locate another mentor if time permitted. It was also discussed that if a mentor missed a session without making prior arrangements with the student that this would have an adverse effect on that student. In other studies ninety percent of the proteges were able to demonstrate improved

attitudes about school and increased their participation in classroom activities by at least twenty-percent after attending just six session.

**Increasing economic self-sufficiency** Students that come from impoverished environments in which access to adult role-models of success are scarce, easily fall into a pitfall of problems including, pregnancy, substance abuse, and criminal activity. These students then become clients of social services rather than contributors. In the past, mentoring programs have offered these types of students, encouragement, assistance, and skills that enable them to avoid the pitfalls discussed earlier. This improves their chances of becoming productive citizens. With the right mentors involved in "Education to Careers: Closing the Gap" students should display an increase awareness of job skills and appropriate workplace behaviors.

**Expanding academic or career options** The overwhelming number of choices a young adult has when it comes to careers can often blind them altogether. Some do not even grasp that education beyond high school is a viable option or relevant to their future. This mentoring program exposes proteges to the world of work and offers them as much information on careers and skills that are required to enter that profession as they want. In a recent study of another mentor program, ninety percent of the proteges demonstrated improved skills in completing job applications, identifying skills needed for various jobs, and developed an educational/ occupational plan after attending a series of just six sessions taught by local employers.

Our project is not complete, however we have tried to capture initial impression from both the mentors and the proteges. First we should mention how receptive the Warsaw business community was in welcoming this program. Eleven of our initial



contacts accepted within a few days of our proposed plan. To date no one has requested to be assigned or to withdraw from the program. Also the proteges report being extremely satisfied with the opportunity and placement. Likewise mentors report they have been pleased with the student representation, their eagerness to learn, and the opportunity to influence their proteges behavior. We expect to summarize final results in June.

We would like to thank Warsaw Community High School for all their assistance and support for this project. We hope these findings will enable them to broaden the scope of this project and further impact greater numbers of students.

# APPENDIX A.

## Mentor Training

EDUCATION TO CAREERS: CLOSING THE GAP  
*A JOB MENTORING PILOT PROGRAM*  
sponsored by Warsaw Community High School and  
Kosciusko Leadership Academy

BASIC INFORMATION

You have been assigned a student from the sophomore class who has been selected to participate in a pilot program regarding job mentoring. The program should last approximately 9 weeks and begin the week after spring break (April 12-16). The student should spend one day per week with you or a team of mentors for approximately 2 hours after school. Some of you may have had alternative arrangements made due to the selected industry or the individual's schedule.

You should contact your student over the next few days to arrange a mutually agreeable meeting time and date. Take the time to exchange some dialogue such as likes and dislikes. Suggest to the student the appropriate dress for the work site.

You each have been assigned a Kosciusko Leadership Academy caseworker. Your caseworker is:

Home Phone:  
Work Phone:  
e-mail:

Difficulties with the student or changes in schedules should be reported to the caseworker.

We are asking that you fill out some paperwork so that we can evaluate this program and possibly look for future funding to continue these types of activities.

WELCOME TO EDUCATION TO CAREERS: CLOSING THE GAP  
*A JOB MENTORING PILOT PROGRAM*  
sponsored by Warsaw Community High School and  
Kosciusko Leadership Academy

CAREERS TO EDUCATION was designed to help young people improve academic achievement, increase self-esteem, gain knowledge about jobs and job opportunities through association with business community leaders and employees in all types of industries. This relationship will help our student proteges to:

- Discover some strengths and skills and build upon them
- Gain self respect through recognition and acquisition of new skills
- Increase knowledge and use of community resources
- Improve abilities to set and achieve goals
- Recognize the link between the world of education and the world of work

A one-on-one or even a close relationship with a caring and concerned individual is often the critical link for young people in learning to avoid and deal with problems. It is also an appropriate way to involve them in meaningful and healthy activities. These handouts and this session is intended to help as a mentor, and encourage and direct your student protégé.

#### WHAT MAKES YOU A MENTOR

The best mentors are those who are enthusiastic about work and study and have interpersonal skills. Sharing these interests and skills with young people is just the beginning.

The ultimate goal of mentoring is to encourage total growth of younger, less experienced people whose needs and interests are your primary consideration. What you do and how you do it will depend on your protégé and the type of relationship you establish.

#### MENTOR ROLES AND EXPECTATIONS

Your student protégé will see you in different ways. Listed below are some ways in which students find mentors to be helpful.

##### Companion

- Shares interests and experiences
- Enjoys time spent with protégé

##### Role Model

- Admired by Protégé
- Possesses qualities and skills

#### Teacher

- Imparts information, knowledge and skills
- Participates in the learning process
- Demonstrates how to do things

#### Resource

- Provides opportunities to try new things
- Introduces protégé to new people, ideas, values, and interests
- Provides access to and encourages protégé to seek out new information sources

#### Motivator

- Promotes goal setting
- Prods protégé to try new activities
- Gives constructive feedback
- Encourages independent thinking and action

#### Friend

- Demonstrates warmth and caring for student
- Respects protégé's talents and interests
- Listens to proteges problems and concerns
- Believes in proteges abilities

## MENTOR EXPECTATIONS

- ⇒ Show interest in protégé's academic progress. (May offer to tutor or to assist with projects or difficult assignments).
- ⇒ Encourage responsible behavior by protégé.
- ⇒ Be a role model.
- ⇒ Invite joint decision making
- ⇒ Encourage protégé to practice new skills
- ⇒ Give constructive feedback.
- ⇒ Provide positive reinforcement.
- ⇒ Encourage self-motivation.
- ⇒ Help protégé understand realities about education and work.
- ⇒ Introduce protégé to new life experiences.
- ⇒ Listen to protégé's concerns and problems.
- ⇒ Help protégé find solutions to problems.
- ⇒ Share life experiences and wisdom.
- ⇒ Recruit additional mentors by sharing experiences in the program with fellow workers.
- ⇒ Have fun!

## THINGS TO AVOID AND THINGS TO DO

### *Don't*

Attempt to replace the parent(s) in situations that the parent should handle.

### *Do*

Preserve the mentor/protégé relationship in the proper perspective - friendship.

### *Don't*

Attempt to intervene in parent/child disputes.

### *Do*

Always listen. Hear what the child has to say. You may be able to bring insight to the situation, but never take sides or attempt to solve the problem.

### *Don't*

Try to hard to facilitate the relationship.

### *Do*

Be real. Show trust, respect and understanding to the protégé. An honest relationship will develop.

### *Don't*

Be overbearing in telling the protégé what is best for him/her.

### *Do*

Teach, challenge and support the protégé. Help him/her to develop a sense of self-concept.

### *Don't*

Represent yourself as an authority figure.

### *Do*

Be a friend.

### *Don't*

Attempt to remediate the protégé's academic failures.

### *Do*

Use your expertise and practical wisdom to provide enrichment, inspire dreams, and pursue realistic goals.

### *Don't*

Expect miracles. A lot has to do with chemistry.

### *Do*

Say the match isn't working and contact your caseworker.

### *Don't*

Be insincere.

### *Do*

If you fake attention, it will be evident.

## COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES

Below you will find some helpful techniques that may start a dialogue between you and your protégé. These will also help insure that you understand what your protégé is telling you.

### **Encouraging Dialogue**

*Invite the protégé to talk.*

“Would you like to talk about it?”

“I’ll listen whenever you want to talk.”

*Acknowledge protégé’s feelings.*

“You seem (upset, sad, angry, excited) about something.”

“You don’t seem to feel well”

*Share what you feel.*

“I find it hard to know what to say when I first meet someone.”

“I’m a little concerned about my (job, family, studies) today.”

### **If you feel you need more information:**

*Draw out the protégé.*

“How would you do that?”

“Can you share why you did that?”

“What do you like (most, least) about this?”

“How does that make you feel?”

“Could you tell me more?”

*Use nonverbal techniques.*

Be silent and wait for protégé to continue.

Nod and smile.

Face protégé and lean forward slightly.

### **Listening without Giving Approval or Offering Solutions**

*Ask leading questions that encourage the protégé to think.*

“What would happen if you did that?”

“What do you think you could do in this situation?”

“How would you handle this situation?”

“What’s the (best, worst) that could happen?”

*Respond neutrally. Do not approve or disapprove.*

“That’s one way. What’s another?”

“What do you think is the best way to handle this?”



### **Ensuring that You Understand What is Said or Felt**

*Restate what the protégé said in your own words.*

“Did you mean that...”

“What I heard you say was...”

“Do you think that...”

*Look for clues. Check:*

Tone of voice

Facial expression

Body language

Gestures

### **When the Conversation Stops Abruptly**

*Review your actions. Did you:*

Change the subject?

Indicate disapproval or dislike by your facial expression or body language?

Misread how the protégé felt?

Respond to how the protégé felt?

*To restart the dialogue:*

Ask if you upset the protégé.

Share a similar situation in your life.

Ask if he or she would like to continue the discussion.

Express your appreciation of the protégé's trust.

## **LISTENING FOR MEANING AND PROPER PRAISING TECHNIQUES**

### **Listening for Meaning**

1. Avoid being judgmental. Concentrate on the message and not the person.
2. Don't be insincere in your listening. If you fake attention, it will be evident.
3. Listen for ideas. Look for the big meaning in what is said.
4. Avoid communication killers. Analyze your responses and be sure to avoid any actions or words that will cut off communication.
5. Put what you are hearing into words. After you have listened closely, try to put what the other person is saying and feeling into words and see how they react.
6. Get agreement. Communication involves knowing when and how to listen as well as how to use words.

### **Proper Praising Techniques**

1. Be immediate. Catch them doing something right, right now.
2. Be sincere. If you cannot be sincere, say nothing.
3. Be specific. Concentrate on specifically what was done, not generalities.
4. Show the benefit. How does this effort really help the protégé?
5. State your own reaction. People want to know how you really feel.
6. Ask if you can help. Offer your assistance. Don't order it.

- **Praise in public. Correct in Private.**
- **Put Power into Your Praise. Positive, Proper Praising will Motivate High Performance.**
- **Teach the Way You Want to be Taught. Each of us wants Positive, Sincere Praise from our own Teacher. Provide Praise for Your own People.**

APPENDIX B.

Student Documentation  
of  
Job Content  
and  
Career Information

# Job Assignment

\_\_\_\_\_, your job mentoring assignment  
is with \_\_\_\_\_.

The contact person at this location is \_\_\_\_\_.

Please arrive at your job location by \_\_\_\_\_.

Other Information:

Call your case worker, \_\_\_\_\_ if you are ill or  
unable to report to the job site.

Dress professionally. Dress appropriately for the job you will be shadowing.

If there are any questions, you may contact Bev Vanover at 269-1809 after  
4:00 p.m. Thanks!

## WCHS JOB MENTORING

# 10 Competencies to be Proficient As A:

Job Position: \_\_\_\_\_

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

WCHS JOB MENTORING

# Work Site Analysis Form

Company \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Person/Title \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of Employees \_\_\_\_\_

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Title of Job to be Mentored \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of Employees in this position \_\_\_\_ Chances for Advancement? \_\_\_\_  
Number of shifts \_\_\_\_\_ Are Shifts rotated? \_\_\_\_\_ How Often? \_\_\_\_\_  
Pay scale/Schedule \_\_\_\_\_  
Benefits \_\_\_\_\_  
Paid Vacations? \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, after how long employed? \_\_\_\_\_  
Paid Insurance? \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, after how long employed? \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of sick/personal days per year \_\_\_\_\_ Paid holidays? \_\_\_\_\_  
Reimbursement for tuition? \_\_\_\_\_ Funeral leave? \_\_\_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

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Education Required: H.S. Diploma/College Degree/Vocational  
Degree/Other \_\_\_\_\_  
Is there a training program? \_\_\_\_\_  
Is there a probationary period? \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, how long? \_\_\_\_\_  
Is there a written job description available? \_\_\_\_\_  
Size and description of job mentoring area: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

---

Description of duties in sequence: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

---

Machinery/Equipment used: \_\_\_\_\_  
What are the **reasons for dismissal** in this position? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
What is the chain of command if problems arise? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Use Other Side For Miscellaneous Information

# Job Site Reaction: Your Evaluation

Please return this paper to Mrs. Vanover through your teacher. Your reactions will be taken into consideration for future job mentoring programs. Thanks for your help.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Job Site \_\_\_\_\_ Mentor \_\_\_\_\_

1. What could we have done to better prepare you for this experience?
  
2. What could your "mentor" have done to be more informative and helpful?
  
3. What were your likes and dislikes at the job site?
  
4. Please give a brief summary of what you learned.
  
5. Is this a possible career choice for you?                      Yes                      No
6. Would you want to job mentor again?                      Yes                      No
7. Would you recommend job mentoring to a friend?                      Yes                      No

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