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Teachers who make the time to prepare themselves to be mentors tend to have more satisfying and productive mentoring relationships than those who do not.

The Role of Teacher as Mentor

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Inevitably, when I ask adults to reflect on their most significant mentoring experience, they describe a special teacher, one they say really connected with them and guided them through the memorable process of self-discovery. The learning they recall transcends a particular time and place and resulted in enduring and meaningful learning that remains useful to this day.

Teachers who prepare themselves as mentors increase their potential to enhance student growth and development, help students maximize education experiences, and enrich their own teaching experience and professional development. Mentors often report that they gain exposure to new and diverse perspectives, improve coaching and listening skills, find work more meaningful and satisfying, hone desired leadership skills, and often become reengaged professionally.

Teachers mentor students for a multitude of reasons. "As mentors, teachers typically pass on knowledge of subjects to improve educational achievement" (Heller and Sindelar, 1991, p. 7). Secondarily, teachers mentor students to facilitate personal development, encourage students to make wise choices, or help them make the transition from school to career (Zeeb, 1998).

Some teachers gravitate quite naturally toward mentoring. Others find themselves uncomfortably thrust into the role. Even under the best circumstances, most teachers are either unprepared or underprepared for the mentor role.

Whether you formally or informally mentor graduate or undergraduate adult learners, or mentor other teachers (also adult learners), adequate preparation is essential. This chapter describes the mentoring journey, provides signposts to navigate the four phases of the journey, and raises reflection questions to encourage more critically reflective mentoring practice.

The Mentoring Process

Mentoring practice has shifted from a product-oriented model, characterized by transfer of knowledge, to a process-oriented relationship involving knowledge acquisition, application, and critical reflection. The hierarchical transfer of knowledge and information from an older, more experienced person to a younger, less experienced person is no longer the prevailing mentoring paradigm.

Learning is the fundamental process, purpose, and product of mentoring. Mentoring is best described as a reciprocal and collaborative learning relationship between two or more individuals who share mutual responsibility and accountability for helping a mentee work toward achieving clear and mutually defined learning goals. Commitment by and engagement of mentoring partners is necessary for establishing, maintaining, and experiencing successful mentoring relationships. Successful mentoring rests on building and maintaining a relationship. This means that in addition to the learning, the relationship is cultivated throughout the mentoring partnership.

Best mentoring practice is consistent with the principles of andragogy, as articulated by Knowles (1980):

- Adults learn best when they are involved in diagnosing, planning, implementing, and evaluating their own learning.
- The role of the facilitator is to create and maintain a supportive climate that promotes conditions necessary for learning to take place.
- Adult learners have a need to be self-directing.
- Readiness for learning increases when there is a specific need to know.
- Life's reservoir of experience is a primary learning resource; the life experiences of others add enrichment to the learning process.
- Adult learners have an inherent need for immediacy of application.
- Adults respond best to learning when they are internally motivated to learn.

If mentoring relationships are to be truly learner centered, the mentor must facilitate learning by applying what is known about how adults learn to enhance the mentoring experience. According to Brookfield (1986), "Facilitators of learning see themselves as resources for learning, rather than as didactic instructors who have all the answers" (p. 63). There is an inherent flow to the facilitation process. A facilitator must:

- Establish a climate conducive to learning.
- Involve learners in planning how and what they will learn.
- Encourage learners to formulate their own learning objectives.
- Encourage learners to identify and utilize a variety of resources to accomplish their objectives.
- Help learners implement and evaluate their learning [Knowles, 1980].

The strategies for promoting effective learning in a mentoring relationship are congruent with those used to facilitate student learning:

- Ask questions. The questions can open a learning conversation or shut it down.
- Reformulate statements. By rephrasing what you have heard, you clarify your own understanding and encourage the mentee to hear what it is he or she has articulated.
- Summarize. Summarizing reinforces the learning and is a reminder of what has transpired.
- Listen for the silence. Silence provides an opportunity for learning.
- Listen reflectively. When you listen reflectively, hold up a mirror for the mentee (Daloz, 1999).
- Provide consistent feedback. Candid and compassionate feedback is a powerful stimulus for learning.

The Mentoring Journey

Every mentoring journey is composed of four phases—preparing, negotiating, enabling, and coming to closure—that build on one another to form a developmental sequence and vary in length from one relationship to another (see Figure 3.1). The phases described here differ from others (Kram, 1988; Phillips-Jones, 1993; Missirian, 1982). They are less bound by time definition and psychological milestones and focus more on the behaviors required to negotiate each of the stages. And although the phases are predictable and sequential, they are not always discreet.

Awareness of each phase helps sustain successful mentoring relationships. Taking phases for granted or skipping over any can have a negative impact. Merely being aware provides significant signposts (Zachary, 2000) to stave off potentially negative consequences.

Preparing. Mentoring involves more than meeting the right teacher; the teacher must meet the right student (Palmer, 1998). To determine the right fit requires preparation of self and the mentoring relationship. Formal

Figure 3.1. Mentoring Relationship Phases
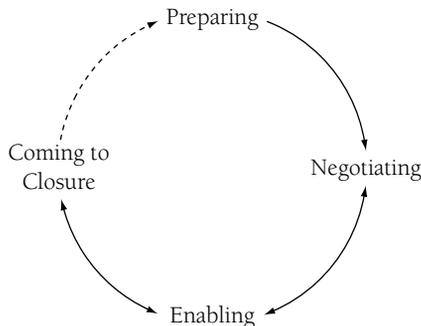
mentoring programs usually provide some assistance and training prior to assuming the role. If you are mentoring on your own, however, it is not likely that you would consider self-preparation before meeting with a prospective mentee.

Because each mentoring relationship is unique, reflective practice, which takes preparation and commitment, is the starting point. Taking the time to prepare for the relationship creates the fertile soil for embedding the mentoring relationship and adds value to the mentoring partnership.

Preparing Self. During the preparing phase of a mentoring relationship, several processes take place simultaneously. Mentors explore personal motivation and readiness to be a mentor. Individual assessment of mentoring skills helps identify areas for the mentor's learning and development. Clarity about expectation and role helps define parameters for establishing a productive and healthy mentoring relationship.

Motivation drives participation in a mentoring relationship and directly affects behavior, attitude, and emotional resilience in mentoring relationships. It also can potentially affect the quality of the mentoring interaction. Those who hold a deep understanding of why they are doing something end up being more committed to it and, because of that, focus their energy better and probably save time in the long run.

Another aspect of mentor preparation is assessing your degree of comfort with requisite mentoring skills: brokering relationships skillfully, building and maintaining relationship, coaching, communicating, encouraging, facilitating, goal setting, guiding, managing conflict, problem solving, providing, and receiving feedback and reflecting. Once you have identified areas for skill improvement, you are ready to develop a mentor development plan for yourself. Before meeting with a prospective mentoring partner you should be able to answer the following questions:

- Why do I want to be a mentor?
- Is mentoring right for me?
- Am I ready for a mentoring relationship?
- What mentoring skills do I have?
- What mentoring skills do I need?
- What are my personal development goals as a mentor?
- How will I go about enhancing my skills?

After answering these questions, you may decide that mentoring is not for you. "The complete mentor role does not fit all individuals; some faculty are less inclined toward developing close relationships with students and with nurturing the student's development. Not all faculty members are capable of or willing to take on this role, and if required to do so would be inadequate or 'incomplete' mentors" (Galbraith and Maslin-Ostrowski, 2000, p. 147).

Preparing the Relationship. The circumstances surrounding the formation of a mentoring relationship vary. Teachers may be assigned a mentee, offer to mentor a promising student, or be recruited by a student. Who does

the asking is not important. The initial conversation, in which potential mentoring partners explore mutuality of interests and learning needs and determine learning fit, is critical. The outcome of this conversation helps determine if you feel you can productively work with a prospective mentee and to what extent you believe you can further this person's learning.

An initial mentoring conversation begins with making the connection—getting to know one another. You and your potential partner should talk about any past mentoring experiences. A frank discussion about relationship needs and expectations is essential. Share assumptions, expectations, and limitations candidly. In order to gauge if your experience or expertise is relevant to achieving the desired learning goals, it is necessary to take time to define desired learning outcomes. A discussion of learning styles and openness will help you identify where and if you have style compatibility.

Everyone holds assumptions about mentoring, mediated by life experiences, and these assumptions, whether we agree with them or not, influence mentoring relationships. It is essential to be aware of assumptions, whether they are institutionally or individually held. "Assumption hunting" (Brookfield, 1995) is vital to nurturing mentoring relationships. Since we all have a unique definition of what is normal in a mentoring relationship, sharing these assumptions in a disciplined way allows us to prepare for mentoring in an honest, forthright way. Sharing assumptions regarding the three terms *mentor, mentee,* and *mentoring relationships* is a revealing way to begin the assumption-hunting conversation.

An Example. A number of years ago, a student asked if I would mentor him. At first, I was intrigued by the student's initial approach, but my interest waned as we shared assumptions about what we each expected a mentor to be. In short order, it became apparent that he was looking for a mentor who was willing to "give him" all the knowledge he needed. The more we talked, the more obvious it was that he wanted to play a receiving role in his learning. He was looking for a knowledgeable, convenient mentor to deposit needed information in his head as expeditiously as possible. His preferred mode of learning made me uncomfortable. I decided instead to recommend a colleague whose style was more congruent with the student's learning style.

The Litmus Test. By the end of the initial mentoring conversation (which can extend over more than one session), both parties should know whether there is a fit and if they are prepared to move forward in the relationship. As a result, mentors should be able to answer the following questions positively:

- Am I clear about my role?
- Am I the best person for the job?
- Is this particular relationship right for me?
- Do I have the time to do justice to this relationship?

Negotiating. Negotiating is the business or contracting phase of the relationship, when mentoring partners reach agreement on learning goals and define the content and process of the relationship. During negotiating

conversations, specific details of the relationship are spelled out: when and how to meet, responsibilities, criteria for success, accountability, and how and when to bring the relationship to closure. There is a natural tendency to skip over this phase of the relationship, especially by teachers, who may readily assume that this phase is superfluous.

Good conversation is essential to arriving at consensus and building commitment. "A good conversation is neither a fight nor a contest. Circular in form, cooperative in manner, and constructive in intent, it is an interchange of ideas by those who see themselves not as adversaries but as human beings coming together to talk and listen and learn from one another" (Roland Martin, 1985, p. 10). Partners engage in conversation about how the learning process will unfold and what outcomes they want to achieve during the relationship. Depth, specificity, and framework are added to the broad goals identified during the preparing phase. The outcome of this iterative phase is a partnership work plan consisting of well-defined goals, criteria and measurement for success, delineation of mutual responsibility, accountability mechanisms, and protocols for dealing with stumbling blocks.

An Example. From my first contact with Mark, it was apparent that he needed considerable support to complete each assignment. He needed a specific detailed itemization of what was required and a model for him to follow. My role as a teacher was to provide a compass, not a road map, since this was, after all, a graduate-level course. As I provided feedback, his confidence grew. But his writing skills were weak, and so I gently but firmly helped him realize that he was going to need help if he intended to complete his academic program successfully. Toward the end of the course, he approached me and asked me if I would mentor him through the writing process. After our initial conversation, I agreed. I asked him to bring his completed writing assignments to the next session, and we reviewed them together.

We used the learnings to define what he wanted to accomplish and discussed his self-imposed deadline. I already knew about his weak learning style and that he was going to stick to a concrete and specific schedule that had clear tasks and deadlines built into it. We spent time talking about accountability and feedback. I let him know that some of what he would be hearing might be hard to accept and that if he wanted to develop his writing, he was going to need to listen not only to his own voice but to some critical feedback. He was also going to have to shoulder the responsibility because no external accountability was being placed on him.

The real value of negotiating conversations like this one lies in the conversation process that creates the shared understanding or working agreements about some of the soft issues in a relationship—topics like confidentiality, boundaries, and limits, which are often omitted in mentoring conversations because they are uncomfortable or difficult to talk about. Although some individuals fear that such a discussion undermines trust, it in fact lays a solid foundation for building trust.

The Litmus Test. By the end of the negotiating conversation, which may take one or more sessions, you should be able to answer the following questions:

• What are the learner's goals?
• What are the learner's needs?
• Is there mutual understanding of roles?
• What are the responsibilities of each partner?
• What are the norms of the relationship?
• How often should we meet?
• How often should we connect?
• What is our agreement?
• What are our operating assumptions about confidentiality?
• What are the boundaries and limits of this relationship?
• What is our work plan?
• How and when will the relationship be brought to closure?
• What are our criteria for success?

When you can address all of these questions, you are ready to move on to the enabling phase and implement the mentoring partnership agreement.

Enabling. The enabling phase takes longer to complete than other mentoring phases, for this is when the greatest learning between mentoring partners takes place. Although it offers opportunity for nurturing learning and development, it is also when mentoring partners are most vulnerable to obstacles that may derail the relationship.

Each mentoring relationship is unique and must find its own path. Although goals are clearly articulated, the process is well defined, and the milestones are identified, path finding takes time. The learning that takes place during the enabling phase depends on maintaining a climate of mutual trust and respect.

The mentor's role during this phase is to nurture mentee growth by maintaining an open and affirming learning climate, asking the right questions at the right time, and providing thoughtful, timely, candid, and constructive feedback (Zachary, 2000). The learning progress and the learning process should be continuously monitored to ensure that the mentee's learning goals are being met. Learning milestones should be acknowledged and celebrated.

An Example. I had been assigned the task of mentoring a new faculty member. The learning goals of our relationship had been established by our institution, and because we shared a history as colleagues, the preparing stage was a relatively short one. We checked out our assumptions in the negotiating phase and spent time talking about learning styles. We agreed on a process to complement her learning style. We decided to begin with some articles and materials that would provide her with a baseline orientation. She would do some shadowing, and we would build in regular conversation time to answer questions as they arose. We decided to attend the

new faculty orientation program together and review each session at the end of the day. We looked at past student papers, which illustrated the sort of feedback I have given students, and we even met with some students together. She was eager to get started and met with some students herself. Each experience raised additional questions for her. For a while, she asked me to read some student evaluations she had drafted. When she was ready, she began her work in earnest, confident that she was well prepared.

What I was endeavoring to do was to provide adequate support, appropriate challenge, and ample vision (Daloz, 1999) to facilitate her learning throughout the enabling phase. I was able to manage the relationship and support her learning by creating a climate for learning. Her continuous feedback made me keenly aware that the level of support she required was not the same support I needed when I was being oriented to that role. I was able to maintain the momentum by providing challenge at the appropriate level (when the challenge was too great, my mentee so informed me) and monitoring the process and evaluating progress. I encouraged her development in the role by providing vision. I served as a guide, provided the map, and held up a mirror to foster reflection and encourage her as she was working hard to achieve the desired learning outcomes. Table 3.1 illustrates how Daloz's (1999) conditions of support, challenge, and vision relate to the ongoing work of this phase.

The Litmus Test. Mentors ensure the integrity of the process when they take time during the enabling phase to reflect on the following questions:

- Have we established a regular pattern of conduct?
- How well are we communicating with one another?
- What kinds of development opportunities am I providing to support fulfillment of my mentee's goals?
- How can I improve the quality of the mentoring interaction?
- Are we continuing to work at maintaining the trust in this relationship?
- Am I providing thoughtful, candid, and constructive feedback?
- Is my mentee using the feedback to take action?
- Are there some lurking dangers or undiscussable issues (that is, things not talked about, perhaps because of discomfort on the part of the mentor or mentee to do so) in the mentoring relationship?
- What additional learning opportunities, resources, and venues should we add to enhance the learning experience?
- Are we taking time to reflect on our partnership regularly?
- Is the quality of our mentoring interaction satisfactory?

Coming to Closure. Coming to closure is an evolutionary process, which actually starts in the negotiating phase when mentoring partners establish closure procedures. As partners get to know each other during the enabling phase, they become more aware of each other's interests and needs, and they are in a better position to plan closure collaboratively. During the coming to closure phase, mentoring partners implement their exit strategy,

Table 3.1. Nurturing Growth in the Enabling Phase

Conditions That Facilitate Growth and Development[a]	Enabling Process and Functions[b]	Mentor's Key Tasks
Support	Managing the Process 　Listening 　Providing structure 　Expressing positive 　expectations 　Serving as advocate 　Sharing ourselves 　Making it special	• Creating a learning environment • Building and maintaining the relationship
Challenge	Maintaining Momentum 　Setting tasks 　Engaging in discussion 　Setting up dichotomies 　Constructing hypotheses 　Setting high standards	• Monitoring the process • Evaluating progress
Vision	Encouraging Movement 　Modeling 　Keeping tradition 　Offering a map 　Suggesting new language 　Providing a mirror	• Fostering reflection • Assessing learning outcomes

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[a]See Daloz (1999, Chap. 8) for full description of the facilitative behaviors.
[b]The functions listed in Column 2 are discussed extensively in Daloz (1999) and are not directly explained in this chapter. They are listed here to illustrate the processes a mentor might use to enable mentee learning.

ensuring that there is a learning conclusion, no matter what the circumstances (Zachary, 2000).

This seemingly short phase offers a rich opportunity for growth and reflection regardless of whether the relationship has been positive. Coming to closure presents a developmental opportunity for mentors and mentees to harvest their learning and move on.

Closure encompasses evaluating the learning, acknowledging progress, and celebrating achievement of the learning. Mentors, as well as mentees, benefit from closure. When closure is seen as an opportunity to evaluate personal learning and take that learning to the next level, mentors leverage their own learning and growth.

Coming to closure presents a serious challenge for mentoring partners. The reasons are legion. Anxiety, resentment, or surprise can sabotage the closure experience. It is difficult to plan for closure because relationships can end earlier or last longer than anticipated. Sometimes partners cannot let a

mentoring relationship end because of the emotions and personal ties inherent in any relationship. Sometimes inertia or a sense of comfort sustains a mentoring relationship long after the relationship should have ended.

Some mentoring partnerships end with successful completion of learning goals. Some do not. Even unproductive or unsatisfactory mentoring relationships benefit from a positive closure experience. If closure is to be a mutually satisfying learning experience, mentoring partners must be prepared with an exit strategy. A good exit strategy has four components:

1. A learning conclusion (reflection on learning outcomes) and process for integrating what was learned (how to apply the learning and taking it to the next level)
2. A meaningful way to celebrate success (collaboratively planning a mutually satisfying way to celebrate)
3. A conversation focusing on redefining the relationship (talking about how the relationship is to continue; whether it moves from professional mentoring relationship to colleague, friendship, or ceases to exist at all)
4. A comfortable way of moving on (acknowledging transition and identifying ways to sever the relationship or stay in contact)

An Example. I recently mentored a student who was studying the topic of mentoring adolescent girls. We talked about closure during the second session and agreed at that time that we both wanted a positive closure experience, even if the relationship did not work out. We agreed that we did not know each other well enough to know what appropriate closure might be and decided to revisit the closure process midway through our mentoring contract. When we did, we tossed around ideas, but neither of us was particularly enamoured with any of the options. We learned shortly thereafter that Marian Wright Edelman was speaking at a local event and decided that attending the event together would be particularly meaningful. As we sat together at the event, we talked about the process we had been through and acknowledged particularly meaningful learnings. We also shared our appreciation of each other. Attending the event was special, and being there together was especially significant.

The Litmus Test. The completion of learning goals signals the time for closure of the relationship. Prior to bringing the relationship to closure, mentors should consider the following questions:

• What are the signals that indicate now is time for closure?
• Have we established closure protocols?
• How are we going to acknowledge and celebrate accomplishments?
• What are the learning outcomes of this relationship for me and for my mentee?
• How am I going to apply what I have learned from this relationship?

- In what ways can I help my mentee think about taking her learning to the next level?
- Where does the relationship go from here?

Lessons Learned

Teaching and mentoring both focus on the work of facilitating learning. Being successful in the teacher role does not guarantee mentoring success; however, good teaching practice does inform good mentoring, and vice versa. Palmer (1990) reminds us that "good teachers dwell in the mystery of good teaching until it dwells in them. As they explore it alone and with others, the insight and energy of mystery begins to inform and animate their work" (p. 11).

As we engage in mentoring, we bring our own cycle, our own timetable, our own history, our own individuality, and our own ways of doing things to each relationship. For learning to occur, we must understand who we are, what we bring, and what our mentoring partner brings to the relationship. We must also understand the complexity of the mentoring relationship. We must understand the ebb and flow of the learning process. In sum, we must prepare ourselves to meet the challenge so that our efforts can have profound, deep, and enduring impact on our students. Being part of a mentoring partnership involves conscious choice and challenges each of us to think about what we might become and to remember Ralph Waldo Emerson's sage words, "What lies behind and lies before us are small matters to what lies within us."

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