International Telementor Program

Program Evaluation for Teacher Surveys
Fort Collins, Colorado
April 2002 – June 2005

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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 support 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 throughout nine countries.

Parameters of this Program Evaluation Research

This independently conducted program evaluation covers three program years (2002-2003, 2003-2004, and 2004-2005). Specifically, this program evaluation research includes teacher survey results from the aforementioned years from teachers in Fort Collins, Colorado.

Summary of Teacher Survey

In summary, the 11 Fort Collins, Colorado teachers that participated in this survey overwhelmingly believe that the International Telementor Program (ITP) is valuable for their students. Teachers reported that students that participated in this program have increasingly become proactive learners. Also, teachers reported that they have gained greater knowledge in the area of "technology usage" by being a part of this program.

Additionally, teachers were asked to describe any additional areas that may have been impacted by this program. Due to the large size of the data sets and the different nature of analyses of qualitative data, responses to qualitative questions were analyzed using HyperResearch software. The major themes are listed below.

- "I believed the program reinforced the students desire to pursue some type of business career—whether it was accounting, starting their own business, combining a major with another area of business."

- "I believe as a direct result of the personal contact and attention of professionals as mentors, my students became more aware and made some long-range goals."

In viewing the other side of the spectrum, the ITP program was not as effective in improving the following areas: (a) science comprehension; (b) standardized test scores and (c) math comprehension. As the ITP program seeks to plan future programmatic efforts, these are critical subjects that should be addressed by the ITP program in collaboration with the teachers that they work with. As a recommendation, the ITP program can work with teachers to create projects that

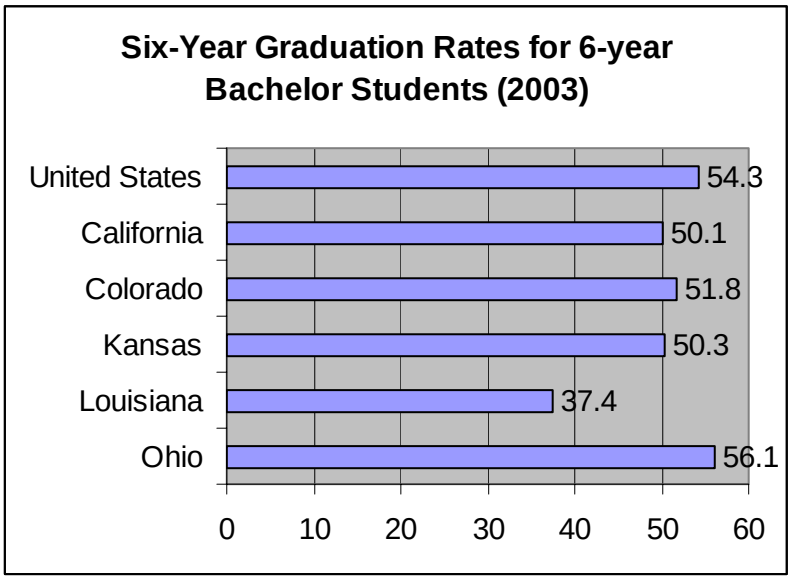
develop solid skills in the areas of math and science. By doing so, the ITP can be instrumental in assisting students to raise academic achievement levels in critical areas such as science and math.

To further explore the challenges of the ITP program, teachers were asked to describe significant changes that they would like to see in the program or school environment that would improve the effectiveness of the program for you and your students. Here is one example that captures responses from teachers in Fort Collins, CO:

- "More computers in our classrooms would improve the effectiveness, which could be provided by a variety of sources. Mentors with expertise in the area of the project would help tremendously. In addition, mentor training in working with young students. More time at the beginning of the project with support for setting up the project expectations and specific outcomes for the project (a combination of telementor staff and teachers, with input from students).

ITP Communities and Graduation Rates

The ITP program has chosen to work in communities across the United States to increase the graduation rates of students. Listed below are national averages and the graduation rates for college freshmen pursuing college degrees in the individual states that the ITP program is currently conducting its programmatic efforts. In examining these numbers, it is fertile ground for the ITP program to have an impact on college student graduation rates across the country.



Source: National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (2002)

As a result of the above table, the national and individual state data shows that plenty of work needs to be done with students with approximately 50% of college freshmen graduating from

college within six-years. The ITP program is providing an innovative approach to help students be prepared to be successful in college.

Summary

In summary, after evaluating the teacher, mentor, and student surveys from 2002-2005, it appears that the International Telementor Program has been very successful in assisting students to become more "proactive learners." With so many teachers, mentors and students involved this program, as one student noted; this program should be in schools across the nation.

After an in-depth examination of the findings, this program is doing quite well. Teachers have noted that have seen quite a change in their students after being involved in this program. To paint a picture of the complexity of the program, the reader must know the amount of mentor/student matches that were made as a result of this program. From April 2002-June 2005 4,021 matches were made between mentors and teachers for the entire International Telementor Program across the world. This provides context into how many students have been impact as a result of this program.

Contact ITP

ITP is one of the largest virtual mentoring programs to date. ITP received a national award from the National Mentoring Partnership organization in 1997. David Neils, ITP founder and director, serves on the National Mentoring Partnership Policy Council and works with top mentoring organizations including the National Mentoring Center, The Mentoring Institute, and America's Promise. ITP will collaborate with mentoring organizations and communities around the world.

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About the Researcher

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Program Overview

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Parameters of this Program Evaluation Research

This program evaluation covers three program years (2002-2003, 2003-2004, and 2004-2005). Specifically, this program evaluation research includes teacher, mentor, and student survey results from the aforementioned years from teachers in Fort Collins, Colorado.

This evaluation report presents the results of analyses of both the quantitative and qualitative data from teachers during the aforementioned time period. Table 1 outlines the questions that were asked of teachers in question 1.

Data Type	Data Source	Question	Response Format
Quantitative	Teacher	Select those areas where you witnessed significant improvement for your participating students. • Improved math comprehension and ability • Increased registration for advanced math courses • Improved science comprehension and ability • Increased registration for advance science courses • Communication skills (Written or Oral) • Subject grade improvement • Standardized test improvement • Improved critical thinking skills • Improved teamwork • Critical thinking skills • Increase in self-directed learning • Increase integration of knowledge across subject areas and interest areas	Any checked items were coded a "1"; all items that were not checked were coded a "0"

Qualitative		• Increase in knowledge of the workplace • Increased desire to go to college • Other areas Describe additional areas that may have been impacted by this program	Open-ended

Quantitative analyses are presented in Tables 2 and 3 below. As noted in Table 1 above, teachers were asked the following quantitative question: "Select those areas where you witnessed significant improvement for your participating students." Each impact area that was selected was assigned a "yes" rating, all those non-selected were assigned a "no" rating. A total of 11 teachers responded to this question.

Table 2

Impact Area	Yes	No
Improved Math Comprehension and ability	2	9
Increased registration for advanced math courses	0	11
Improved science comprehension and ability	2	9
Increased registration for advanced science courses	0	11
Communication skills (written or oral)	8	3
Subject grade improvement	4	7
Standardized test improvement	0	11
Improved critical thinking skills	9	2
Improved teamwork	9	2
Critical thinking skills	3	8
Increase in self-directed learning	8	3
Increase integration of knowledge across subject areas and interest	7	4
Increase in knowledge of the workplace	6	5
Increased desire to become a proactive learner	9	2
Increased desire to go to college	6	5
Other areas	1	8

In examining Table 2, teachers reported that the areas of greatest impact for students were centered on the "softer" skills (i.e., communication skills, improved teamwork, self-directed learning and critical thinking skills). A close analysis of the numbers reveal that the top 5 areas support the notion that students made the most significant improvements in areas that are not easily quantifiable.

Additionally, teachers were asked to describe any additional areas that may have been impacted by this program. Due to the large size of the data sets and the different nature of analyses of qualitative data, responses to qualitative questions were analyzed using HyperResearch software. The major themes are listed below.

- "Increased students' awareness of importance of networking and of teamwork. Also made them aware that they will be competing on a global scale now and in the future."

- "Students needed to use organization with note cards, writing, and when working with others. Communication was needed not only when writing the mentor, but when working with their classmates as well. Students learned to work together as a team."

Students Becoming Proactive Learners

In question 2a, Fort Collins, CO teachers were asked to "Please indicate the percentage of their students who were actively moving in the direction of becoming proactive learners." In an examination of the three years of this full evaluation report (n=11) 63.27% of teachers reported that their students were actively moving in the direction of becoming proactive learners.

This clearly demonstrates that teachers do feel that students are benefiting from the International Telementoring Program. With more than 63% of teachers indicating that students are becoming more active learners, the educational impact of the ITP program has been very positive.

In question 2b, teachers were asked, "How they used the program to help their students become proactive learners." Here is a sample of teacher responses:

- "Students were responsible for learning about their chosen topic. They were responsible for making note cards, writing individual papers, and making creative presentations. Students were given a lot of freedom to explore the questions they had about his or her topic."

- "The students made some decisions concerning what college they would attend and through the program have valid data to support their decisions."

In addition to the above-stated quotes, teachers clearly see a positive link between the ITP program and project-based learning. With this link, students and their mentors used these projects to help students become more productive and proactive in achieving greater success on assignments where students were required to use higher order thinking skills.

Student Supervision

Question 3a asked teachers, "How many students did they want to supervise in the program next year?"

Overall Mean Score: 15.36

According to this finding, the data shows that teachers only want to supervise a small number of students in this program. It appears that teachers over all three years of the program evaluation want to supervise an average of 15.36 students participating in the program.

In question 3b, teachers were asked, "How could (ITP) partner with them to expand the program in your area." A summary of teacher-responses are found below:

- "This program works best when used as a whole class. It is challenging to maintain when only a few students are in the program."

- "I was very fortunate to have direct contact with David Neils. This was invaluable. Teachers who are new to this program can really benefit from working closely with David or a Telementor representative.."

Quality of Matches between Mentors and Students

Question 4 asked teachers, "Please rate the quality of the matches between students and mentors." Teachers were provided with a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from "1=poor through 5=excellent."

Overall Mean Score: 3.73

With a mean score of 3.73, teachers reported overall that the matches between students and mentors were of high quality. Teachers were very pleased with the types of mentoring their students were receiving through the ITP program.

Additionally in question 4b, teachers were asked to "Please describe any changes they wanted to see which would further improve the quality of the matches." A summary of teachers are found below:

- "Students were disappointed when if didn't here from their mentors on a weekly basis. However, this did not happen often."

- "The mentor having some idea what the life of a high school student is like; the mentor responding at least a couple times a week."

Student and Mentor Accomplishments

In question 5, teachers were asked to "Please describe a few things that students and mentors were able to accomplish through this program that would have been difficult or impossible any other way. Teacher responses are listed below:

- "College Search--the student with the help of his/her mentor are investigating colleges with the student's interests kept in mind. We have a Career Center but it is mainly applying for colleges, scholarship information but time limits help for each student to thoroughly investigate a college or colleges and specific interests. Interviewing someone current working in a career the student is thinking about for his/her future. The mentor helped provide a person currently working in a specific career. Future of Business--may include accounting standards since the Enron scandal; the whys of accounting."

- "Mentors edited student papers, and gave valuable advice and information to students. Mentors met student individual needs."

Teacher Ratings of Quality of Help Received from ITP Staff

In Question 6, teachers were asked to rate the quality of help they received from the ITP staff throughout the duration of the project. Teachers were given 5 choices ranging from 1=poor through 5=excellent. The mean score is listed in Table 5 below:

Overall Mean Score: 4.27

According to this finding, teachers were very pleased with the quality of help they received from the ITP staff. Given the mean score of 4.27, teachers' perceptions were very close to the "Excellent" category.

Frequency of communication with the mentor group

In question 7, teachers were asked, "How often they were able to communicate with the entire mentor group?" The survey choices ranged from the following choices: 1=daily, 2=every other day; 3= weekly; 4=biweekly; and 5=less than biweekly. Results are found below:

Overall Mean Score: 3.91

According to this finding, teachers reported a mean score of 3.91. This score illustrates that they were able to communicate with the entire mentor group about once a week. Given the demands on a teacher's time, this communication is efficient to discuss any problems that may arise with matches between students and mentors.

Students Communication with Mentors

Question 8 asked teachers to report how often students were able to communicate with their mentors. Teachers were given 5 choices: 1=Daily; 2=Every other day; 3=Weekly; 4=Bi-weekly; and 5=less than biweekly. Results are found below:

Overall Mean Score: 3.55

According to the mean score of 3.55, teachers reported that students often communicated with their mentors roughly about once a week. However, this may not be the *actual number* because of the capability of some students to e-mail from their homes. Also, the ITP message system allows students the flexibility to communicate more often. This messaging system helps the students to communicate 2-3 times per week, which is the requirement of the ITP program.

Changes in ITP program

In question 9 of the survey, teachers were asked to "Describe any significant changes that they would like to see in the program and who would be responsible for making these changes." The summary of the responses are found below:

- "I would like to see the program offered in a shorter amount of time (6weeks). My students could have easily have finished in this amount of time. 6 weeks would also fit nicely with the quarter grading system.."

- "The technology wiring in our building is very limiting. This is a district problem."

Assistance with Technology

Question 10 asked teachers, "How has this program assisted in using technology more effectively. The summary of responses is found below:

- "Students have had the opportunity to use the Internet and search for information. They have also worked on keyboarding skills and communication skills."

- "It enhances what is available to us--without technology the projects would not be able to function.

In examining the above-stated quotes, it is clear that teachers are getting valuable technology training for their classrooms. Many teachers are learning the value of technology in their classrooms.

Impact of Meeting National and State Standards

In question 11a, teachers were asked, "How this program impacted students in meeting the various national and state standards." Teachers were given 5 choices ranging from 1=Not at all significant to 5=Significant. The mean score is provided below:

Overall Mean Score: 3.82

According to teachers in this survey, the (ITP) program is significant in helping students to meet the various national and state standards. This explains what many teachers have said many times during this survey, that this program should be highly publicized so it can have a positive impact on many more students in schools.

In question 11b, teachers were asked to "Please describe the impact of the (ITP) program in helping to meet national and state standards in their own words. A summary of teacher thoughts are listed below:

- "With No Child Left Behind--all of my accounting students are given the opportunity to participate regardless of the level they are scoring on standard tests."

- "Standards covered have been language arts: writing process of planning, editing, reading, technology, and media. Presenting orally with visuals Technology standards: searching for information the Internet, keyboarding, word processing, saving information into student files."

Supervising "At-Risk Students"

Question 12 asked teachers to "Indicate the percentage of students that were under their supervision that can be identified as "at-risk" students." Teachers had 5 possible choices which consisted of the following: 1=10% or less; 2=25%, 3=50%, 4=75%, and 5=90% or more.

Overall Mean Score = 2.27

According to this mean score of 2.27, teachers reported that approximately 25% of their students were actually labeled as "at-risk" students. This indicates that the majority of the students that teachers were working with in the ITP program were more "traditional students."

Meeting of ITP Program Requirements

In question 13 of the survey, teachers that were selected in the (ITP) program were asked to meet the following requirements:

1. All student/mentor communication is project-based
2. Participating students receive a subject grade and turn in work at least biweekly
3. Teachers should communicate biweekly with the mentors
4. Students should be self-selected for participation
5. Teachers should expect a high degree of accountability from their students
6. Teachers should respond to specific program problems within 48 hours

With these requirements, teachers were asked, "How many of the requirements were they able to meet during they year. Teachers were given 5 choices ranging from 1-5.

Overall Mean Score: 3.91

This mean score clearly shows that most teachers were able to meet approximately 4 of the 6 above stated requirements during the three academic years under investigation. This shows a positive picture for the ITP program because teachers meet the majority of the goals and requirements in a given academic year.

In question 14, teachers were asked a follow-up question to #13. **"Teachers were asked to indicate which requirements helped them be successful in the program."** A summary of teachers responses are found below:

- "Weekly assignments enabled students to focus on assignment goals. Communicating with mentors what the weekly assignments were enabled mentors to keep students focused."

- "Requiring all of my students to do health research and assessing their work, enabled me to set aside the time in our daily schedule to allow students to participate."

Question 15 asked teachers to **"Please describe which requirements were difficult to meet."** A summary of the teacher responses are found below:

- "Communication with mentors on a regular basis was challenging due to our poor technology wiring and juggling of limited computers along with other unexpected events that require students' time."

- "There were only three projects so communicating with the biweekly with the mentors was not always necessary."

Question 16 asked teachers the following question: **"If you were helping a new teacher start this program, what advice would you offer that would aid this new teacher and his or her students to be successful participants?"** Teacher responses are found below:

- "Plan your projects so they are beneficial and interesting/fun for the students and within reason for the mentor to be able to help the student.."

- "I would do this program only with the whole class and I would try to apply to choice of topics to material that you are required to cover by the district. I would get the cooperation of other key teachers (computer, media, etc.) to help."

Question 17 asked teachers the following question, **"Do you plan to participate in the program next year?"** The teacher responses are reported below:

Overall Totals: Yes=7; No=4

These numbers clearly show that teachers found this program very productive and plan to participate in the upcoming school year. With such a great number of teachers (64%) reporting that they plan to participate again lends support to the need to promote this program on a larger-scale basis.

Support of "Proactive Learning"

Question 18 asked teachers the following question: "Are you supportive of the 'proactive learning' concept where each student measure academic success by the ability to execute his or her own learning plan successfully?" The responses are reported below:

Overall Totals: Yes=11; No=0

These totals show that teachers are "very" supportive of the concept of "proactive learning" where students measure academic success by the ability to execute his or her own learning plan successfully. By this response, teachers would like students to become more "accountable" for their own learning.

Numbers of Students Served

Question 19 asked teachers to "Please estimate the amount of students in your school district or city that could take advantage of this program next year. The finding to this question is found below:

Overall Mean Score: 86.82

According to this finding, teachers reported that many students could take advantage of the International Telementoring Program. By teacher estimates, an additional 86+ students could be recruited into this program. This shows that teachers believe that more students need to be involved in order to ensure their success in the academic environment.

Additional Training

In question 20, teachers were asked, "What additional training is needed for next year?" A summary of teacher responses are found below:

- "Perhaps a list of helpful tips would be a good addition. Example: Knowing how to wrap text. Knowing how to accommodate for the differences between Apple and PC computers. For elementary students have teachers print out mentor messages so students can plan their next message to the mentor. This was especially helpful since computer time was so limited."

- "Making sure that a teacher is aware of any changes in the technology presented for the program."

Summary of Teacher Survey

In summary, the 11 Fort Collins, Colorado teachers that participated in this survey overwhelmingly believe that the International Telementor Program (ITP) is valuable for their students. Teachers reported that students that participated in this program have increasingly become proactive learners. Also, teachers reported that they have gained greater knowledge in the area of "technology usage" by being a part of this program.

Researcher's Recommendations

As a result of this program evaluation research, several recommendations are provided for the ITP program to consider in its future programmatic efforts:

1. Work with teachers and schools to find ways for schools to obtain more computer equipment to increase the time students can work on their projects and communicate with their mentors. By doing so, will increase the overall effectiveness of what students can get out of this program.

2. Find ways to have mentors, students and teachers communicate more often via the ITP website. Various comments from all three constituents in the full program evaluation noted that more communication was needed in this program.

3. Make sure the teacher is involved with the various aspects of communication with the student and the teacher. Many mentors noted that the teacher was not very involved in the entire process.

4. ITP staff should assist teachers to help create projects that develop solid skills in the areas of math and science. By doing so, the program will be able to demonstrate greater effectiveness in improving math and science comprehension.

5. Provide background data to students and mentors before a match is made. Many mentors and students noted that the initial stages of the mentor/student match were a little slow in development because the different parties did not know much about each other.

6. Additional mentor recruitment is needed as this program continues to grow. By increasing the mentor base, students can be exposed to more professionals in the work world that can help provide advice on how to become a proactive learner.

7. In the area of research, the ITP program should work with the researcher to make the survey instruments are more efficient for mentors, teachers and students. The survey instruments should be refined for clarity and greater effectiveness for obtaining program data.

8. Evaluation data should be conducted at the end of each academic semester for the mentors, teachers and students. This will help the ITP program to stay current on how mentors, teachers and students are doing in the program. Also, this will be helpful to provide feedback to the many constituents that ITP works with.

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About the Researcher

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