CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

MENTORING IN THE WORKPLACE: A CASE STUDY OF THE ACADEMIC SETTING

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on mentoring in the workplace with particular reference to the academic setting; since mentoring can be applied to a variety of people, situations and purposes .In the academic setting mentoring is used both for students and for academic staff and mentoring involves transmission of skills as well as socialization into academia.

Existing literatures were used to buttress these facts in this paper. Thus, it is important that those involved in education recognize the links between teaching, learning, mentors, mentees and mentoring experience throughout the life span of participants.

Mentoring is a developmental relationship between a more experienced individual (the mentor) and a less experienced partner (the mentee) for purposes of sharing technical information, institutional knowledge and insight with respect to a particular occupation, profession, organization or endeavor. Mentoring according to Fajana (2002), is the process of using especially selected and trained individuals to provide care and advice that will help to develop the careers of other employees who have been allocated to them. The employees are the proteges of the mentors because of the closeness that must exist between the mentor and whoever is allocated to him for the scheme to succeed.

Mentoring can be applied to a variety of people, situations and purposes. In academic settings, mentoring is used both for students and for academic staff. The broad aims of mentoring for staff are to reduce academic stress; to ensure that academics are encouraged to engage in quality teaching and research; to develop a culture and community of mentoring in the faculties; and to encourage cross faculty collaboration. Mentoring for students is used for stimulation and motivation purpose; to acclimatize new students to college life and its challenges, and to provide help by older students to younger students in specific subjects.

Some mentoring schemes involves researchers who would benefit from mentoring in teaching and some would improve the capacity for research-led teaching outcomes in faculties by involving innovative teachers who would benefit from mentoring in research-led teaching (e.g. early career academics and stalled researchers that may benefit from a range of mentored skills such as time management, research prioritization, research methods, grant getting or pedagogical research and other opportunities. The mentoring relationship and its stages, as well as specific mentoring strategies, are defined in Kopp and Hinkle (2006). The differences between mentoring and other forms of teaching are in the level of intensity and commitment (Goran, 2001). Mentoring in an academic setting includes transmission of skills (i.e., job preparation) as well as socialization into academia (Brown, 1999; Goran). Mentoring in academia also includes at least some one-on-one teaching (Norris, 2002).

Qualities of successful mentors:

- Genuine interest
- Sensitivity to other's needs and development
- Excellent listening skills
- Commitment
- Confidentiality
- Excellent coaching and feedback skills

The role of the mentor includes the following:

- Help the mentee identify with their organization and professional environment
- Be prepared to help the mentee through difficult situations

- Work with the mentee to develop his/her self-confidence
- Ensure communications are clear, open and reciprocal
- Help develop creative and independent thinking
- Maintain confidentiality

Qualities of successful mentees:

- Genuine interest in personal growth and professional development
- Strong commitment to learning and acquiring new skills
- Receptive to honest, constructive feedback
- Willing to take risks as part of the learning process
- A sense of self and personal vision

Role of the mentee:

- Develop mutually agreeable goals for the mentoring relationship that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely
- Communicate openly and honestly with the mentor
- Take responsibility for establishing expectations between the mentor and mentee
- Make good use of time spent with the mentor
- Be mindful of the mentor's needs and expectations
- Be trustworthy and maintain confidentiality

Mentoring partnerships, where a more experienced person assists a less experienced other to achieve a level of personal attainment, excellence and eminence not possessed previously, are well recognized (Carruthers, 1990; Alleman, 1991). These mentoring relationships range in nature and style from serendipitously initiated, informal duos to large scale, formally organized batches of pairings designed to contribute to the advancement of stipulated organizational goals in diverse workplaces and professions (Balint, Finlay, Groundwater-Smith, Long & Tinker, 1994). New directions include telementoring (Eisenman & Thornton, 1999; Matters, 2001) where mentoring dyads maintain contact via computer mounted personal video cameras, email, fax and mobile phones; and mentoring circles, where a series of mentors sequentially assist designated mentees (Bond, 1999).

Extensive research concerning mentoring's definition, roles, effects upon mentor and mentee participants and observable outcomes resulting from their relationships has been conducted during the last two decades. Considerable emphasis has been placed upon the importance of mentoring within organizations, citing its powerful effects upon induction, enculturation and continuing professional development processes and its contributions to the achievement of formally designated organisational goals (Clutterbuck, 1993; Bell, 1996).

By synthesizing generic factors integral to mentoring and six interrelated behavioural functions which Cohen (cited in Tomlinson, 1995) contends must be present for mentoring dyads to interact effectively, common ground has been achieved concerning recognition of the key elements of effective mentoring relationships. There must be

(1) a *relationship* emphasis initiated and maintained between the mentoring pair in order to establish mutual trust and respect;

(2) an *information* emphasis constructed within the partnership to facilitate the exchange of specific and cogent advice;

(3) a *facilitative* focus established between the duo so that alternative solutions to problem solving may be generated without personal restraint or external constraint;

(4) a *confrontive* focus implemented safely so that challenges and their attendant opportunities and conflicts are not dissipated before resolution;

(5) an expectation that the mentor will *model* appropriate behaviours which will contribute to the motivation of the mentee; and (6) encouragement for the mentee to express personal and professional *visions* which will promote successful initiative taking .Different types of mentor emerged and were noted (Matters,1998) adding weight to past theories that mentoring is more likely to be sought after and occur at life transition stages (Glaser & Strauss, 1971; Sheehy, 1977; Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson & McKee, 1978; Erickson, 1980; Gilligan, 1982) They are the :

(1) *continual* mentor, one who oversees a mentee's career path from the beginning of a career in a specific organisation until the termination of the mentee's employment;

(2) *complementary* mentor, one who exhibits differences in learning, thinking and operational styles to those of the mentee and teaches the mentee to utilize these styles in appropriate situations without discarding the mentee's preferred styles;

(3) *ingenious* mentor, one who pairs consistently with the mentee to produce highly innovative, distinctly creative and intellectually exciting work which could not be produced individually by either member of the partnership;

(4) *intermediate* mentor, one who takes the place of the actual mentor, provides specialized advice, personal support and mentors the mentee until the mentor returns to the home context when the intermediate mentor reoccupies her/his formal role without detracting from the main mentoring relationship;

(5) *eventual* mentor, one who is constrained in some way from publicly performing the role of mentor in the original situation in which s/he encounters the mentee but maintains contact through limited communication until the situation passes and the pair may enjoy a full mentoring partnership without restraint;

(6) *pivotal* mentor, one who demonstrates the capacity to mentor less experienced colleagues in an organisation and/or a profession while simultaneously being mentored herself/ himself by one or more experienced personnel;

(7) *intergenerational* mentor, one who mentors across two generations within a family;

(8) *inner* mentor, created internally within a mentee or mentor by synthesizing the advice of a series of external mentors.

In an empirical study, Neary (2000) synthesized data from more than 400 interviews on student's perceptions of the mentoring role of those overseeing the students in the clinical setting. In the United Kingdom study, the students identified a mentor as someone to emulate, a contact person, someone to have a

chat with, a teacher, a guide, or an assessor or supervisor. Other researchers reported that a group of 11 nursing students in the United Kingdom rated their mentors positively and consistently rated the mentors more highly than the mentors rated themselves (Andrews & Chilton, 2000).

Goran (2001) conducted a literature review on mentorship as a teaching strategy used with undergraduate nursing students. Students emphasized that clinical mentors need to be positive, enthusiastic, and genuinely interested in students. Other research reported that the stress experienced by nursing students is inversely proportional to the friendliness of the mentor (Spouse, 1996). Students in other studies identified the mentor as the linchpin of their experience (Gray & Smith, 1999). Others reported that students with mentors develop intuition earlier in their educational experience (Gray & Smith, 2000).

Mentoring is considered to be the heart of graduate education. In a study sought to determine which graduate students were being mentored or were mentoring other students. It was postulated that students' mentor status would be related to their perceptions of the graduate climate, as well as the receipt of special benefits. Six hundred and seventy graduate students in a large Midwestern university were interviewed regarding their demographic information, mentor status, and their perceptions of the racial/ethnic and academic climate. The findings indicated that those receiving mentoring had better outcomes, and that this relationship is more crucial for non-Caucasians. Further, the results yielded valuable information for universities interested in devising ways to increase the support received by graduate students (Kelly & Schweitzer, 1999).

It is commonly known that the relationship between faculty and graduate students at universities is extremely important. Many graduate degree recipients have reported that their relationship with faculty has been the most important aspect in their completion of and satisfaction with graduate school (Blackwell, 1981; Hartnett & Katz, 1977). The quality and frequency of interaction with faculty are also seen as more important in determining graduate school success than both the personal characteristics of students and their undergraduate experiences (McGhee, Satcher & Livingston, 1995). In fact, mentoring, a specific type of faculty-student relationship is considered to be the heart of graduate education (Cusanovich & Gilliland, 1991).Mentoring occurs when an older, more experienced organization member dons a guiding role with a less experienced protege (Kogler Hill,

Bahniuk, Dobos & Rouner, 1989). Faculty mentors teach graduate students the technical aspects of their profession, collaborate with them on research, and assist them with job placement, networking, and professional development. In addition, collaboration with mentors is associated with higher productivity both before and after attaining the doctoral degree (Wright & Wright, 1987).

Unfortunately, previous studies have been unable to adequately assess these relationships. For example, some studies are unable to make comparisons across minority graduate students, because they do not have large enough numbers of different minorities in the populations that they sample (e.g. Cooke, Sims & Peyrefitte, 1995). A review of the Psychinfo database also revealed no articles which investigate mentoring specifically for international students. Thus, the first hypothesis of the study is that minorities, especially African American, international, and women graduate students are significantly less likely to report having mentors than Caucasians and men.

Further, because issues of faculty-graduate student similarity may prevent these groups of students from receiving faculty mentors (e.g. Wright & Wright, 1987), this study will explore which graduate students mentor others. Such an exploration may help to determine whether or not faculty mentoring yields more positive outcomes than mentoring received from a graduate peer. This approach may also determine whether or not having a peer mentor yields better outcomes than having no mentor. If this is so, whether or not graduate mentoring is as effective as faculty mentoring, the mentoring of more advanced minority graduate students may serve to offset any inequities that may exist for various minority groups in obtaining faculty mentors For graduate students, the interaction with their thesis advisers profoundly affects their motivation to pursue research and the extent they can grow as a beginning researcher. Good mentors can bring substantial advantages to junior faculty members as well. Training in the graduate school mostly focuses on producing independent researchers. A junior professor, however, requires a variety of skills to develop a successful career in academia, including teaching, committee work, professional service, and finding research funding. Mentoring during tenure-track years is highly valuable for a junior professor to master skills in these areas.

For graduate students the research supervisor usually plays the role of primary mentor, so for the moment we consider the issues of finding a good research supervisor.

Finally, activities related to their careers and professional development is ranked highest on graduate students' list of needs (Rimmer, Lammert, & McClain, 1982). Since mentors sometimes link their mentees with dissertation funding and other support (Wright & Wright, 1987), and mentoring is also associated with the chance of succeeding and advancing in one's career (Kogler Hill et al., 1989), graduate students who have mentors may receive many perks as compared to those who do not. This may be especially notable for minority graduate students, since financial need is a controlling factor in the recruitment and retention of these students (Pruitt & Isaac, 1985). Thus, graduate students who have mentors will receive more direct benefits such as funding and good grades.

Mentoring for academic leadership is, in many ways, like other forms of mentoring - the mentor is an adviser, a consultant, a role model and a colleague. At the same time, it is perhaps more difficult than ordinary faculty mentoring. Often the mentor is part of the majority of faculty who has not been an academic leader, and as a result the mentor's view of leadership may differ markedly from the views of those who have had experience with leadership. In mentoring, rewards come when your protégé succeeds, but in leadership roles this can mean that they take on positions of authority over someone.

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