

Evaluation of mentoring experience

[Education](#)



For my mentoring placement, I was placed in Willows high school, a diverse community secondary school that covers the areas of Tremorfa, Splott and Adamsdown in Cardiff. The school is situated in an area where there is deprivation socially and economically. The pupils range from ages eleven to sixteen and all have different abilities some including special needs which the school accommodates for. Many of the pupils who attend the school are from minority ethnic backgrounds and live in Cardiff's most disadvantaged areas.

This can have an affect on the pupils due to different socio-economic groups in educational achievement which can be developed by their home learning atmosphere, moderate pupil's attitudes and behaviours as well as assisting disadvantaged pupils believe their own responses and accomplishment can result in progressed effects. (Goodman and Gregg, 2010.) The culture of the school can have an affect on the pupils as explained by Watson (2001) who defines that if the culture is not courteous to education then this can have an unsatisfactory impact on the pupils performance and attainment.

Climate of the school has also seen to have an affect on its pupils, as to the pupils enjoying attending school and wanting to be there as well as their connection with their teachers. Wang et al (1997) clarifies how the culture and climate of a school have an actual influential part in pupil's achievement. This school has a culture were pupils and teachers both work together to encourage and motivate academic success and learning is honoured and awarded. I mentored four pupils who were in year ten at key stage four, in their first year of preparing for their gcse's.

I helped my mentees with anything they were struggling with in school as well as giving advice and guidance on careers and goals (Haney, 1997.) I feel that as a mentor I built a very good relationship with my mentees even though this went through stages, as at first I was getting to know them and building rapport and empathy with them which then went on to building an understanding of growth and learning as well as progressing and trust which made me look forward to attending the school and seeing my mentees. Clutterback (1994) emphasises that relationships that commence during mentoring can advance into distinct friendships.

I also felt as a volunteer mentor I interacted with my mentees really well and provided an environment, which was comfortable and safe for them to encourage and motivate their learning (Kember and Leung, 2006.) I felt my performance as a mentor was effective on my mentees as I could see them progressing as the weeks went by and this made me happy to see that my time and effort was benefiting their education. Ragins and Scandura (1994) interprets how mentors develop feeling of personal fulfilment from stimulating their mentees learning development as well as being there for advice and accommodating relevant information.

This supports how as well as me being there to encourage and help my mentees progress in their education with problem areas I was also someone my mentees could confide in and trust with any other personal or private issues outside of school. In particular, one of my mentees was Asian and had a lot of problems at home which were very similar as to what I went through when I was her age and I felt very connected to her as we had the same

culture, background and religion so felt I really understood her and developed such a close relationship with her over my weeks of mentoring.

Allen, Poteet and Burroughs (1997) also support this as they express how mentors feel self-gratification when seeing their mentees advance and achieve. This was shown with one of mentees as when I first met her she struggled a lot with maths and found it a very hard subject to understand but with my patience, different learning techniques and working with her on a one to one basis I saw her progress more and more over the weeks and less depend on me which made me feel so good about myself that my time and effort was benefiting her education.

I was always there on time for the mentoring sessions and always arrived slightly earlier so I had time to organise my sessions with each mentee. Carter and Lewis (1994) discuss how a reliable mentor needs to be liable and the characteristics of the mentor play an important part in having an effective relationship with mentee.

Although some weeks during mentoring, my mentees didn't turn up due to not being allowed out of important subjects or just simply forgetting which was disappointing when as I had gone out my way to collect resources to help them learn and spent quality time putting their lesson plans together which made me realise how to always attend lectures in university and to be on time as teaching is a two way interaction, doesn't work if only one puts in the effort.

I also brought in different resources to try and make the learning more fun and different to the usual classroom setting teaching for my mentees, for

xample bringing in my ipad to do maths exercises on but due to the Wi-Fi not working in the school I had to change my whole lesson plan on the day which was slightly frustrating although due to the mentoring sessions being taken in the library I had a number of other resources to use. This was a difficult situation encountered although can be prevented as to myself being more organized and finding out before the mentoring session took place if I was able to have internet connection as well as having prepared backup resources.

On the other hand, one of the weeks of my mentoring experience I assumed it was a late start but it was an early start which meant I missed two of my mentees which was due to lack of communication and can be prevented by emailing or ringing the school if not sure instead of hesitating and assuming. Overall, I really enjoyed my mentoring experience as I gained a lot of skills from being a mentor such as leadership, organizational skills, motivating the pupil's, problem solving, listening and being attentive and many others which will benefit me when applying for future jobs.

I also felt a sense of personal achievement from nurturing my mentees (Ragins and Scandura, 1994). I love working with children and young people and this has been an eye opener for my future career, as after this mentoring experience I definitely want to consider teaching, as it was a positive experience and its very satisfying when you see the pupils progress and better themselves. I am now considering more volunteering opportunities with children and young people so I can gain more experience for my future career aspirations.