



From Classrooms to Careers: How Mentorship Builds Workforce Readiness



Audience Engagement

1. Upon entry, audio is on mute
2. Adjust your video layout to speaker view
3. Chat your **name** and **organization**
4. Submit your questions throughout the event and chat with attendees via the Chat feature in Zoom

Like what you hear? Let us know with reactions!

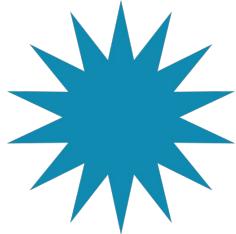


Today's Speaker



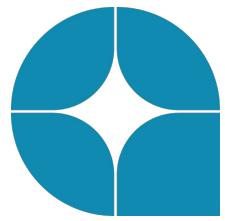
Emily Barrett
Associate Vice President,
Strategic Partnerships
Mentor Collective

Agenda



Mind the Gap

Understanding the disconnect between education and employment outcomes



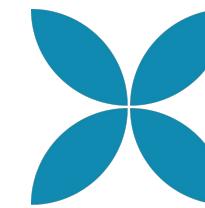
The Missing Link

Why mentorship is essential to building confidence, belonging, and workforce-ready skills



Proof in the Data

How mentorship measurably improves career decision self-efficacy, engagement, and professional confidence



From Insight to Impact

Strategies for integrating mentorship into career readiness and workforce development initiatives

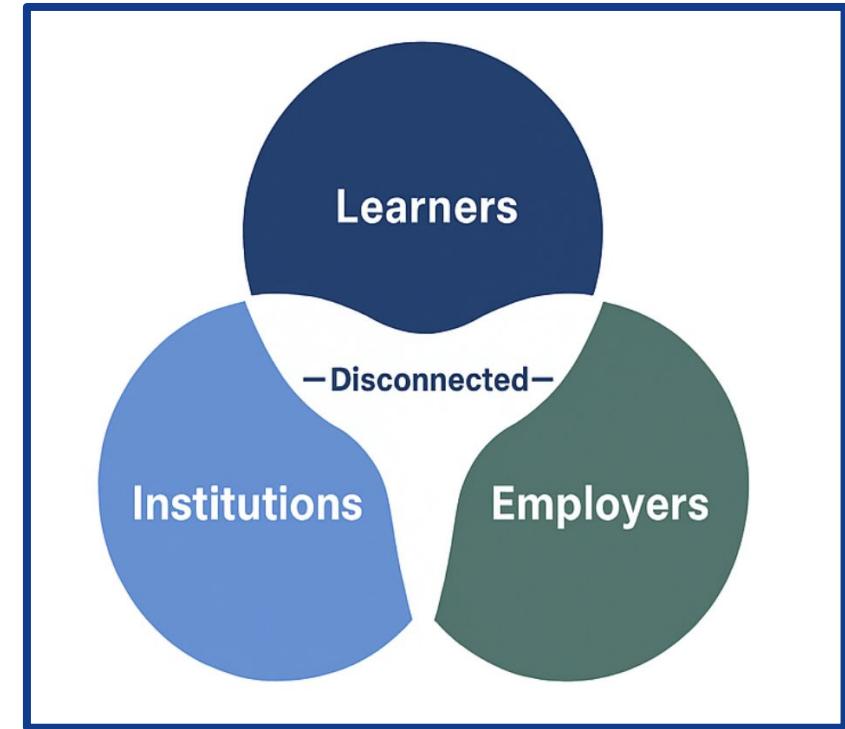
Mind the Gap



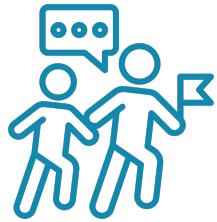
The State of Career Readiness

Despite growing investment, the gap between learning and work persists

- 50% of graduates feel unprepared for work
- 40% of graduates are underemployed in their first job.
- Only 31% say their education prepared them for work.
- 92M U.S. workers don't have a quality job
- Schools lose billions in tuition from dropouts; employers waste billions on turnover
- Employers continue to cite critical gaps in communication, critical thinking, and applied skills.



Degrees ≠ Readiness



1 in 5

Only 1 in 5 graduates receive personalized career coaching.



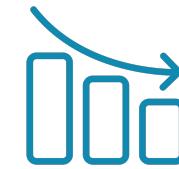
-40%

Fewer than 40% of colleges offer career services tailored to first-gen learners—despite their higher risk of underemployment.



49%

Internships reduce underemployment by 49%, yet access remains inequitable.



3.5X

Graduates who start underemployed are 3.5x more likely to remain so a decade later.

The Missing Link



Mentorship is the Missing Link

Mentorship provides the relational support that turns **academic learning** into career confidence.

- Scalable, relational strategy that connects knowledge to experience
- Builds social capital, confidence, and belonging
- Aligns education with workforce outcomes





Mentorship Bridges the Gap

What Mentorship Builds

Four Measurable Indicators of Career Readiness

Career Decision Self-Efficacy

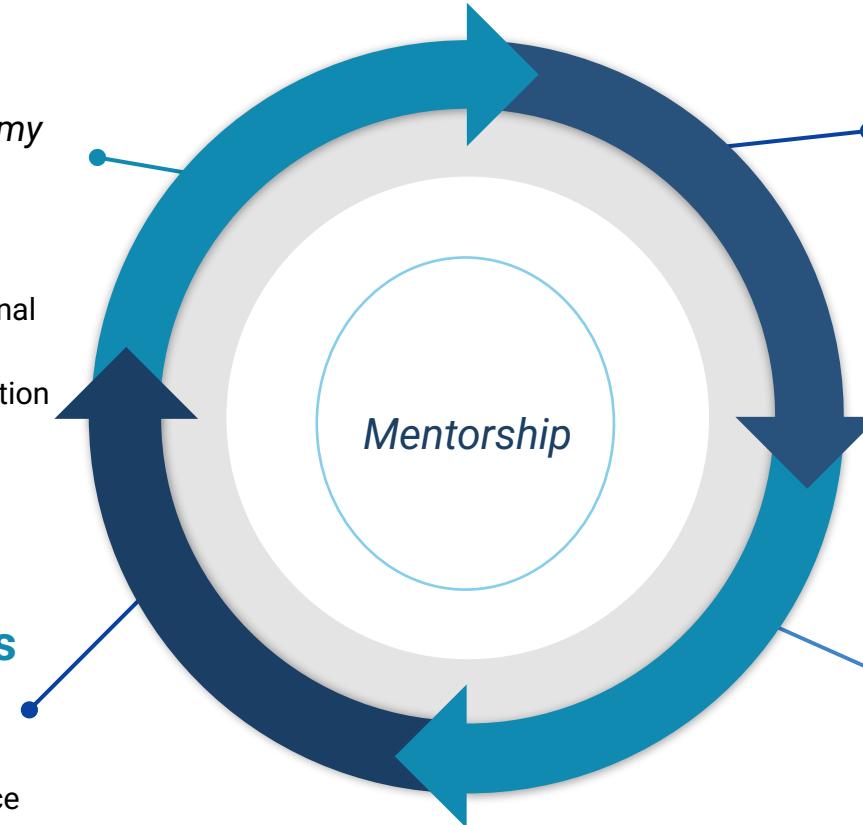
"I feel confident making decisions about my future."

- +12% increase in resourcefulness/confidence
- Mentorship boosts clarity around personal strengths and pathways
- Learners report a greater sense of direction after working with mentors

Confidence in Professional Skills

"I believe I can succeed in a workplace environment."

- +22% boost in job search strategy confidence
- Increases in goal setting, follow-through, and communication
- Mentors provide feedback, validation, and real-world context



Career Exploration & Engagement

"I take active steps toward career preparation."

- +45% increase in use of career services
- More students reported attending events, networking, and using LinkedIn
- Mentors prompt mentees to act on career advice and build momentum

Sense of Belonging & Social Capital

"I have people I can turn to for guidance and opportunity."

- +23% access to role models in their intended career field
- +19% increase in new professional contacts
- Mentorship fosters community, connection, and hidden curriculum access

Proof in the Data



Proof in the Data: Career Confidence

Mentorship Builds Career Decision Self-Efficacy



+23%

Access to relatable role
models



+12%

Confidence gathering
career information



+8%

Observing career
decision-making
behaviors



80%

High self-efficacy
learners increased from
62% → 80%

Career Decision Self-Efficacy



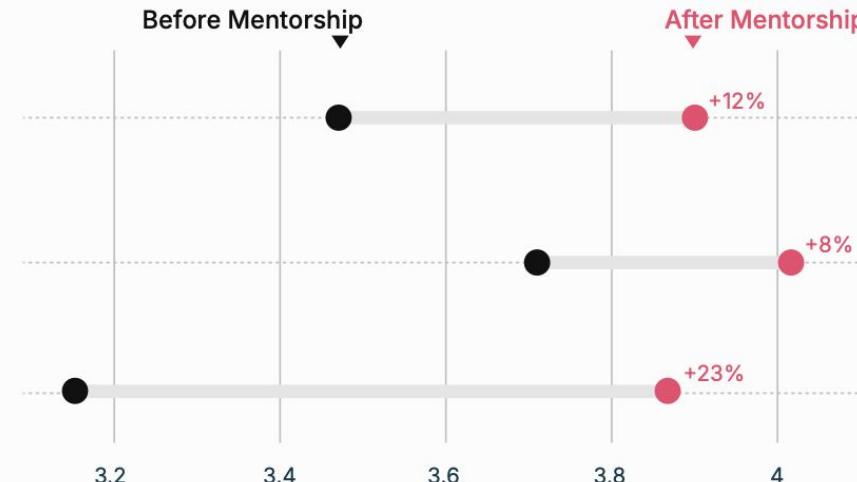
Career Decision Self-Efficacy Before & After Mentorship

Scale of 1-5; n=1421 (Before), 420 (After)

People important to me have let me know that I am resourceful when it comes to gathering information needed to make career-related decisions.

I have observed people I admire who are resourceful at gathering the information they need to make career-related decisions.

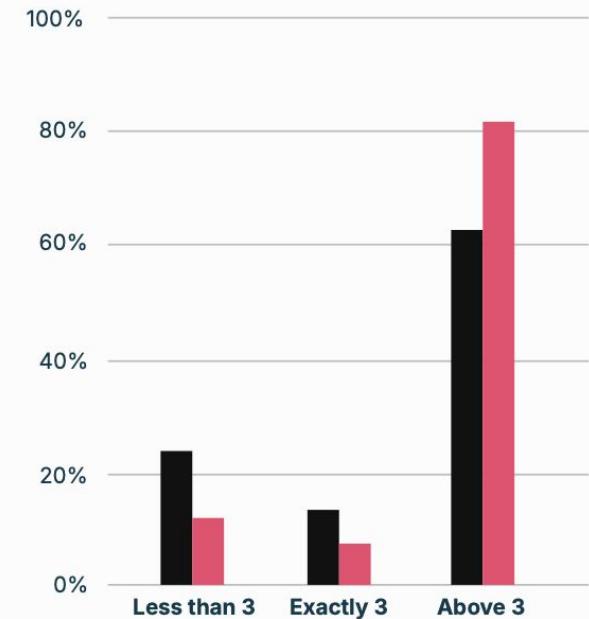
I have models who have explained to me how they chose an academic major or career path.



Career Decision Self-Efficacy Before & After Mentorship

Scale of 1-5; n=1,421 (Before), 420 (After)

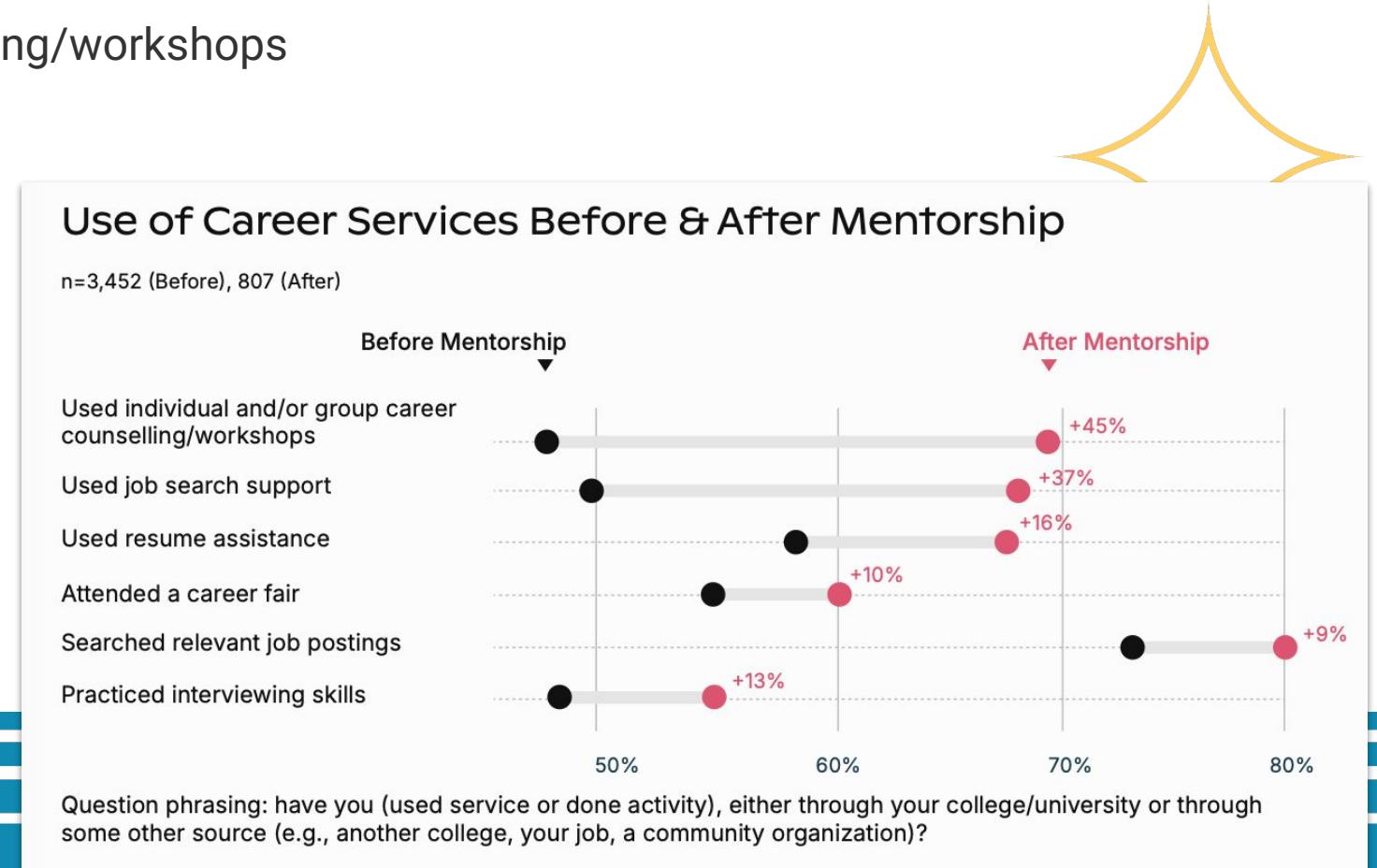
■ Before Mentorship ■ After Mentorship



Proof in the Data: Engagement Behaviors

Mentors Drive Engagement with Career Resources

- **+45%**: Participation in career counseling/workshops
- **+37%**: Use of job search support
- **+16%**: Resume assistance
- **+13%**: Practiced interview skill
- **+10%**: Career fair attendance



Engagement with these services directly correlates to *higher job offers and stronger first-destination outcomes*. (NACE, 2022)

Proof in the Data: Professional Confidence

Mentorship Doubles Learners' Confidence in Professional Skills

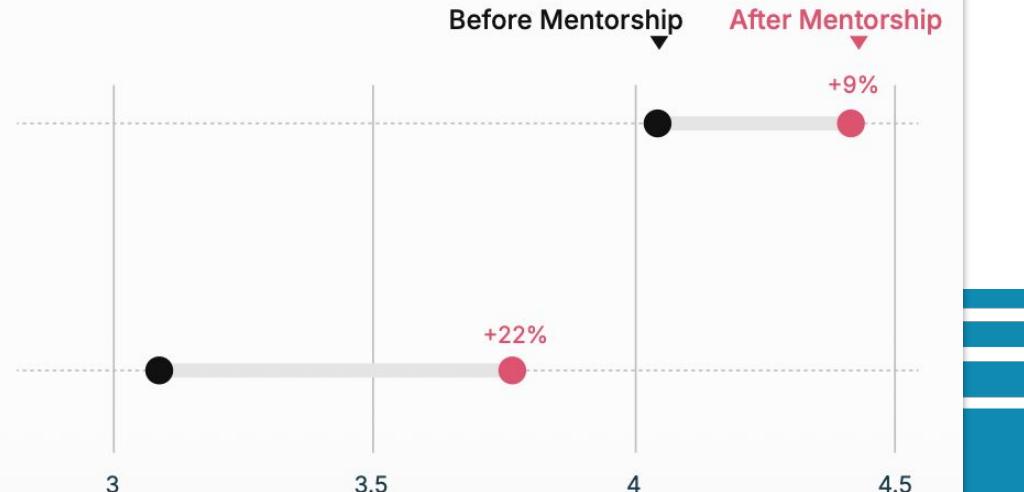
- +22%: Confidence developing strategies to secure employment
- High-confidence learners rose from 19% → 42%

Professional Skills Before & After Mentorship

Scale of 0-5; n=3,452 (Before), 807 (After)

To what extent have you begun thinking about, exploring, or planning your life after graduation, whether that includes more school, a job, volunteer work, or anything else?

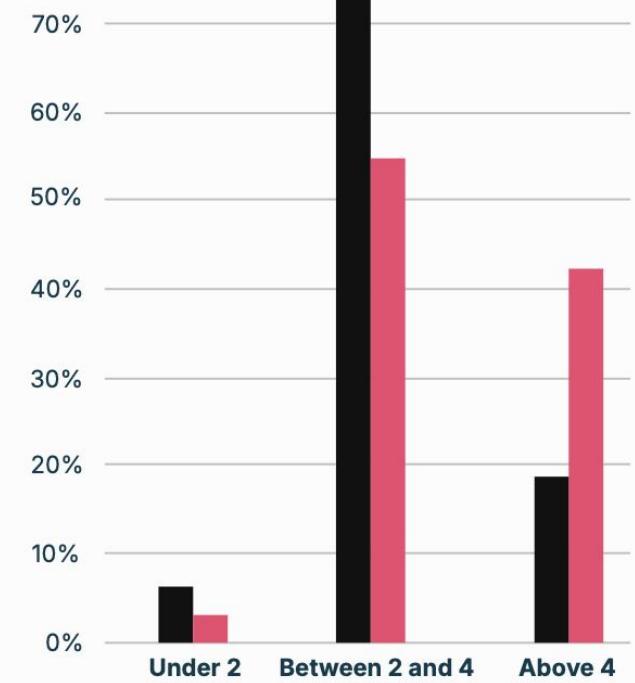
How confident are you in your ability to develop realistic strategies for locating and securing employment?



Professional Skills Before & After Mentorship

Scale of 0-5; n=3,452 (Before), 807 (After)

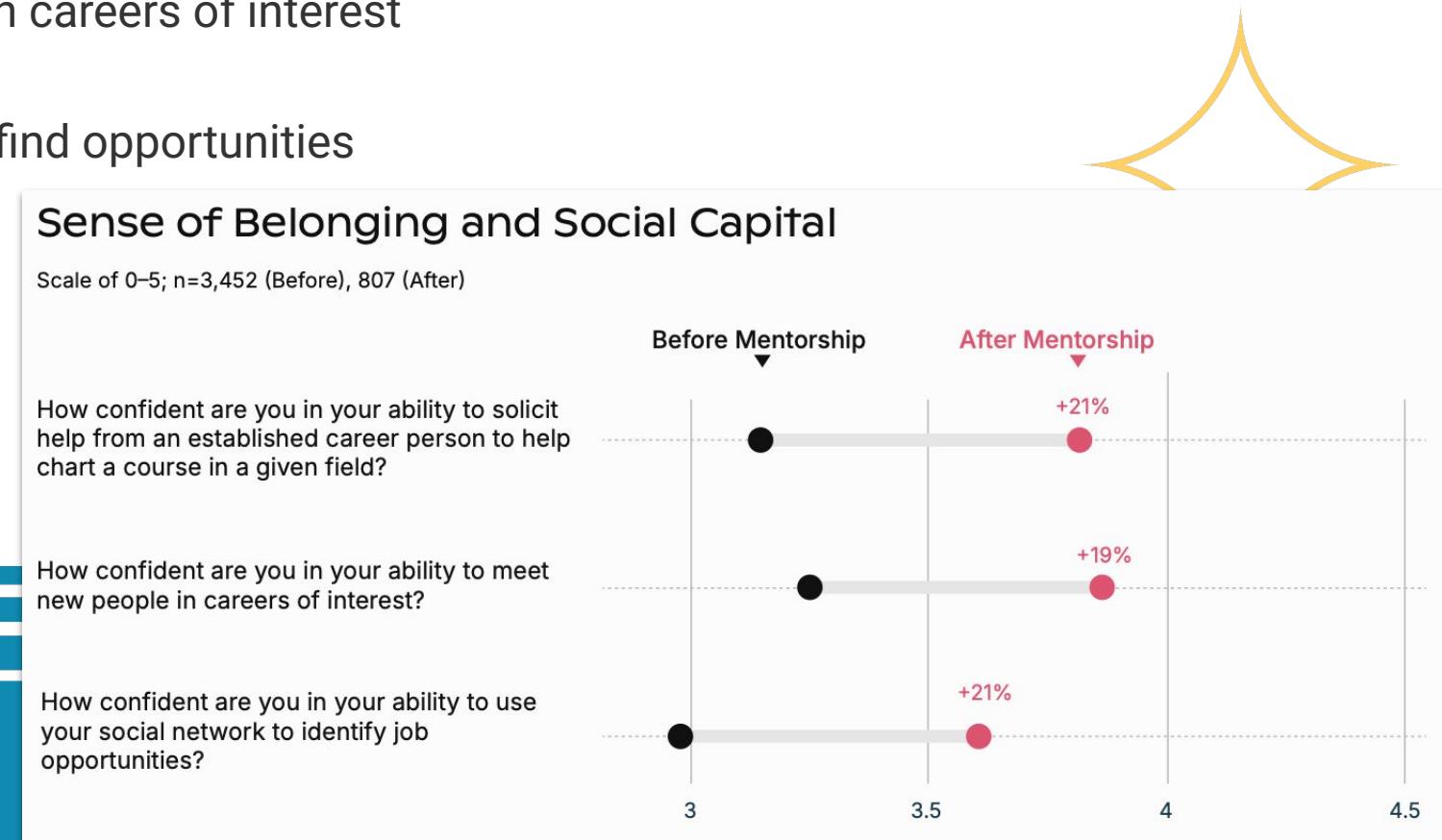
■ Before Mentorship ■ After Mentorship



Proof in the Data: Belonging and Social Capital

Mentorship Expands Opportunity

- +21%: Confidence asking professionals for help
- +19%: Comfort meeting new people in careers of interest
- +21%: Confidence using networks to find opportunities



Beyond Networks: Accessing the Hidden Curriculum

Mentorship unlocks the hidden curriculum of career success

- Mentors help learners navigate unspoken professional norms (e.g., networking, communication, self-advocacy).
- Provides culturally responsive guidance for first-gen and underserved learners.
- Builds the social capital and confidence often missing from traditional career preparation.



From Insight to Impact



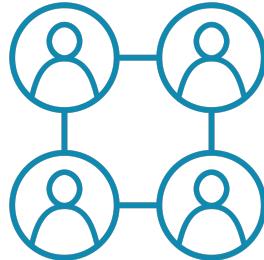
The Evolving Benefits of Mentorship



Mentorship improves outcomes for underrepresented students.

Students of color and first-gen students benefit more significantly from formal mentoring relationships during experiential learning.

(Gallup-Strada Education Network)



Structured mentorship adds accountability and skill development.

Braven's Model shows that near-peer mentors coaching students during career-embedded learning improve job attainment rates post-graduation.



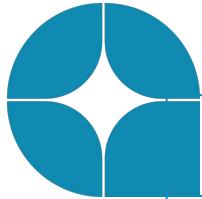
Mentorship increases perceived career preparedness.

Students with formal mentorships during internships report greater clarity on career goals and stronger workplace integration.

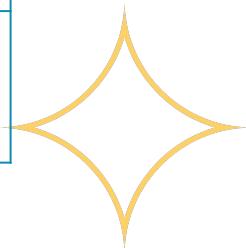
(NACE)

From Insight to Impact

How Institutions and Employers Benefit



For Institutions	For Employers
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• +6% Retention lift	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stronger early-talent pipelines
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• +8% Belonging increase	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Higher intern-to-hire conversion
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Better alignment with career outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More diverse, prepared hires



The Future of Career Readiness

60% of workers will need reskilling by 2030

53% of executives expect half their workforce to upskill within 3 years

Social capital has become a career prerequisite.



Mentorship as Workforce Infrastructure

- 1. Supports upskilling, adaptability, and reskilling across career stages.**
- 2. Connects learners to evolving industry expectations.**
- 3. Helps learners build a professional network, advocate during a job offer, and navigate workplace norms.**
- 4. Helps translate education into ongoing employability.**



The Outcome

“

I learned a lot from my mentor about how to navigate my career path and build my professional network. She helped me identify people to reach out to and even reviewed the emails I sent. I wouldn't have known where to start without her.”

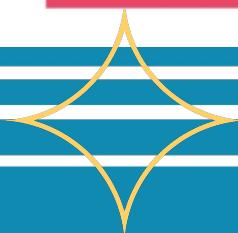
—One Mentee



“

My mentor has been a great help in my professional development. He's helped me with my resume, my LinkedIn, and my general networking skills. It's a lot less scary to reach out to people when you have someone in your corner to encourage you.”

—One Learner



What's Next



Download Today:

Career Readiness Begins Here

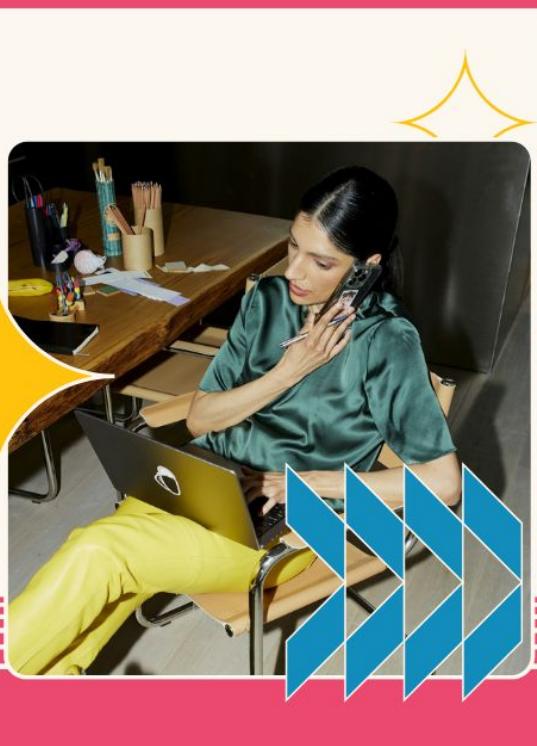
WHITE PAPER

Career Readiness Begins Here: How Mentorship Builds the Skills that Matter

Written by:

Annemieke Rice, M.S., MentorCollective
Jennifer Kious, Ed.M., MentorCollective

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The next step for institutions and policymakers: position mentorship as a strategic driver of belonging, career readiness, and workforce success.

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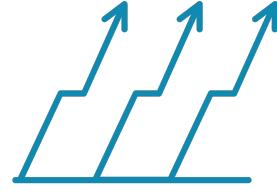
Poll



Thank You!

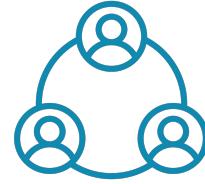


Mentorship as Workforce Infrastructure



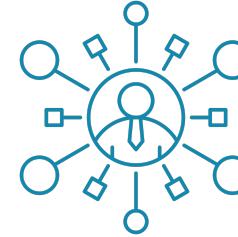
Fuel Career Growth & Adaptability

Supports upskilling, adaptability, and reskilling across career stages.



Build Industry-Aligned Networks

Connects learners to evolving industry expectations.



Bridge the Transition to Work

Helps learners build a professional network, advocate during a job offer, and navigate workplace norms.



Turn Education into Employment

Helps translate education into ongoing employability.