



Mentor's Handbook

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1 What is Mentoring?

Mentoring is a very human activity and the chances are, we have probably already been mentors or mentees in some capacity even if it wasn't called mentoring.

The name 'mentor' comes from Homer's 'Odyssey' that is set in ancient Greece, and is about how 'Mentor' watches over Odysseus's son Telemachus (with the help of the Goddess Athene) and helps him to realise his aspirations and true potential.

There are many different definitions of mentoring that place a different emphasis upon certain aspects of the relationship according to the context of the mentoring activity.

A general definition of mentoring is:

'Mentoring is the process by which one person assists another to grow and learn in a safe and supportive relationship'

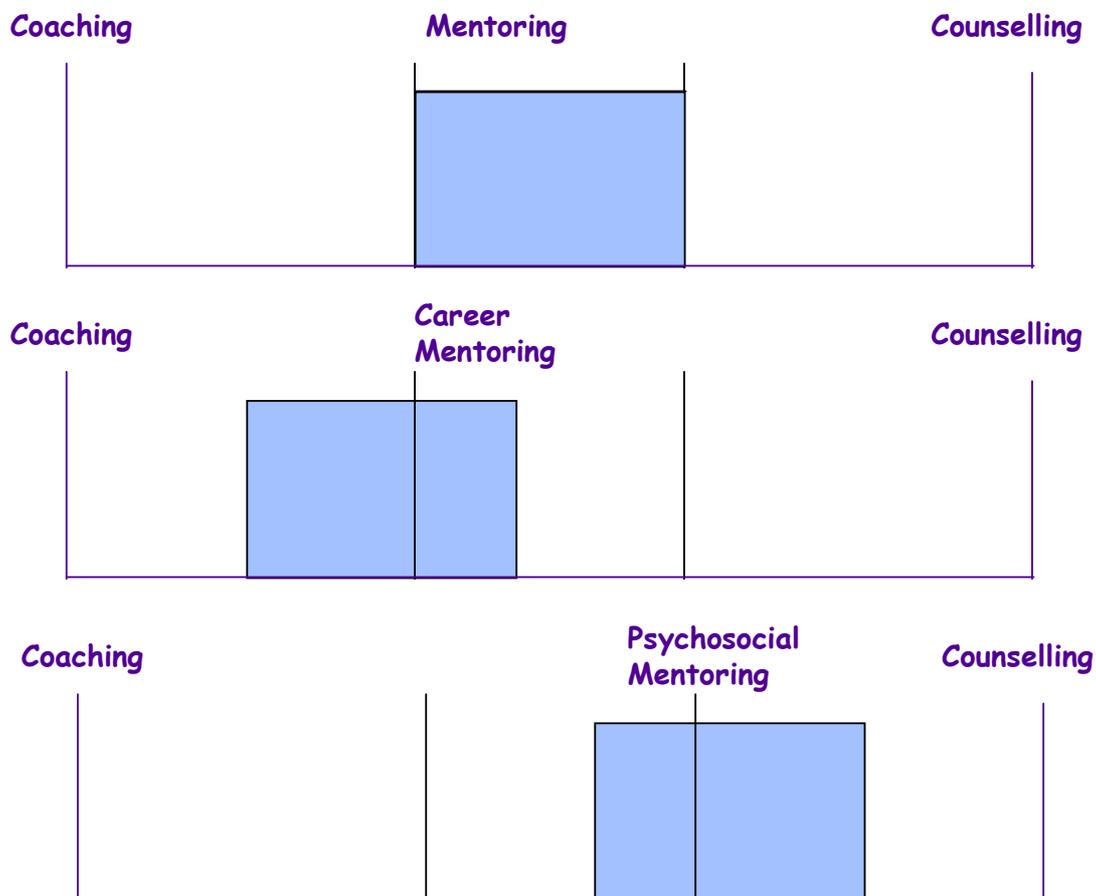
Langridge 1998

A more recent definition for mentoring comes from the Home Office Active Community Unit. This definition has also been adopted by the Department for Education and Skills in relation to school based schemes:

"A one-to-one, non-judgmental relationship in which an individual mentor voluntarily gives time to support and encourage another. This relationship is typically developed at a time of transition in the mentee's life, and lasts for a significant and sustained period of time."

2 How Mentoring differs from Coaching and Counselling

Mentoring involves a range of approaches, which vary depending on the context of the mentoring activity and the mentee's learning needs. Many people find mentoring hard to define because it can overlap with coaching and counselling. It may focus on developing organisational and job-related skills (mentoring/coaching) or on the mentee's personal development in areas such as communication and interpersonal skills (mentoring/counselling).



Mentoring relationships can change over a period of time to reflect changes in circumstance or issues, and this requires a change of emphasis in the skills the mentor uses.

Mentors cannot be all things to all people, and having clearly defined boundaries in a mentoring relationship is critical for both mentor and mentee.

When a relationship hits the boundaries of coaching or counselling, the mentor's role changes to that of a 'signpost' to an appropriate professional, or 'gatekeeper' to internal networks.

The school's scheme co-ordinator is always on hand to assist and support the mentoring relationship. Should an issue arise that both parties feel lies outside of the defined boundaries of the mentoring relationship, the scheme co-ordinator can be consulted as to the best course of action. This might be obtaining information on internal/external workshops or referral to an appropriate professional.

3 Knowledge and experience

A mentor draws on their personal experience of...

- ❖ facing difficulties and setbacks
- ❖ meeting new challenges
- ❖ being helped, being a mentee
- ❖ working with others and contributing
- ❖ achievement, success and failure
- ❖ being responsible for their actions and reactions to others and to situations

4 What does a mentor do?

Does

- ◆ Guide and offer alternatives
- ◆ Explore, suggest options
- ◆ Empower, show mentee how to do things for themselves
- ◆ Offer expertise and information, suggest ways of finding out
- ◆ Support and encourage
- ◆ Give realistic advice
- ◆ Listen to and explore mentee's issues
- ◆ Present an open and accepting attitude
- ◆ Use their own experience in a positive way

Does not

- ◆ Counsel (is not there to deal with deep-seated emotional problems)
- ◆ Tell someone what to do
- ◆ Do things for the mentee
- ◆ Have to be expert in everything
- ◆ Get too emotionally involved with their mentee
- ◆ Create false expectations
- ◆ Make assumptions
- ◆ Adopt a judgmental attitude
- ◆ Involve mentee in their own problems

5 Key guidelines of any mentoring scheme

- Do set some objectives for your mentoring relationship when your mentee is ready to do so.
- Do not arrange to meet outside the agreed criteria laid down by the school without advising the school and/or the nominated co-ordinator. Make sure you know these criteria!
- Do not give out your personal telephone number and address unless you personally feel comfortable about divulging that information to your mentee and it is part of the scheme.
- Do not lend money to, or buy anything expensive for, your mentee.
- Establish your ground rules with your mentee. Do not reveal a confidentiality.
- Talk to the scheme co-ordinator if you are very concerned about something said to you in confidence.
- Do be sensitive to the financial and environmental constraints of your mentee, and their religious and cultural background.
- Do agree a proper way to end your relationship.
- Don't get out of your depth – talk to the scheme co-ordinator about any problems.

6 Formal vs. Informal

If being mentored is such a common experience, why then do schools need to formalise it by setting up mentoring schemes?

A well structured and planned scheme means that individual relationships:

- Are measurable
- Have clear goals
- Allow the Mentee to set the agenda

7 Phases of the Relationship

A mentoring relationship will typically go through three phases.

Phase 1 - The beginning: developing rapport and building trust

One of the best ways to build trust is to help your mentee quickly accomplish something tangible that is important to him/her. For example, assist them in following up an interest, getting involved in a club, or meeting someone important in a career or a field of interest.

Testing may occur, particularly when mentees are from unstable backgrounds where they have been repeatedly disappointed.

What can mentors do?

Predictability builds trust, so be consistent:

- Be on time for arranged meetings
- Bring promised information and materials
- Follow through on agreements and arrangements with your mentee

Provide mentees with reassurance that what you discuss together is *confidential*.

In some relationships this phase may be difficult. It is important for you to be prepared for initial disappointments and frustration, and to remember that this phase can take a long time.

Phase 2 - Developing the relationship: working together to reach goals

This can be a time of closeness in the relationship, and as this develops it can take on many forms. These can be broken down into two key types, namely:

1. A relationship where contacts are frequent and intense
2. An equally important but less intense relationship where the focus is on accomplishing tasks.

Any variety of these forms has its value and you may find your relationship fluctuating between them over time.

The scheme co-ordinator should recommend the amount of contact time you should have with your mentee during the programme. A good rule of thumb is 30-40 minutes, once a fortnight.

Phase 3 - Ending, re-defining and evaluating

This is a crucial part of the relationship. The way the relationship ends can shape how your mentee thinks about and learns from the experience.

Plan ahead for the end of the relationship with your mentee. Encourage your mentee to verbalise her/his feelings about the relationship and help him/her to feel supported and in control. Whatever you do, do not just drop out of sight.

8 25 top hints & tips from experienced mentors

1. Agree your objectives with the mentee at the beginning of the mentoring relationship, but **be flexible** enough for them to change - agree changes together and keep revisiting them.
2. Look at common interests as a platform from which to build your relationship.
3. Try not to allow too big a gap in between dates of meetings.
4. Impress on the mentee the need to **keep in touch**, regardless of whether they need to, and no matter how busy they are.
5. Be patient, your mentee may not turn up for meetings and may forget to let you know in advance – life can get very busy for a young person!
6. Be open-minded about what the mentee wants/needs from the mentor. It may be a supportive role through to academic, information seeking, target setting or finding out about business. Neither of you will know for sure until after the first 2 or 3 sessions and it may vary over time.
7. Give practical experience/opportunities if possible.
8. **Strive to build confidence.** The mentee may be very unsure of their own ability.
9. Treat each meeting just as important as any other business meeting. Do not cancel/postpone them just because an important business meeting is subsequently requested (unless absolutely essential).
10. Be prepared for it being hard. Give each meeting, and your preparation, as much attention as any business task, and do not make it appear as if you are fitting the mentee into a busy schedule.
11. Be patient, especially in the first few meetings. It may feel like you're getting nowhere or that it is all chat, but allow time for the two-way relationship to develop; these are the building blocks.
12. Recognise that the person you are mentoring is the expert; they can only change themselves. Allow them the time and space to explore, to succeed and to fail; and stick with them.
13. Make brief notes of each meeting; not only does this help maintain focus and continuity but it also helps when looking back to see what progress you have made together.
14. Use every opportunity to praise your mentee's efforts.

15. Be disciplined - take responsibility for keeping the momentum going and maintaining the focus, but do not do all the work yourself. Be pro-active in making contact. The mentee may feel that they are intruding on your day.
16. Do it to the best of your ability and you will learn, gain self-respect/confidence, and probably have fun.
17. **Take pride in what you are doing.** It is time well spent as you are investing in someone's future.
18. Enjoy it and be yourself, it can do your confidence a world of good.
19. Get to know your mentee, their family circumstances and interests.
20. Set up regular meetings, setting a date and time after each session. This makes the dates easy to remember, provides timescales to complete actions by and also keeps momentum going.
21. Ensure you discuss the next stage of the syllabus at every single meeting. Meetings should not simply be about personal problems.
22. **Make it fun.** Make sure that every discussion includes something amusing which has happened in the previous couple of weeks.
23. Make sure the mentee realises that you are in this together.
24. Be open minded and honest. Valuing your mentee is vital. You need to let them help themselves, although in the early stages you may take more of a lead.
25. Make use of the training aids available to you, i.e. books, videos, courses and open learning.

9 Building Rapport

Rapport can best be described as the link and mutual understanding that exists between two people, often built over time and through shared experiences. In mentoring, the mentor needs to start building this rapport from day one, and it can best be achieved by encouraging open discussion and exchange of ideas.

Although the mentor takes the lead in asking the questions in the early stages of the mentoring, it should be emphasised that the ideas, values and feelings of mentor and mentee are of equal importance: mentoring is a two-way process.

The mentor can speed up this process by spending time talking with their mentee about who does what in the relationship, as well as talking about shared interests and subjects they like/dislike. Key elements of rapport are:

- Mutual respect
- Trust
- Common values and/or interests
- Defined boundaries

Even when the mentee is not communicating openly, by showing respect, using good listening/questioning skills and demonstrating a real interest in the mentee throughout the meeting, gradually even the most hesitant or troublesome mentee will start to respond.

This doesn't mean that you have to agree with what the mentee is saying or condone all their actions, but we can still respect them. By gently challenging them with good questioning skills, we can present a range of different ideas or approaches to dealing with problems.

The key here is to treat the mentee as you would like to be treated!

10 Who does what and why

You will need to cover the following issues fairly early on in the mentoring relationship:

- **Why are we meeting?**
- **What am I going to do?**
- **What are you going to do?**
- **How will we know that it's working?**

Why are we meeting? What is the declared purpose, aim or objective of the mentoring relationship, and how does it relate to the mentee's own life? Identifying this will assist in defining the boundaries of the relationship and, much later, will assist in evaluating the purpose/aim/objective.

What am I going to do? What is the mentor going to be responsible for? Identifying this will assist in shaping a shared understanding of how mentoring might sit alongside other activities, as well as letting the mentee know that the mentor is not going to do all the work for them.

What are you going to do? What is the mentee going to be responsible for? This sends out a clear message that there is a shared responsibility in the relationship and that, whilst the mentor is there to assist, in the end it is down to the mentee to make it happen.

How will we know that it's working? Are we on track with our declared purpose and achieving measurable outcomes? A good question to ask the mentee here is, 'What will be different for you?'

The most frequent question that mentors are asked by a new mentee is 'Why are you a mentor?'. By talking about their own experiences, mentors can give insight into their own motivation for joining the scheme.

11 Practical tips on arranging meetings in school schemes

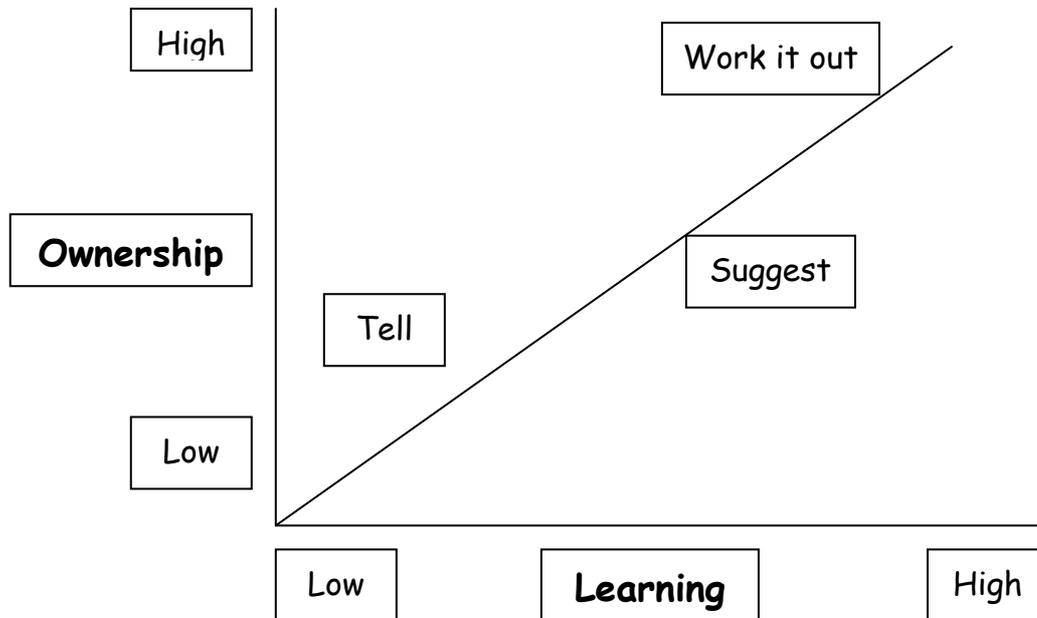
The best way to arrange meetings is to arrange the next one at each meeting.

Remember:

- Schools/colleges are not run like businesses!
- Younger students have little idea of forward planning. The mentoring scheme will help them.
- Find out how you can make contact in the day - the school/college might make a phone line available at break and lunchtimes.
- You will need to know your mentee's timetable, and call when you say you will.
- If you leave a message with the school, remember it might take more than a day to be delivered to your mentee!
- If you cancel at short notice you may have to ask someone to greet your mentee if they've not got the message and have come to meet you.
- If you send a fax to your mentee with meeting dates to choose from, keep it simple!
- Ensure your mentee realises why you may not be available at short notice, or that messages taken by colleagues might not get through to you - otherwise they might simply give up!

12 Learning

Growth, new understanding, and support through a period of transition, are all hallmarks of a successful mentoring relationship. The mentor's role in this new learning is that of a facilitator and guide.



Whilst the benefits of this learning are all positive, the route to achieving them is often uncomfortable or challenging. This is where a supportive, non-judgmental and developmental relationship can aid and speed up this period of transition for the mentee.

We all have differing experience of learning and over the years we usually develop preferences for the way we learn. There is no one way to learn and you may find that your own style is different from your mentee's.

Try to adapt your usual approach to suit your mentee, whilst paying attention to your own level of comfort.

You will find a basic understanding of learning styles and methods useful. In Appendix B at the end of this workbook you will find an introduction to the differing styles of learning.

13 Agreeing Boundaries

Discussing and agreeing boundaries sets out, in a clear and concise way, how both parties should behave towards each other. Ask the following questions:

1. What is acceptable or unacceptable behaviour?
2. What if one of us is late or doesn't turn up for a meeting?
3. Does anyone else need to be updated on our progress?
4. What do we mean by confidentiality?

1. Acceptable or unacceptable behaviour:

Unacceptable behaviour might include:

- Swearing
- Being late
- Showing aggression
- Smoking

Mentoring is a learning activity and as such, needs to be conducted in a 'safe' environment. Safe in this context means without fear, intimidation, humiliation, bullying or harassment - for either party!

It is therefore very important that time is made in the first meeting to discuss how the mentor and mentee are going to behave – this is a strong indicator of the respectful nature of mentoring.

It might be that none of the above is likely to be an issue but talk openly and agree a way of working that is acceptable to both parties.

2. Being late or not turning up for a meeting:

This is a practical issue. Mentors need to talk to their mentee about how each of them can leave messages if they will be late or need to cancel a meeting.

3. Does anyone else need to be updated on our progress?

This might be teachers, Suffolk EBP or the school scheme co-ordinator and should cover such issues as when they are going to be involved and what will be discussed with them.

If you are not sure what should be discussed with others, a good rule of thumb is to ask yourself how you would like to be treated - bearing in mind that there are some issues that mentors have an obligation to inform others about (i.e. Child Protection issues).

4. What do we mean by confidentiality?

Do we have a shared understanding about the real meaning of this word, and are there any instances where one or both parties would have to disclose information to a third party?

Given that we cannot second-guess what might come up in our conversations, we can use these three questions as a practical guide:

- Does it place the mentee at risk?
- Does it place someone else at risk?
- Does it place me at risk?

These questions should be discussed with the mentee at the first meeting, and care should be taken not to assume that the mentee will remember this guideline. If at any point you think that the mentee might be straying into uncharted waters, pause and remind them of the questions that you will be asking yourself regarding any disclosure from them.

For the majority of mentoring relationships, legal obligations relating to the mentoring conversations are not an issue. Where they do become relevant is if, at any stage in the mentoring relationship, the mentor becomes aware, or has sufficient just cause to suspect, that their mentee has, or is currently, experiencing:

1. Physical abuse
2. Sexual abuse
3. Emotional abuse
4. Neglect

It is not for the mentor to attempt to resolve the problem or 'rescue' their mentee. Each school has a named person who has specific responsibility for all child protection issues in the school or affecting pupils of the school.

A useful tool, used in a number of schemes to capture this discussion and information, is a Mentoring Contract (see next page).

14 Mentoring Contract - example

We agree to participate in the Mentoring Scheme and agree to the following:

1. Attend all mentoring meetings.
2. Notify our mentoring partner in advance if we cannot attend a meeting.
3. Keep a record of every meeting.
4. Attend all other mentoring programme activities.
5. Take part in the evaluation of the programme.
6. Agree objectives for our mentoring relationship.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.

Mentor's Signature

Mentee's Signature

.....

.....

Date:

Date:

15 The 3-Stage Model

The 3-stage model gives the mentor permission to not have all the answers or solutions for the mentee's issues or problems – this approach can be the key to our mentee finding their own answers or solutions. Success builds confidence, raises self-esteem and develops sustainable strategies for problem solving.

3-Stage Model

- 1. Exploration**
- 2. New Understanding**
- 3. Action Planning**

The model can be used in a number of ways:

- As a map of the mentoring process – this enables us to see what ground has been covered and what needs further attention.
- To reflect upon the mentoring process and the relationship.
- As a schedule for meetings: what do I need to be thinking about?

Stage 1 – Exploration:

The mentor:

- **Takes the lead**
- **Negotiates an agenda**
- **Asks questions and listens**
- **Supports the learner**

The mentor, although encouraging the mentee to do most of the talking, should take the lead in managing the relationship. They do this by making the mentee the focus of their attention; by asking them what they want to get out of the meeting, asking lots of open-ended questions and listening intently to what the mentee says.

Using open-ended questions is an art in itself - these might take the form of:

- "What would you like to talk about today?"
- "Why do you think they did that?"
- "Tell me some more about your experience."
- "Has that happened before?"
- "What did you do?"
- "Let's explore X some more."

These questions all require the mentee to think about their response. This process is often likened to a Russian doll - issues within issues being uncovered until, of course, we discover the one at the centre. It might take 5 minutes or the whole meeting to arrive at this point, but it's this exploration that can make a real and lasting difference to the mentee.

Having asked the questions, listen!

As we are listening, remember the other things we should be doing or watching out for:

1. Maintain good eye contact - it shows you're interested
2. Reflect back what's been said - it shows you're taking time to understand
3. Don't assume that you know how they feel about their issue
4. Watch their body language - are they relaxed or agitated? What does yours say about how interested you are?
5. Don't make assumptions - test out ideas to see if you have the same understanding
6. Be patient

Stage 2 - New Understanding:

- **Share experiences and stories**
- **Give feedback and advice**
- **Ask open and closed questions**
- **Challenge and support**

Having explored the mentee's issues, we can now start to move to a new understanding of them - this is often the turning point in the process. We do this by building upon our approach in 'Exploration'. We will still use active listening and open questioning skills but now we start to:

- **Share experiences and stories** - "you might find this useful" or, "once I was in this situation and..."
- **Give feedback and advice** - "Have you thought of ...?" etc.
- **Ask open and closed questions** - closed questions are where the mentee can only answer yes or no, i.e. "Do you think that was a good idea?". This 'focuses in' their response, as opposed to open questions (which we will still use if we need more information).

- **Challenge and support** - Challenge ideas by asking questions, i.e. 'How would you react if someone said that?'. But, always be positive by referring to the mentee's achievements. Be patient; learning about ourselves can be uncomfortable so it's important that we are also supportive.

New understanding or insight is the key here - moving on to stage 3 too early will only result in weak action planning.

Stage 3 – Action Planning:

- **Possible courses of action**
- **Consequences of that action**
- **Alternatives and options**
- **Timeframe and recourses needed**

This is about exploring options, how realistic are they, who else do they affect, what other options are there, how long would they take to do and how would we know if we achieved them?

If stages 1 and 2 of the process have gone well, then stage 3 is usually straightforward. Action Planning is merely a means of enabling the mentee to make decisions and plan appropriate action based upon their new understanding of the issue.

Not every mentoring meeting will end in an action plan. Sometimes talking through an issue in a supportive manner is exactly what's needed – issues can be picked up at the next meeting.

Action planning requires a clear goal or target – whatever it is, ensure that it is achievable. Small steps to success start to establish a track record of success. A good goal is both realistic and achievable within a practical time frame.

A common acronym used to capture these points is 'SMART':

Specific
Measurable
Achievable
Realistic
Time bound

Quite a few mentoring relationships will capture these points on paper, and it can help 'cement' the action plan if both mentee and mentor then sign and date the agreed action plan.

16 Reviewing the relationship

A common reason why mentoring relationships don't always achieve their objective is because mentor and mentee have a different understanding about how the mentoring should work.

A simple exercise that can be used from time to time (from approximately the third meeting onwards) is to build in 5 minutes at the end of the meeting to ask the mentee:

- Are our meetings what you thought they would be?
- Do things happen after our meetings?
- How could the meetings be better?
- Are there any other issues you want to talk about?

There are no right or wrong answers; the usefulness of this exercise is that it can help us to develop a 'shared' understanding of the relationship.

17 When to end the relationship

The mentor's role is to guide their mentee to a point that they can do without them. The mentor should avoid creating a relationship of dependency at all costs, by continually thinking about what they are doing and why.

Mentoring relationships end because:

- The scheme is coming to a close
- The relationship has achieved all its objectives

The scheme is coming to a close: If the scheme is coming to an end, one of two things can happen. The relationship finishes with the scheme (and mentor/mentee know when their last meeting will be) or, if the mentoring relationship is still producing results, mentors can explore with the scheme co-ordinator the possibility of the relationship continuing.

The relationship has achieved all its objectives: If the scheme is still going but both mentor and mentee think they have achieved all their objectives, then this is a natural point to finish (i.e. there are no other goals that can be set). The mentor should contact the scheme co-ordinator to talk it through if they think this is likely.

Signs of ending in prospect:

- Fewer meetings, less face-to-face contact, lack of interest
- Know what each other are going to say next
- Struggle to find new issues to talk about
- Feel you have largely achieved the goals
- Mentee feels they can tackle problems alone

If the relationship did not work:

This could be due to:

- Lack of maturity
- Attendance so poor that the relationship never got off the ground
- Even if got on well, nothing came of the discussions in terms of objectives and outcomes
- A lack of commitment - from the mentee or the mentor
- A clash of personalities or style

People have different habits and preferences in the way they learn and communicate, and these can sometimes be too big a barrier to overcome. Recognise that no-one is at fault - what is important is how you handle it.

The goal of a good mentor is to make yourself redundant.

What happens if it doesn't work out?

There can be a number of reasons why a mentoring relationship might finish early such as a promotion, transfer or increased workload through to mentor and mentee being unable to work together.

Most often, a relationship ends early because of factors outside of the control of the mentor and mentee. But, to avoid either party feeling a failure or rejected, efforts should be made to talk to each other. If this is not possible, contact the scheme co-ordinator so they can pass on the information to the other party.

Very occasionally, and through no fault of their own, the mentor and mentee find that despite following all the right procedures and practicing all the right approaches, there is no working chemistry between them. This happens in every walk of life and is nobody's fault. Most schemes employ a 'no blame' exit policy that either party can use.

Mentor and mentee usually have a clear idea by the end of their third meeting if the basis of a working relationship is in place or not. If not, either party should contact the scheme co-ordinator at the earliest opportunity to discuss the situation.

Practical ideas to help get your relationship back on track

Like any relationship, analyse the problem - why is it stuck in a rut?

- **Never enough time to do everything**

Mentees know when you are putting aside quality time and when you are not. Are you being honest about this? Manage your time. If it is impossible to meet all your commitments, work out which are the priorities. If, as a result, you need to withdraw from the scheme, discuss it with your co-ordinator and your mentee. ***Don't just drop out of sight.***

- **Mentee seems to be taking it all for granted**

Stop making all the running. Suggest a break for a month and ask that the mentee contact you to arrange the next meeting in 3 weeks' time. This often comes as a bit of a shock to the mentee and they are fired into action.

- **It's getting boring**

Why not meet somewhere else? e.g. go and have a coffee rather than meet in the office. (Still needs to be on school premises unless parental permission sought). Make something together or look at some relevant articles/publications.

- **Need a new idea**

Arrange for the mentee to meet with someone or do something that interests him/her through your own contacts, e.g. spending a day with another department; getting involved in a voluntary project for a day; being shown round a motor repair garage; coming to watch a local theatre/music/choir rehearsal or seeing behind the scenes. The mentor can discuss this with the scheme co-ordinator who, if they feel it is appropriate, will organise the parental consent, transport and visit.

- **Focus on a goal**

Help the mentee find information or to meet someone that will help them find out about education or work-related ideas that interest them, e.g. the local Connexions Centre; working out which colleges run the course the mentee is interested in; helping to fill in application forms; doing mock interviews.

If you feel you have tried everything and your mentee is still not responding, then you will need to have an open and honest discussion with your mentee about the need to meet each other halfway. This is the last resort; try to avoid it if at all possible.

18 Finishing and Evaluating the Mentoring

Whatever the reason for ending the mentoring relationship, mentors should allocate time with their mentees to discuss the end of it. They should do this to:

- Compare outcomes with the original objectives
- Review the progress that has taken place
- Recognise achievements/successes
- Discuss what's the next step for the mentee

Compare outcomes with the original objectives:

This process helps us to recognise and manage the fact that the relationship has run its course. By comparing what the mentee has achieved with the original objectives, the mentor and mentee will be able to see what has been accomplished.

Review the progress that has taken place:

Reviewing the progress that has taken place can be a powerful experience, as it's only towards the end of the mentoring that the mentor and mentee can see how far they have journeyed. The journey, quite often, is well beyond the mentee's original expectations.

The mentor and mentee can look at what has been accomplished and ask themselves, if we were starting again, what would we do differently?

Recognise achievements/successes:

Whether it's a sincere 'well done' or a certificate of achievement, we all respond positively to recognition and praise as long as it is real and sincere – otherwise it will have no value.

Discuss what's the next step for the mentee:

"What is the next stage of your learning and what support might you need?"

This should encourage the mentee to start looking outside of the current mentoring relationship for support. It also means that the mentor doesn't just leave the mentee without giving them some pointers (or even an agreed action plan) as to where that support is going to come from.

Further Mentor development and support:

On-going development improves a mentor's effectiveness as a skilled helper by assisting them to:

- **Understand the mentoring process more clearly**
- **Gain feedback on their interpersonal skills**
- **Think, what could I have done better?**
- **Get the maximum benefit for their mentee**

This on-going development can take many forms:

- Keeping a reflective diary of the mentoring activity – see Appendix A
- Using videos and books
- Benchmarking existing practise through a course
- Networking through peer support groups
- Attending conferences and workshops for new ideas

See Appendix C for details of further resources.

The Mentor's Reflective Diary

The use of a learning log or diary is now widespread and its benefits are well documented. Its purpose here is threefold:

1. To act as an aide memoir which enables us to highlight key points of the meeting
2. To encourage you, the mentor, to continually reflect on your own practice as a mentor
3. To assist you in identifying your own points of excellence, as well as developmental needs as a mentor

The Reflective Diary is not meant to be a blow by blow description of who said what and when; this would change the nature of the meeting and would inhibit 'active' listening to what the mentee is saying, especially what words they use and how much emphasis they use.

Use the Diary to encourage reflection in yourself and your mentee, to capture key learning points or issues, and as a tool to assist in agreeing action points. You might even say to your mentee as the meeting draws to a close, "So, what outcomes from our meeting shall I write in my Diary?". This will encourage the mentee to summarise once again their key learning outcomes and resulting action points.

By using a Mentor's Reflective Diary, you will also build a record of your learning journey together and, over a period of time, this will enable both of you to measure the amount and quality of learning that has taken place.

See next page for an example of a diary sheet.

Mentoring Meeting Record

Personal Log Sheet

Date of Meeting:.....

Location:

Summary (feelings, thoughts, comments, outcomes etc.):

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Time, date and place of next meeting:

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Points for discussion:

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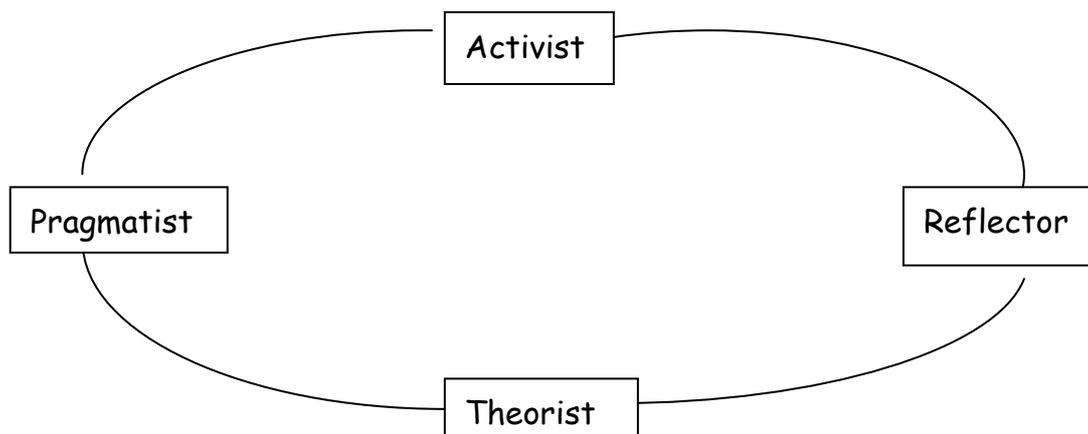
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Learning Styles

In the early '80s, Kolb published his model of 'The Learning Cycle'. Kolb proposed that we, as human beings, are all capable of learning but that the learning is maximised when we visit all four key points of the learning cycle. These key points he identified as: Having an experience, Observing the experience, Concluding from the experience and Modifying behaviour.

Based upon their own research, Honey and Mumford observed that, while we are all capable of travelling around the whole of the learning cycle, most of us have a preference for one or two of these key points. Those individuals who have an experiential preference, they termed *Activists* – Observers, they termed *Reflectors* – those concluding from the experience, they termed *Theorists* - and those modifying behaviour, they termed *Pragmatists*.



No one preferred learning style is more or less desirable than the others. The purpose behind increasing our awareness of our own and others' preferences, is to increase our learning capabilities in any given situation and provide insight into how others learn best.

Each preferred learning style has its own strengths and weaknesses, and a mentor's role here can be to deliver learning in a way that is insightful and meaningful to the mentee. That initial learning having taken place, we can then encourage and guide the mentee to complete the learning cycle and thus allow the mentee to maximise their learning.

A good working knowledge of learning styles can also assist in selecting the right learning environment. For example, activists rarely do well in a classic classroom environment. Their preference is to move around with a high level of interaction with those around them, and they have a strong drive to be creative.

Reflectors, by contrast, rarely benefit from a 'hurried' or 'busy' learning environment, as they feel robbed of quality time to think about what is being said or done.

Theorists can be less engaged if there is a strong 'people' emphasis or a focus upon an immediate practical solution – theorists, for example, rarely enjoy outdoor team building exercises, but really shine if debating different ideas or concepts.

Pragmatists thrive in a variety of learning environments, but have to be able to see an immediate practicable purpose to the learning; otherwise they have a tendency to 'turn off'.

Further Resources

Organisations

There are only a small number of organisations that exist on a national basis, whilst locally there could well be a range of relevant schemes and groups. A good place to start is with your local Education Business Link. The National Mentoring Network also has a database of member projects and schemes as well as a number of regional networks. A web-based search might also reveal similar projects/schemes that you can contact direct.

National Mentoring Network:

The NMN offers a range of support to schools, colleges, EBPs and community groups wishing to set up or develop mentoring programmes. This support includes producing a range of publications and advice leaflets, as well as holding an annual conference and providing support for regional networks.

The network also manages 'Excellence in Mentoring for Schools' which is a national initiative for the **accreditation of mentoring activities in schools.**

National Mentoring Network
Tel: 0161 787 8600
Fax: 0161 787 8555
Email: enquiries@nmn.org.uk
www.nmn.org.uk

The Greenwood Partnership:

Involved in all facets of mentoring from designing schemes, training mentors, research, evaluation and the design of paper-based, video and CD-Rom learning materials.

The Greenwood Partnership
Tel: 07957 380157
Email: info@greenwood-partnership.com
www.greenwood-partnership.com

European Mentoring & Coaching Council:

The EMCC aims to promote mentoring and coaching in business, education and the community at large. It brings together practitioners, researchers and institutions internationally to explore and foster best practice.

European Mentoring & Coaching Council
Tel: 07000 234683
www.emccouncil.org

Publications

There are a number of excellent general publications now available on mentoring, but for a comprehensive list of publications relating to mentoring in education (not including NQTs and New Head Teacher mentoring) contact the National Mentoring Network.

Mentoring in Schools Pocketbook

by Bob Garvey & Kim Langridge

The "Mentoring in Schools Pocketbook" explains how to: set up and manage a mentoring scheme; train peer mentors; conduct mentoring meetings; evaluate mentoring; persuade people of its benefits; ask relevant questions; and avoid problems and pitfalls. Published by Management Pocketbooks Ltd, UK

Mentoring Students and Young People by Andrew Miller

This book presents a range of case studies and key findings in setting up and running mentoring schemes in education in the UK and North America.

Published by Kogan Page, UK (ISBN 0 7494 3543 7)

Videos

Peer Mentoring

An excellent introduction to peer mentoring in schools. The video, in the words of the young people involved, paints a realistic picture of the many benefits that peer mentoring can achieve for all involved. It can be used with parents, teachers and governors as well as pupils. Available from:

Incentive Plus
Tel: 01908 526120
Email: orders@incentiveplus.co.uk

Learning Mentors

This two-video boxed set introduces the role and skills of Learning Mentors and illustrates how they differ from teachers and classroom assistants. Available from:

Incentive Plus

Tel: 01908 526120

Email: orders@incentiveplus.co.uk

Face to face

This video introduces some of the benefits of mentoring for pupils, schools and businesses involved with volunteers in schools.

Available from:

The National Mentoring Network (see details above).

New chances, new horizons – Realising potential through mentoring

This two-video pack illustrates the power of mentoring in helping young people, particularly those at risk of exclusion, to realise their true potential. This is probably the most widely used video for the training of mentors. Available from:

The Greenwood Partnership (see details above).