

PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE OF MENTORING

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PRINCIPLES OF MENTORING

Passing on knowledge that is not linked to a specific job is known as education whereas developing skill in order to perform a specific job more effectively is training which is job oriented. Development can be seen as strategic plan designed to produce growth over time. Changes in individuals due to interaction with the environment is learning. Traditionally, a teacher is someone who shows up for a teaching job every day. He or she knows the content and teaching is assumed like a job. However, meaning of educator is wider. Educator is one of those people who go further than what is expected. He believes making relationships with students is more important than the content and the content coming alive because of those relationships. Therefore, scope of educator is broader; he is a facilitator, role model and information provider. He is also responsible for creating effective learning environment and research culture. In addition to it, he organizes courses, plans and evaluating curriculum as well as assessing student.^{1,2}

Every country's education system is its basis for progress and the groundwork for its future. A common feature in successful education systems is the balance between tradition and the capacity to be flexible and able to adapt to current social trends. Today, knowledge that formed the basis of progress in the 19th and 20th centuries is not enough for 21st century as industries have revolutionized from 1.0 to 4.0. Therefore, education must be transitioned in line with industrial revolution. Students will require having a new set of competencies such as

critical thinking, creativity, cognitive flexibility, judgment and decision making. Training, coaching, facilitating are no longer sufficient to meet those skills and qualities. Mentoring according to individual diversity becomes the key element to produce professionals for 21st century.³

Mentoring is not a new idea in medical education. Rector Professor Zaw Wai Soe mentioned that he was exposed to mentoring program while he was in Glasgow for further training. Professor Kyu Kyu Maung also spoke that they have informal mentoring program in their department. Similarly, Associate Professor Dr Aung Kyaw Thu discussed that they have already started mentoring program for post graduate training in University of Medicine 2 but it has not well established yet.

Nevertheless, it is high time to focus mentoring to prepare for education 4.0 era. Clutterbuck, 1990 defined mentoring as "Off-line help by one person to another in making significant transitions in knowledge work or thinking". According to Parsole, 1992, mentoring is stated as 'To help and support people to manage their own learning in order to maximise their potential, develop their skills, improve their performance and become the person they want to be'. In other words, a mentoring is a career development whereby less experienced people are matched with more experienced colleagues for guidance either through formal or informal program. Mentoring can be further elaborated as a tool to nurture, let people grow and it essentially involves helping a person develop more

effectively. It is also a relationship designed to take increasing initiative in his/ her development. Although it may be done by anyone, it involves differently for different people and needs real listening. It does not dictate mentee what to do, instead it helps mentee clarify his/ her objectives. For medical teacher, Mentoring is a professional relationship that promotes talent development by bringing healthcare practitioners together with more experienced seniors to achieve their full potential. Impact of mentoring to healthcare is huge as enhances productivity and performance of the individual and the organization. It is also building capacity and

skills to transform lives and make positive differences. Mentoring is also essential for team management. It is important to apply mentoring and coaching in line with team building stages which are known as forming, storming, norming and performing. Coaching is suitable for forming stage during which participant has growing skills & rising enthusiasm whereas mentoring should be used during the performing phase – a time of encouragement, advanced guidance.

Mentoring is different from coaching in terms of goals, initiatives, focus and roles. It is illustrated in table-1 as follow.

	Coaching	Mentoring
Goals	Correct inappropriate behavior Improve performance Impart skills	Support & guide the personal growth
Initiative	Coach directs the learning & instruction.	Mentee is in charge of learning.
Focus	Immediate problems & learning opportunities	Long-term personal development, values
Roles	Heavy on telling with appropriate feedback	Heavy on listening, providing a role model, & making suggestions and connections

Table (1) showing differences between coaching and mentoring⁴

There are some principles to follow in mentoring program. The Mentee drives the Mentoring agenda. Firstly, Engagement is on a voluntary basis for both the mentor and the mentee and the relationship is confidential. Mentoring is non-directive in its approach and a relationship is built upon trust and mutual respect. The relationship places no obligation on either party beyond its developmental

intent.

The Mentor empowers the Mentee to take responsibility for their own learning and career development. It has three phases, phase one being clarifying expectation which includes building Rapport, contracting, direction Setting; phase two being progress making and phase three being maturation and closure.⁵

PRACTICES OF MENTORING

There are three levels of mentoring. Level one is impression and it is least effective as it only impresses the follower with little or no relationship. It requires only the will of the leader and leader must want to leave an impression. Level two is Influence which could possibly be effective. The leader influences the followers and there is some relationship with the followers. It requires the will of the follower and follower must want to be influenced. Level three is Impact and it is most effective. It requires an intimate relationship between mentor and mentee. As both agree to accountability and growth, it requires will of both. Mentor should ask for challenge, confirmation, probing, testing; listen with empathy and four ears – appeal, relationship, self-revelation, factual information; show potential talent and ability as a role model.

Qualities of a good mentor are fully committing to mentoring, being approachable, positive, being non-judgmental, supportive and constructive. In addition to it, He should also be willing to learn. Two key skills of a mentor are also noteworthy. First skill is broadening the horizon which means that encouraging the mentee to bring topics to the table, facilitating focus on long-term professional development and exploring wider range of alternatives with mentee to aid decision making. Relationship building & Communication skills are the second crucial skills which require trust, good listening skill, asking questions and giving advice, storytelling, being a good role model and a good motivator.⁵

For a mentee who is looking for a mentor, a few questions need to be asked himself before deciding to choose a potential mentor. Are they objective, lovingly honest, and balanced source of feedback for questions? Are they open and transparent with their own struggles? Are they successful in your eyes? Are they open to two-way communication/learning? Are they modeling their teachings? Do they want to see you develop and succeed? Are they chief cheerleader or chief critic? Are they teaching and answering questions?

Some useful tips for mentor also exist. Personal experiences are valuable and better than reading other's successes. Furthermore, mentees should be encouraged that mistakes are not the end; instead they are steps to growth. Mentor should be willing to admit past mistakes and lessons learned. Lastly, it should not be forgotten that being accountable for everything mentor do and say is important step for trust building.

Matching mentee with suitable mentor plays a vital role in mentoring program as people show a variety of personal trait and unmatched pairing can affect relationship building. Some online personality tests are freely available and one of them can be found in <https://www.16personalities.com/free-personality-test>. In imperial college London, students are required to take online personality test during enrollment and were assigned matched mentor who are sometimes alumni. Different personal traits are summarized in the following figure.

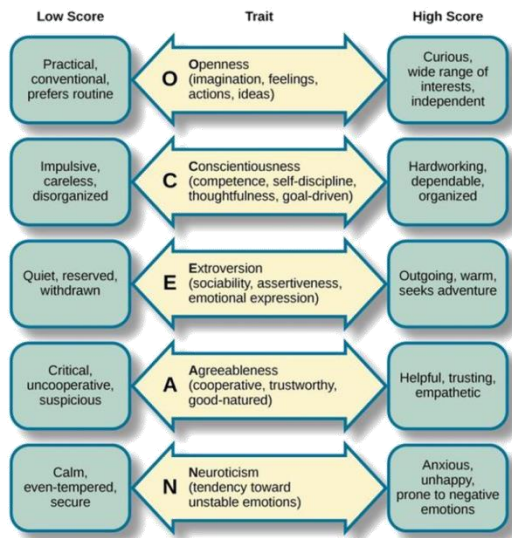


Figure (1) Figure illustrating personal traits⁶

It is also critical to understand values and attitudes of a mentor as they certainly differ among individuals. Values describes what mentees try to achieve through work and how they think they should behave while attitudes capture mentees' thoughts and feelings about their specific jobs or businesses. Values can be subdivided into terminal value which is personal conviction about life-long goals and instrumental value which is personal conviction about desired modes of conduct or ways of behaving. Some examples of terminal values are happiness, national security, self-respect and freedom. Obedience, politeness and honesty are some examples of instrumental values.

A typical mentoring meeting involves helping the mentees set targets for him/ her, helping the mentee seeing the consequences of different actions for mentee to decide for themselves, turning questions back to the mentee and referring them to someone qualified to help. Moreover, it is also important to remember that role of the mentor is not to make decision and micromanage mentee. Potential pitfalls such as overdependence of mentee on mentor,

exploitation of mentee, using a mentee should be aware. It is also advisable to treat mentee with respect, provide constructive and supportive feedback and breaking the ice by sharing some personal experience of a mentor. Mentee's interest should be looked out during a conversation.

Some sins can negatively affect the mentor-mentee relationship. They are failing to communicate effectively, playing games, playing favorites, getting involved with individuals' personal problems, becoming personally involved with team members, ignoring performance gaps, treating team members unfairly, failing to build a sound foundation and displaying lackadaisical attitude. A Mentee and/or Mentor should consider ending the partnership if the mentor and/or mentee are clearly and consistently uninterested in the relationship; if the mentee is depressed by the mentor's undervaluing their abilities or by questioning their motives; if the mentor displays any signs of undermining the relationship (e.g. racial, sexual, ethnic or other prejudice) or simple incompatibility between mentee and mentor or if the current mentor consistently is unable to answer questions or offer advice. Part of the Mentor's role is to recognize when the relationship is reaching a transitional stage. During this stage, mentee is contacting you less often and exhibits less appreciation for mentor input. Mentee exhibits less openness in communication and it indicates that the protégé can get help elsewhere. If such a situation is encountered, the mentor must take the lead to confront the transition issue. Let the mentee know you have noticed and indicate a non- judgmental desire to deal with differences in the relationship.

Mentoring mistakes should also be noted. Sometimes, it can be failure to start a

mentoring. Others are thinking they must be a master of principles before they can share them, unwillingness to make mentoring a high priority so time is not regularly scheduled, thinking sessions must occur in a formal or academic setting, failure to think specifically about their mentees, unwillingness to be transparent and vulnerable, making the session longer than interest span of their mentees, turning the session into a lecture or a sermon rather than a quality exchange and expecting to see immediate and/or unrealistic changes in their mentees.

There are mentoring myths and fears. They think that they are too old, too busy, do not have; time, ability, right; personality enough; money. Sometimes their fear arises from the fact that as mentor they must be able to teach and understand the next generation. Moreover, occasionally, they are afraid that no one would want them. Basic and simple instructions are available to avoid fear, confusion and frustration in the process of mentoring and engaging with mentee. A wide variety of options should be used to keep experiences fresh and exciting. Likewise, it should be aware that feelings of fear and inadequacy are normal and this can be overcome by learning together. The best mentoring relies heavily on the natural relationship and exchange between mentor and mentee. When mentoring more than one person at a time, it is important to make sure that sessions are equally valid either for single or multiple mentees. If you mentor more than one, forming groups similar in age and interests may be helpful. "Ancient Wisdom" has a place--let the Word do the work.

In summary, we are in the period of transition and education is instantly changing

to prepare for the future needs. Roles and behavior are also changing to match new demands in the workplace. Organizations are moving from hierarchical to team Structure. Teaching communication skill, ethics and professionalism, work place based assessment, critical thinking and mentoring are the keys to open the door of education 4.0.

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