

MENTORING ROAD SAFETY KIT: A RESOURCE FOR TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

Mentoring, when older persons ‘wisely counsel’ and interact with younger persons, has the capacity to be a powerful educational process for positively influencing students’ road safety values, attitudes and behaviours.

A recent ACT study supports the use of mentoring within road safety educational programs. Recommendation 3 of “Students At-Risk and Driver Enhancement Programs in ACT Schools” Long R. (2000) states that:

“The format of peer mentoring ought to be incorporated in any driver education program with young people...the effectiveness of this format is indisputable based upon observations and student feedback.” (P28)

The Mentoring Kit provides information for the development of primary school road safety media and high school pre-driver programs. The kit contains:

- Three books
- One ATSB folder ‘Key Facts for New Drivers’
- One video that has 4 sections:
 1. Background on the kit (interviews with teachers, students etc)
 2. Professionally developed drink driving advertisements
 3. Primary school road safety advertisements (relevant to Year 3 students)
 4. Interviews with provisional drivers who were finalists in the ACT Young Driver Challenge

The road safety advertising and pre-driver mentoring examples provided are areas of study that students will find both interesting and relevant. They are also programs that teachers will be able to use to meet educational objectives in a number of Key Learning Areas.

However, many teachers will find that implementing a successful mentoring program is a time consuming and challenging task. To encourage teachers to take up the challenge it is suggested that transport and/or education authorities will need to commit resources to its promotion and going support.

Topic Fields

Mentoring, Road Safety Education (relevant to primary students, pre-drivers and provisional drivers)

INTRODUCTION

The kit provides information for teachers to develop either primary school road safety media or high school pre-driver awareness mentoring programs. Mentoring, when older persons 'wisely counsel' and interact with younger persons, has the capacity to be a powerful educational process for positively influencing students' road safety values, attitudes and behaviours.

Factors underlying kit development were:

- research supporting the use of mentoring within road safety educational programs
- availability of joint funding from the NRMA-ACT Road Safety Trust and Community Partnerships and School Development Section, ACT Department of Education and Community Services to allow the trialing of 3 road safety projects

The 3 projects that form the basis of the kit were:

- Mentoring, Road Safety and Media in Primary Schools where mentoring occurred between college and primary school students
- Mentoring Pre-drivers in High Schools where mentoring took place between college provisional drivers and high school pre-licence students
- Rotary Belconnen Young Driver Challenge. An interview with the ACT finalists is available for use in the pre-driver program

RATIONALE

A recent ACT report assessed the value of training (secondary college) provisional drivers to mentor (high school) pre-drivers. The study strongly supported the use of mentoring within road safety educational programs. Recommendation 3 of "Students At-Risk and Driver Enhancement Programs in ACT Schools" Long R. (2000) states that:

"The format of peer mentoring ought to be incorporated in any driver education program with young people...the effectiveness of this format is indisputable based upon observations and student feedback."
(P28)

On the basis of this report finding and the availability of funding it was decided to develop a comprehensive resource for the use of ACT teachers wishing to implement mentoring programs.

CONTENTS

The kit contains

- Three books (outlined below)
- One ATSB folder 'Key Facts for New Drivers'
- One video that has 4 sections:
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a) **Book One – Mentoring, Road Safety and Media Principles**

Book One is designed to help teachers come to terms with key mentoring, media and road safety principles. Book One information includes:

- road safety principles such as crash - counter measures, types, factors, defences, stages and costs
- media principles such as effects on the public of: road safety campaigns generally and shock tactics
- mentoring principles such as implementation checklist and roles/interactions of mentors and recipients
- examples of road safety mentoring activities

b) **Book Two – Mentoring, Road Safety and Media in Primary Schools**

Book Two is based on a 'Mentoring, Road Safety and Media' trial project that was conducted at Lake Ginninderra (secondary) College and Weetangera Primary School. Six children's road safety commercials were developed and produced using the following process.

With the assistance of teachers and road safety experts:

1. Year 11/12 college media students were trained to become road safety mentor leaders for upper primary students. There were 4 lessons provided to the students:
 - Introduction to Road Safety Campaigns
 - Developing a Road Safety Campaign (example: 'Rethink Your Drink')
 - Workshop: Analysing Current Social Marketing Programs
 - Working with Primary Students
2. College students worked with Year 6 students to discuss road safety principles and issues relevant to primary students. There were 5 lessons:
 - Five Main Types of Media
 - Media and Our Five Senses
 - Road Safety Advertisements
 - How Advertising Sells Products
 - Producing a Road Safety Campaign (Example: students develop a Scooter Safety campaign)
3. Year 6 discussed road safety issues with Year 3 students who decided the road safety issues to be highlighted in the road safety advertisements. Storyboards were then developed.
4. College media students then filmed six advertisements using Year 3 students as actors.

Book Three – Mentoring Pre-drivers in High Schools

Book Three is based on two projects:

- ‘Mentoring Pre-drivers in High Schools’ trial project that involved provisional drivers from Lake Ginninderra College mentoring Canberra and Kaleen High School Year 10 students.
- ‘2001 Rotary Belconnen Young Driver Challenge’ whereby secondary college P plate drivers receive cash rewards for displaying appropriate behaviour in driving reviews conducted by driving instructors.

High school pre-driver students received two lessons from college students after the following process was undertaken. College P plate drivers:

- were enrolled as mentors for pre-drivers
- received a one day planning and training conference for mentors
- provided ideas for possible road safety lessons
- provided examples of crashes or near crashes they had experienced in their first year of driving

Mentors were provided with the following materials to be used when mentoring Year 10 students:

- a) 6 lessons that paralleled information in the ‘Key Facts for Young Drivers’ folder
- b) 19 examples of students’ personal driving experiences
- c) ATSB ‘Key Facts for Young Drivers’ folder
- d) a video of interviews with YDC finalists

KEY FEATURES OF THE KIT

The kit advances road safety education on three fronts. Teachers may:

- a) Use mentoring processes in school programs
- b) Incorporate road safety into the over-crowded primary school curriculum

Media Studies is an excellent way for Road Safety to gain increasing attention in an already crowded primary school curriculum. Teachers are more likely to provide a road safety theme if they can, simultaneously, meet requirements in other key learning areas (such as English, Technology, Studies of Society and Environment).

- c) Incorporate student developed materials within programs

Both the primary school media and high school pre-driver programs provide materials that are relevant, developed by students and therefore more likely to be of interest to their peers. It is very noticeable that students have heightened interest and pleasure in the product when their primary peers are the stars of TV advertisements (and obtaining student interest is a pre-condition for instilling appropriate attitudes and behaviours).

Similarly, the use of students’ personal driving stories as the centre-piece of pre-driver mentoring lessons makes the lessons more relevant to teenagers. The greater the relevance of lesson material the less likely students will regard on-road dangers as only a distant intangible possibility.

THE WAY FORWARD

Mentoring programs are relatively complex and require considerable planning and preparation. Before implementing a program a teacher will have to:

- gain familiarity and confidence in three educational areas – mentoring, road safety and media (or) driver education
- liaise with teachers both in their own school and with teachers in other education institutions
- liaise with community support persons and agencies
- train students as either mentors or recipients

This workload may deter many teachers from implementing a mentoring program unless there is support provided from a relevant transport or education authority. This support may take the form of:

- funding for teachers to have time release for program liaison and preparation
- a support person to assist teachers with their first mentoring programs

CONCLUSION

The Mentoring Kit is a highly valuable resource for teachers wishing to implement a road safety mentoring program that includes primary and/or secondary students.

The road safety advertising and pre-driver mentoring examples provided are areas of study that students will find both interesting and relevant. They are also programs that teachers will be able to use to meet educational objectives in a number of Key Learning Areas.

However, many teachers will find that implementing a successful mentoring program is a time consuming and challenging task. To encourage teachers to take up the challenge it is suggested that transport and/or education authorities will need to commit resources to its promotion and on-going support.

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REFERENCES

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