

E-mentoring

3. Training - mentors, teachers, students and parents

This area is the key to success and will ultimately make the difference between success and failure.

We have seen and then taken over lots of projects that failed to produce the objectives set at the beginning of their particular programme. This isn't because the objectives were too far reaching or difficult it was generally because they were not shared with all the individuals taking part.

Training should never take place until the **school** has decided what its objectives are for the students taking part. Remember, the student is the end user so it's their goals and aspirations we are trying to address and meet.

Once the school's goals have been identified then training can take place.

There are lots of different manuals and training schemes relating to being a good mentor. However, be realistic. If your business partners are supplying you with office staff it's no good training them to work with students who want to be mechanics, it would be better to find some mechanics.

Make the training simple and easy to follow. You will find that mentors will generally have concerns about two main areas. The first will be security and the second will relate to "What are we going to talk about?" Make sure every mentor fully understand the schools objectives.

Students will have similar issues and want them clearly explained. At this point it's fair to say that if the students taking part aren't clear on why they are involved in the programme then it will have no momentum and be a failure. This happens in 7 out of 10 programmes but it is really easy to address, just tell the students what's expected of them from the start.

Teachers, all need to be fully up to speed on what the objectives are and how the technology being used actually works. Don't rely on one member of staff, if there out of school or off sick then your programme will not operate. This sounds like common sense but you would be amazed how many schools do this and then regret not training more than one teacher.

Parents, one of the most common mistakes in training is not to get the parents involved. If a parent fully understand why their son or daughter are getting involved then they will in most cases support their child. Not all parents will have lots of questions but some will. So hold a parents evening and show them what is going to be happening. It's not hard to do it just takes a little organising and management but it's well worth the time.