Understanding the Availability and Supporting the Growth of Dropout Prevention Programs in a Geographic Area: the Tutor/Mentor Connection Model

By Daniel F. Bassill, Tutor/Mentor Institute, LLC
TIPPING POINTS

What are some of the actions that could dramatically change the availability and impact of programs helping youth born in an inner-city neighborhood be in a job and starting a career by age 25?

This mentor and student have been connected to each other for more than 8 years. What strategies and actions need to be developed so that thousands of matches like this are connecting youth in poverty neighborhoods with adult mentors and learning beyond poverty?

Tutor/Mentor Institute, LLC
http://www.tutormentorexchange.net
Tutormentor2@earthlink.net
What will I talk about today

Instead of focusing on specific programs, I focus on strategies that are needed to make high quality programs available in many places throughout a city and for many years

• What are goals of T/MC – mission, vision

• Throughout this presentation I’ll show uses of mapping and other visualization tools.

DISCUSSION: How does (could) T/MC offer a vehicle for connecting, not just mentoring programs, but programs and organizations that support healthy youth development more generally, in your own communities?

• It’s on the web at http://www.tutormentorexchange.net/library
This has been a 38 year journey.
(and it’s not over yet)

I became volunteer in 1973; leader of the tutoring program in 1975. By 1990 we had 300 pairs of kids and volunteers meeting weekly at the Wards HQ in Chicago.

Left company in 1990; President, Founder of Cabrini Connections in 1992; Tutor/Mentor Connection, in 1993

Created Tutor/Mentor Institute, LLC in July 2011 to expand support for Tutor/Mentor Connection in Chicago and help similar groups grow in other cities.

Dan & Leo
Circa 1974

Leo Today
Lessons Learned:

- How to apply mass communications, advertising concepts.
- How to use computers and technology for program management; evaluation
- How to connect youth and volunteers in non-school tutor/mentor program
- Importance of mapping and visualization strategies
- Mentoring is a strategy to expand the number of people working to help kids grow up

Helping kids from early grades..

Into adult lives and responsibilities.
Kids living in inner-city poverty face challenges that most kids do not have. **Tutor/Mentor Programs can provide extra adult support, hope and opportunity for youth in many of these neighborhoods...if they are available**

- The pink and blue areas of this map are areas where poverty concentrations are 20% or higher
- The flags are locations of schools where more than half of the students fail to meet state standards on reading, writing or both
- In Chicago more than 40% of youth drop out of high school before graduation
- Visit the Research Links at [http://tinyurl.com/TMLibrary-research](http://tinyurl.com/TMLibrary-research) and you can learn more about how poverty is an environmental disadvantage and how some organizations are using tutoring/mentoring to help youth stay in school and move to careers
Collective Effort

What might we accomplish working toward shared goals that we cannot do when working alone?

“Cabrini Connections played a major role in my life during my high school years.”

“Maurice has his GED and now works in construction...”
In 1993 no one had a master database of all volunteer-based, non-school tutoring/mentoring programs in Chicago.

And there was no consistent marketing drawing volunteers and donors to all of the programs in the city.

**Tutor/Mentor Connection** helps programs like Cabrini Connections grow in every poverty area of the city and suburbs.

Cabrini Connections serves teens in the Cabrini-Green area of Chicago.

If a single program is valuable in one neighborhood, what can a city do to make similar programs available in all high poverty neighborhoods?
• Our aim was to create a master database of all tutor/mentor programs in the city

• Then to increase the number of media stories talking about tutoring/mentoring, in order to draw more consistent volunteer and donor support to every program.

• So each program would be more able to innovate ways to connect inner city teens with adults who will act as tutors, mentors, coaches, advocates and friends … and that many of these adults to stay involved in the lives of kids for many years.

• The long term goal is that these programs help teens finish high school and that the volunteers help open doors to advanced learning, jobs and careers. In such programs, volunteers also must learn to take on roles of leaders, fund raisers, advocates, etc. so that programs constantly expand the resources available to them.

This article was written in 1995 … read the article at http://www.tutormentorexchange.net/images/PDF/tribune5_15_1995.pdf
What will it take to assure that all youth born in poverty are entering careers by age 25?

What does it take to make mentor-rich programs available to more youth, in more places?
These are just a few of the questions that need to be answered in Chicago, and in most other communities:

How do we help good programs be in more of the places where they are needed?

How do we help each program have effective, long-term leaders?

How do we increase the number of volunteers from different work backgrounds who get involved, and stay involved for many years?

How do we provide consistent, flexible, multi-year funding in all locations, not just a few?
How do we get individuals, and teams of people from colleges, business, media, education, arts, etc. thinking about this every day?

How do we connect those who are already deliberating and discussing these questions in ways share knowledge and good ideas and encourage others to be involved?
These are some of the questions. We don’t claim to know the answers.

However, we believe that by aggregating information, we help others think through these questions and find their own answers.
WHAT ARE MAIN COMPONENTS OF the Tutor/Mentor Connection?

The following slides show the steps we’ve taken to create this network.
The Tutor/Mentor Connection focuses on four on-going strategies:

- **Resource Generation**
- **Collaboration, shared learning**
- **Public Awareness**
- **Research**

http://www.tutormentorconnection.org
Step 1: Build and Maintain knowledge base

Information Collection
Prior to 1993, no organization was attempting to maintain a comprehensive database of non-school tutor/mentor programs.

The T/MC database and web site Program Locator now includes most tutor/mentor programs in the Chicago area, as well as links to
* Research,
* Capacity-building information,
* Homework help
* Collaboration & Innovation resources.

Database
(see Program Locator at www.tutormentorexchange.net)
RESEARCH – knowing all we can about tutoring/mentoring

Chicago Area Program Locator http://www.tutormentorprogramlocator.net/

You can search for programs in Chicago area, based on zip code, age served, type of program. You can also add your own program.
The programs in this search show up on a Google map. Info for each program is shown below the map, based on what T/MC has received from each organization.
Interactive Zip Code Search Map – Give it Test Drive!

Instead of using the chart to search for programs, you can use the Zip Code Map. If you click on the map for any zip code, it will take you to the same Google map and list of programs.

Flash Intro to Program Locator: http://www.tutormentorprogramlocator.net/Intro.aspx
The Tutor/Mentor Library contains a wide range of information anyone can use to develop tutor/mentor program support systems.

http://tinyurl.com/T-MC-Library
Step 2: Volunteer Mobilization: Public Awareness

Because the T/MC maintains a database with contact information for most tutor/mentor programs in Chicago...

a) The T/MC is able to lead advertising and public education efforts that recruit volunteers and donors for more than 150 other programs throughout the Chicago region.

b) The T/MC web site is a portal that can be used by anyone in the Chicago region to find information about existing tutoring and/or mentoring programs.

See this idea illustrated at http://www.tutormentorexchange.net/images/flash/vol_leadership.swf
While we link to more than 1,500 organizations on T/MC sites...

...each site we link to, links to even more sites. It’s a vast information network, if we connect with each other in more ways than web links.
Creating Learning Circles

This is one of many graphics created by interns working with Tutor/Mentor Connection. Youth in high schools and colleges in many places could be doing similar work.
Using the same advertising principles that corporations use to create awareness and draw customers to stores, T/MC seeks to

- reach more people every day, and
- draw them to on-line learning sites,
- then to maps,
- then to tutor/mentor programs in specific zip codes.
Step. 3  **A successful collaboration or partnership is built on trust and mutual self-interest.**

The T/MC leads an annual sequence of capacity-building actions that draw more than 300 programs together for regular knowledge sharing, resource building.

These actions are essential for building trust and relationships.

Without the regular invitations from the T/MC, and the constant information sharing, most organizations would remain isolated from each other. Without the database, we’re not inviting all of the programs to come together.
Immediate Impact

Growth of volunteers & $$ and corporate leaders involved

YOU NEED A STRATEGY THAT REACHES A LONG TERM GOAL

A collective effort might result in more leaders in the Chicago region taking roles that raise the level of volunteers, operating dollars and other needed resources for all tutor/mentor programs.
Step 4: Information sharing results….

Building Better Understanding of Needs, Opportunities

By bringing programs together on a regular basis, and by supporting this process with surveys and an Internet library of tutor/mentor information….

T/MC seeks to create a better understanding of what works, who/how many are being served, where programs are needed, and what it takes to help good programs be in every place where they are needed.
We can connect in deeper thinking, with more of the same people involved more often if we use on-line tools for collaboration and innovation.

This is one tool we’ve found where all of us can share our ideas about helping kids to careers.

http://debategraph.org/mentoring_kids_to_careers
Step 5: Actions that increase flow of resources

Using the map, and the database, leaders can stimulate a flow of resources to all programs, in all neighborhoods.

By working as a group, T/MC helps programs generate greater impact than most programs could generate by themselves.

This is intended to draw volunteers, dollars, public attention, technology and training directly to tutor/mentor programs in every neighborhood.

Without a steady flow of these resources no program can succeed.
All programs have same needs:

We need these resources every day, in every neighborhood:

* volunteers
* public visibility
* operating dollars
* technology
* training/learning
* leadership
To influence “Birth to Work” we must influence the flow of operating dollars.
WHY SHOULD BUSINESS TAKE THIS ROLE?

To SUCCEED
We must recruit business leaders who will use their resources in PULLING Youth to Careers

To SUCCEED
We must help tutor/mentor program leaders, volunteers, schools and parents be more effective in PUSHING Youth to Careers

School-Time Programs
Pre-K  K - 5th  5th - 6th  6th - 8th  High School  Career Track
3-5 PM Non-School Programs
After 5 PM and Weekend Programs

Property of Tutor/Mentor Institute & Tutor/Mentor Connection, Merchandise Mart PO Box 3303, Chicago, Ill. 60654 Email for permission to use: tutormentor2@earthlink.net
As volunteers bond with kids many become leaders who recruit more volunteers and other resources from their industry, faith group, and social network.
If Step 1 to 5 are happening in every poverty neighborhood, youth and families will have access to more of the help they need, better programs, and more consistent, longer-term services.

This will begin to achieve the changes in school performance and career preparation that we all want:

- better attendance in school
- lower drop out rates
- less youth violence
- better academic performance
- business reports better prepared workers

The Result -- After Many Years…

More youth stay in school, are safe in non-school hours, graduate, and move to careers

Better programs in more places for more age groups

Actions that increase the flow of resources to each program

Building Better Understanding of Needs, Opportunities

Building a network of tutor/mentor leaders

Volunteer Mobilization

Database
Any organization can take on this intermediary role...even youth in local high schools and colleges.

This is a role the Tutor/Mentor Connection takes:

Those Who can help  

T/MC  
TUTORMENTOR INSTITUTE, LLC  
CONNECTING  

Those Who Need help  

Our aim is to draw needed resources to ALL tutor/mentor programs in Chicago on a more consistent basis. It’s a role any leader can take.
Using the Internet to network and learn

- Blogs – like [http://tutormentor.blogspot.com](http://tutormentor.blogspot.com)
- Conferences, eConferences – [http://www.tutormentorconference.org](http://www.tutormentorconference.org)
- At [http://www.tutormentorconnection.org](http://www.tutormentorconnection.org) we’re hosting a links library, with links to organizations that we want to connect with
- At [www.Google.com](http://www.google.com) you can search for “tutor mentor” and find the T/MC and numerous other organizations who could be invited to come together for networking, learning, collaboration
Importance of Maps and Visualization

Pictures worth “1000 words”
Creative uses of information visualization, maps, video, animation
Strategies that mobilize public/private sector resources in specific zip codes
Focus on distribution of resources needed to operate effective programs in many places.
Examples of information visualization – ROLES OF INTERNS

This shows how intern converted this to flash animation
http://www.tutormentorexchange.net/images/flash/vol_leadership.swf

This shows how idea is first visualized in power point and posted on a blog
New ways of showing value: Social Network Analysis

Understanding the T/MC network, and our impact on bringing people together has always been a challenge. Understanding how tutor/mentor programs expand networks for youth has also been a challenge.

Imagine if we could map network of youth, or volunteers, when they join a program, then show changes over time?

INTERNS COULD BE DOING THIS WORK

Youth SNA map discussion on Ning - http://tinyurl.com/TMC-youthSNAmap
The Tutor/Mentor Connection focuses on **four on-going strategies**

1. Collect and Organize Knowledge
2. Raise public awareness
3. Facilitate Understanding and Collaboration
4. Increase Resources for Tutor/Mentor Programs

- A connection of volunteers with K-12 youth living in a high poverty areas
- Our goal is to lead events
- To help a tutor/mentor program

Cabrini Connection, founded 1993

Strategy map created by intern -- [http://tinyurl.com/tmc-strategy-map](http://tinyurl.com/tmc-strategy-map)
Attend May and November Tutor/Mentor Leadership and Networking Conference in Chicago

http://www.tutormentorconference.org

Connect conferences you host to the T/MC and other conferences via on-line forums you create or that are hosted by others.

http://tutormentorconnection.ning.com is one that we host.
Find Me on Social Media

- Facebook
  http://www.facebook.com/TutorMentorInstitute
- Twitter @tutortorteam
- Linked In
- Ning – http://tutormentorconnection.ning.com
- Blog – http://tutormentor.blogspot.com
- Email – tutormentor2@earthlink.net

- Find this presentation on
  http://www.tutormentorexchange.net/library
Tutor/Mentor Institute: A Theory of Change proposed by the Tutor/Mentor Connection

“If this (initiative) is accepted and acted upon, it can change the way philanthropy and charities work together in America and throughout the world. It can change the future for millions of kids born into poverty each year. Invite Tutor/Mentor Institute to be your guide to understanding and applying these ideas.”

--Daniel F. Bassill,
President of Tutor/Mentor Institute, LLC and the Tutor/Mentor Connection

http://www.tutormentorexchange.net    tutormentor2@earthlink.net    Skype: @dbassill