

# Mentoring in a Community Of Practice

Ron Jockheck MCE

March 2012

## COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

Group that forms and engages in processes of information and experience sharing with its members in order to learn from each other and develop in ways that are related to their field.

## MENTORING

A supportive relationship focused on growth and development that enables one party to gain skills, knowledge, attitudes and/or behaviours usually in relation to setting and attaining professional goals.

## APPRENTICESHIP

A process of moving learners into a set of social norms and ways of working that assumes teachers will be highly skilled and experienced practitioners of what they are teaching. Teachers reveal the inner workings of skilled performance and translate it into accessible language and an ordered set of tasks which usually proceed from simple to complex, allowing for different points of entry depending upon the learner's capability.

## CONTINUOUS DEVELOPMENT

On-going development includes setting development goals, reflecting on your performance, obtaining feedback in order to build skills and knowledge. What follows is a generic development plan as a resource for you to use in pursuit of learning and development that reflects the learning cycle.

### GENERIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

#### *Step 1*

Identify learning or development goal and how you will know when you achieve it (describe it, be specific).

#### *Step 2*

Identify what you will do to achieve it (be specific about actions, resources you will need).

#### *Step 3*

Identify any barriers and how you may overcome them (if you feel you can't overcome a barrier, perhaps it should become the first goal).

#### *Step 4*

Set start, completion and follow-up times.

#### *Step 5*

Implement your plan.

#### *Step 6*

Reflect on and/or obtain feedback on your performance or achievement as related to your identified goal and continue to use new behaviours or set new goals.

## ROLES OF A MENTOR

- Helper
- Broker
- Celebrant
- Confidant
- Listener
- Questioner
- Learning partner

## EFFECTIVE MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

- Establish rapport and set direction – agree/contract as to the focus (goals) of the relationship, logistics/boundaries (check-ins, follow-ups, reflection, confidentiality) and what to do if it isn't working out
- When goals have been achieved end, renew or continue the relationship
- Trust
- Openness
- Enthusiasm

## FINDING A MENTOR

- Know why you want a mentor (your goals) and what you expect of a mentor (e.g., insights into how to develop, what to learn, feedback provider)
- Look for a role model, someone you admire, respect, think you can trust and would like to emulate
- Ask colleagues, friends, etc. who they might recommend or who successfully held the role of mentor for them
- Approach the individual and share your goals, ask if they are interested and what they would expect out of the relationship
- Share your expectations and what you know about a successful mentoring relationship
- Ask for agreement and set a meeting to contract around goals, the relationship and logistics (this is the beginning)

How does mentoring occur now in your COP?

What do you think you should do collectively to ensure well developed practitioners and leaders in your field emerge from your COP?

What might be the design of a formal or informal but supported mentoring program in your COP?

## REFERENCES

### LEARNING, TRANSFER & DEVELOPMENT

- Billett, S. (2001). *Learning in the workplace: Strategies for effective practice*. Crows Nest, Australia: Allen & Unwin.
- Cranton, P. (2002). Teaching for transformation. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 93, 63-71.
- Drewitt, T. (2008). Improving the transfer of learning. *Training Journal*, October, 57-60.
- Jacobson, H. & Bregman, P. (2000). From training to development: how to make learning stick. Retrieved February 1, 2012, from [http://www.howieconnect.com/New\\_Training\\_Model.pdf](http://www.howieconnect.com/New_Training_Model.pdf)
- Janove, J.W. (2002). Use it or lose it. *HR Magazine*, 47 (4), 99-104.
- Lowry, C. M. (2006). Supporting and facilitating self-directed learning. Retrieved August 17, 2011 from <http://www.ntlf.com/html/lib/bib/89dig.htm>
- Terry, R. (2009). Transfer and application. *Training Journal*, July 2009, 69.
- Wexley, K.N. & Baldwin, T.T. (1986). Posttraining strategies for facilitating positive transfer: An empirical exploration. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 29 (3), 503-520.
- Yamhill, S. McLean, G. (2001). Theories supporting transfer of training. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 12 (2), 195-208.

### MENTORING

- Ali, P.A. & Panther, W. (2008). Professional development and the role of mentorship. *Nursing Standard*, 22(42), 35-39.
- Allan, T.D., Eby, L.T. & Lentz, E. (2006). The relationship between formal mentoring program characteristics and perceived program effectiveness. *Personnel Psychology*, 59, 125-153.
- Erdem, R. & Aytemur, J.O. (2008). Mentoring – A relationship based on trust: Qualitative research. *Public Personnel Management*, 37(1), 55-65.
- KENSINGTON-MILLER, B. A. (2006). The Development of a Community of Practice and its Connection with Mentoring in Low Socio-Economic Secondary Schools in New Zealand. In P. Grootenboer, R. Zevenbergen & M. Chinnappan (Eds.), *Identities, Cultures and Learning Spaces. Proceedings of the 29th Annual Conference of the Mathematics Education Research Group of Australasia Incorporated*. (Vol. 2, pp. 320-327), Canberra.
- Offstein, E.H., Jorwich, J.M. & Shah, A. (2007). Mentoring programs and jobs: A contingency approach. *Review of Business*, 27(27), 32-37.
- Walsh, A.M. & Borkowski, S.C. (1999). Cross-gender mentoring and career development in the health care industry. *Health Care Management Review*, 24(3), 7-17.