Mentoring theory analysis

The aim of this report is to investigate and analyse mentoring theory and methods so that valid conclusions can be drawn on the ideal mentoring approach. This analysis will be utilised in a real-life mentoring scenario with a group of ELB007 students.

Mentoring can occur in an assortment of situations including in education, starting new jobs, further training and development of personnel. In these scenarios, the mentor generally will have more experience and is easily approachable and accessible for the mentee.

Society in the 21 st century have grown up with the impression that they must constantly pursue the advice of other people. It is more common for an individual to have multiple mentors; the traditional older mentors but also peer mentors and coaches. In this era, mentorship is viewed as a two-way road and takes more commitment and patience to guide young adults of today. The mentoring relationship that is developed should be mutually beneficial where both sides are expected to contribute to one another's goals and expectations. A crucial component of a successful mentoring relationship is having both the mentor and mentee to have an openness to changes and are eager to learn. [1]

This type of relationship can be valuable when the progression of the mentee depends on their development of additional skills. [2] This is because it enables them to absorb more information and gain valuable advice and support needed to grow themselves in both a personal and professional way. Some situations do not easily allow for obtaining objective advice, help and

support. Having a mentoring scheme within an organization incorporates all these important services.

A mentor is " an experienced and trusted advisor" (Collins English Dictionary, 2016). Another definition of a mentor and its role, more specifically in the business sector includes:

" An *employee training system under which a senior or more experienced individual (the mentor) is assigned to act as an advisor, counselor, or guide to a junior or trainee. The mentor is responsible for providing support to, and feedback on, the individual in his or her charge.*" [3]

People perceive mentoring in slightly different ways depending on their experience and the use of the mentor-mentee relationship. In addition to this, each organisation has different definitions of mentoring but, within an organisation, everyone possesses the same understanding of what is expected of a mentor in that specific scheme. [4]

For this report, the focus is on group mentoring as it is what will be put into practice with the Part B students. This type of mentoring differs from the typical one-to-one. Group projects linked to group mentoring enhance the learning of participants and develop an understanding of how teams operate.

Looking at the history of mentoring and its origins, Greek mythology depicts the first insight of a mentor. This can be seen in one of the Greek poems written by Homer. The poem ' Odyssey' describes the journey home of a Greek hero after the fall of Troy. Odyssey, the king of Ithaca, was a Greek hero that entrusted the care of his household to a man named Mentor whilst

he was away fighting in the Trojan War. In the poem, mentor serves as a teacher and overseer of Odysseus' son, Telemachus. In time, Telemachus ventures in search of his father whilst Athena, Goddess of war, accompanies him and in doing so, undertakes the form of Mentor. [5]

From this, the word mentor has evolved to mean trusted advisor, friend, teacher and wise person. Human development relies on various forms of mentoring where one person invests time, energy and personal know-how in assisting the growth and ability of another person. Whilst this is the perceived origin of the term mentor, there are alternative ideas which will be discussed further into this report. There are certain qualities in which a mentor must have in order to accomplish a successful mentoring relationship. The main qualities include: being perceptive, a motivator, have the ability to advise and instruct without interfering, and finally being able to listen, question and feedback to the mentees.

In modern day times, coaching and mentoring get used interchangeably but have major differences which are often overlooked. Coaching is an enabling and helping process whereas mentoring is fundamentally a supportive one. Mentors must act objectively when discussing situations with their mentees and allowing the mentees to explore their own idea to achieve a solution is imperative. [6]

In this section, the methods and theories of mentoring will be investigated. As explained in section 3. 0, the concept of mentoring has been around for many years which has allowed for vast speculation and a wide range of

conceptual theories to be created. Many theorists such as Kram, Levinson and Erikson have contrasting theories towards the concept of mentoring.

Levinson created his theory in the 1970s where it saw mentoring as a single and hierarchical relationship between two people. Kram, another theorist, also agreed with this mentality and it was only in the 2000s that other concepts were developed by Williams and Baugh indicating that there are many types of mentoring including group mentoring. Following on from this development, Kram updated her theory to agree with this new-found approach. Looking more into Kram's mentoring theories, she alluded towards a two-dimensional concept which highlighted the two main functions of mentoring being for psychological support and vital for career development. The mentoring relationship would start with learning each other's learning style and habits followed by the mentee learning from the mentor leading to career advancement. This concept focuses on role-modelling, counselling and friendship to be successful.

Similar to this, Levinson's theory developed in the 1970s suggests that mentors function as guides and counsellors. This theory implies that both sides of the mentoring relationship to benefit. The mentee gains fundamental knowledge and the mentor gains a sense of well-being from passing on their knowledge to the next generation. [7] This sense of well-being is also confirmed in the theory created by Erikson. This framework states that he mentors main concern is to establish and guide the next generation through nurture. [8]

The article written from the point of view of a Marxist feminist suggests different perspectives of the Odyssey poem by Homer. It implicates Athena as being a mentor figure as well as the advisor, Mentor. Athena provides support to Telemachus on his journey to locate Odyssey. She possesses caring and selfless traits, both of which are expected in the mentoring figure of today. This judgement of the poem provides a modern-day outlook of the mentoring concept and aligns with the theories provided by Kram and Erikson which were mentioned above. From the article, mentor is considered in diverse ways.

To continue with the theory that Athena was more of a mentor, it is suggested that in the Greek myth, Mentor was a weak man. The goddess Athena was required to intervene with Mentor's role to prevent disorder. In Greek mythology, gods and goddess are expected to do everything possible to keep order amongst the people. Athena's actions prove that she was a true mentor as recognised by the people of today. She used her powers to ensure the continuation of a man controlled society by helping Telemachus locate his father and thus preventing his mother taking over jurisdiction.

Later in history, as described in the article, mentoring changes from being a natural human function. This enhancement comes from investigating relationships between exceptional people such as Socrates and Plato. These relationships contain an emotional bond which is not spoken of in the Odyssey poem but is anticipated in modern-day mentoring. Levinson's theory, complies with the Odyssey evidence which depicts that only the wealthy (powerful) could have successful mentoring relationships. This idea has progressed throughout the ages and it can now be proven that this

mentoring relationship also works with the powerful mentoring the weak and the weak mentoring the weak. Weak and powerful people can be defined through a variety of ways including social status, knowledge, age and professional standing within an organisation. Mentoring interactions in the modern era must be based upon a certain level of trust between the members. It can be seen through this article as well as with the theorists' concepts that mentoring has progressed vastly over the years. [5]

As stated in section 2. 0, the mentoring analysis will take place on a Part B project group. This type of mentoring is different to the typical one-on-one relationship. There are many ways to approach group mentoring including: facilitated group mentoring, peer-group mentoring and finally team mentoring. Facilitated group mentoring allows people to participate in a learning group and benefit from the experience and expertise of the mentor. The richness of the experience multiplies as each group participant brings personal experiences into the conversation. The facilitator asks questions to keep the dialogue thought-provoking and meaningful, shares their own personal experiences, provides feedback and serves as a sounding board. Peer-group mentoring brings together peers with similar learning interests or needs. The group is self-directed and self-managed. Finally, team mentoring offers a methodology for facilitating the learning of an intact team. Together team individuals articulate goals and work simultaneously with mentors who guide them through the process. This allows the team to be supported and to learn from each other's experience and knowledge.

Having discussed mentoring theories already in this section, the next part is based on methods of mentoring which have been developed over the years.

Some of these relate to the theories created and similarities can be drawn from all the methods about to be deliberated. These methods all agree on key skills needed to be an effective mentor which include active listening, advising, receptiveness and the ability to question the mentee through inputting but not dominating the discussion. When the mentee starts to question the mentor, that is when trust has been built. [6]

Eric Parsloe provided a mentoring model consisting of four stages. The first stage involves identifying the development needs and objectives of the mentee. This is the stage where the mentor and mentee will build a rapport that will enable them to establish a mutual understanding of how each other work. The first meeting allows both people to gain each other's trust and to share the expectations of what they wish to achieve from the relationship. In doing so, any disappointment will be avoided. The next stage focuses on encouragement of the mentee to carry out the actions independently that were decided upon in the first meeting. During the next few meetings, a timetable of meetings should be drawn up and the mentor needs to recognise the development and learning needs of the mentee and how these can be achieved. The third phase of Parsloe's model illustrates that the mentor needs to help the mentee execute their actions by guiding them and offering advice and drawing on previous experiences. After the objectives of the mentee have been met, an evaluation meeting should take place to critically analyse the process and the relationship that has been established. [4] Organisations should monitor the progress of relationships as they develop to maintain a smooth and effective process and to identify and adapt to potential difficulties at an early stage.

Another mentoring model is GROW: Goals, Reality statement, Obstacles and Way forward. This model can be considered a map; guiding mentoring partnerships from their current position through to their final destination. GROW provides a structured approach which permits the mentees to find solutions to their problems. It has been used since the 1980s and allows for a full understanding of what is to be expected of the group. A goal is created by using the SMART principles. Every goal decided upon must be specific, measureable, agreed, realistic and timed. A reality statement can be generated to illustrate how far away the mentee is from the GOAL. After this, the mentee needs to find the obstacles that are stopping them from reaching their goal. Obstacles can be found in the mentees environment, resources or lack of and the limitations in knowledge and experience. The last step in the model is isolating the way forward. [10] This is completed by selecting the most appropriate sequences and combinations of options that will enable the mentee to fulfil all the goals. The path chosen needs to be specific and detailed so that the progress can be gauged.

Another model available for mentoring that was also created in the 1980s is the CLEAR model. This was developed by Peter Hawkins and relies on the activities: Contracting, Listening, Exploring, Action and Review. Contracting is similar to the goal making of the GROW model. An open discussion takes place in order to establish the desired outcomes of both the project and from the mentoring relationship. Listening is the next part of the CLEAR model. In mentoring, listening is one of the most important skills that a mentor needs to possess. After listening, exploring allows the mentor to challenge the mentee on their thoughts. When doing this, criticism needs to be kept simple

and constructive in this stage by concentrating on the mentee's behaviour and not their personal attributes. Action ensues the exploration and supports the mentee in choosing the next steps. After this, a review is carried out which reinforces what has been covered in the meetings and the decisions made. [11] Furthermore, a review also highlights what needs to be improved and altered in the mentoring relationship so that both parties gain maximum benefit from the partnership. The final review phase is crucial to dictate future meetings. In carrying out either of these models, the motivation of the mentee will increase as well as their building upon their self-confidence.

The mentoring relationship can be view upon as a system. When taking systems theory approach to mentoring, one must first understand a system. Systems are interrelated and interact with their environments and through these interactions, they evolve much alike the mentoring relationship. It is first necessary to understand the individual system elements as well as the relationships between them. Putting this into a mentoring context, one mentoring session often has the ability to create an immediate change in an individual. This changed individual will react to the environment in a different way and therefore causes an impact on the environment as well as others that inhabit that environment. A possible implication of applying this theory is the suggestion that individuals should not be coached or mentored in isolation but always in the context of the group (system) in which they work. [4]

During the lectures given on this module, the Moore Method was discussed. After further research, it can be seen that this method of mentoring is held in

high regard across the academic sector and within teaching. The Moore Method is a Socratic method of teaching and was developed by Robert Lee Moore in the early 1900s. Its main principle draws on encouraging students to solve problems using their own skills of critical analysis and creativity. [12] This method worked by Moore giving his students a theorem and making them come up with a solution without the aid of him or other students in the same class. In turn, the students who had a plausible solution would write it on the board. If an error was found in their solution, the other students will be called upon to find a correction. Where students made improvements on the theorems, they would be rewarded by having their name referred to alongside that theorem.

Moore was opposed to ridicule and instead encouraged the students to be open with their solutions without the fear of being put down if they were incorrect. For the more timid students, he would involve them in class discussion and they would gradually gain the confidence to also write their solutions on the board in front of the class. However, the greatest struggle of the Moore Method is patience. When a student is struggling or not has run out of ideas, the mentor or teacher must wait for them to figure out the problem on their own. The mentor must take a back seat for this method to work as it should. The main points to take from this method include the mentoring needing to be confident in their approach from the beginning. This will immediately improve the trust in the mentoring relationship. An additional point is for the mentee to realise that some solutions will come quicker and easier than others. [13]

For this report, it was necessary to put the researched mentoring methods into practice. Each Part B group were assigned a pair of Part D mentors. This type of assignment was a means of development for both the mentor and the mentee.

In this instance, the Part D mentors were told to take the approach of an individual mentoring a group rather than a group mentoring a group. The module leaders for both ELB007 and ELD033 arranged appropriate times and dates for the mentors to meet their groups for the first time. The first meeting with the Part B group was a chance for everyone to get to know each other and to start building a rapport. This would be vital for a successful mentoring relationship. Gaining a certain level of trust would enable the Part B group together or as individual to easily approach the mentor and ask questions freely. In addition to this, a brief discussion took place to indicate the reason for the part D mentors to be involved in the Part B project and how best to utilise having such an asset readily available for the group.

In addition to the introductions and exchange of contact details, this first meeting ensued a topic was chosen and the goals of the project were outlined. It was decided that the main form of communication would be through the mobile application, ' WhatsApp'. This is a messaging application that allowed the mentors and mentees to communicate with each other as and when required. This could be for arranging other meetings or catching up with missed information or even asking questions about their part of the report which was unclear.

As the mentor, listening to the discussion taking place allowed for an assessment of the group dynamics to take place. The group was put together randomly and after the first meeting; it still hadn't become clear the roles in which the members would individually play. Naturally, a leader will form in a group of this type who will take control of the situation and organise the group. There were a few contenders for this position in the group as they all seemed confident with the task ahead. To conclude this meeting, future times and dates of meetings were agreed to ensure the best availability for the majority of the people involved. Successful mentoring practice requires both parties agree on the purpose and extent of the relationship including the means, frequency and how confidentiality will be maintained. [1] In these group projects, a limitation that can be identified is the difficulty of finding a time suitable for everyone to be available for a meeting.

Amidst these meetings, it can clearly be seen that the GROW method has started to be exploited. The above paragraph outlined the first two stages: Identifying goals and creating a reality statement. These stages were alluded to by employing questions as prompts. To help the Part B students realise specific goals, questions such as: ' what do you want to achieve?' and ' What are your objects?' were asked. Following on from these, they were asked what stage they were currently at and a self-assessment was requested so that the group and mentor understood their positioning in the project and the next steps that needed to be taken.

Furthermore, limitations within the group include having limited knowledge of systems methods, and the lack of understanding of the topic and overall

project. This type of limitation can induce the phenomenon of groupthink. This can occur when a group makes faulty decisions because group pressures lead to a deterioration of mental efficiency and moral judgement. A group is especially vulnerable when its members are similar in background and when the group is insulated from outside opinions. [13] The Part B group have similar backgrounds when it comes to knowledge of the topic therefore careful observations need to be made and advisement form the mentor needs to be voiced clearly but not in an overpowering manner. For mentoring to work, as discussed in previous sections, the mentor needs to be passive in the meetings and avoid dominating their opinions over the group discussion.

In the meetings that followed, each member of the group took responsibility of a section from the chosen topic to work on over the coming weeks leading up to the deadline. During this time, a problem occurred with one of the group members who was unable to complete their section of the report. This was overcome with a discussion with the lecturer and with all the group members agreeing to pick up components of the missing section. As a newly formed group the bonding was easily achieved and everyone able to complete their work, did so in the allotted time.

These meetings just described conclude the GROW method by having the group assess their options and a way forward. This, again, was prompted by the mentor by asking the following types of questions:

- What can you do to bridge the gap?
- Who can help?

- What do you need?

- What are the actions?

- What is the timing plan and actions following?

These enabled the group to gain a full understanding of the project and its direction. This method also included informal mentoring techniques due to the setting and scenario that had been arranged.

To reflect on this study, there are many benefits as well as some disadvantages that came from this mentoring project. To start with, being able to work with a group and form a relationship with them allowed us, as mentors, to put into practice some of the approaches that had been researched. This embedded the skills that had been learnt throughout the process and it could easily be seen which methods were more effective than others.

However, the process had its disadvantages. To begin with the group did not fully comprehend the extent at which the Part D mentors would be able to assist them in their report even after discussing the reasons behind being involved in the meetings. Having previous knowledge.

This was the mentors first time at mentoring a group. To begin with, not knowing the individuals in the group was intimidating and it was difficult for them to initiate the mentoring relationship. A possible alteration for this could have been one-to-one mentoring sessions before the project was started to fully form bonds between the individuals.

The mentor's personality is not as outgoing as others may have been so asking questions and prompting the group proved more difficult and the

mentor was reluctant, at some points, to catechize for answers. However, this did not prevent the mentor from taking a back seat in the meetings and becoming an active listener. If the individuals in the group had questions, the mentor would be able to clearly advise them towards a proper solution. This mentoring process can be seen to correspond with the Moore's method.

Additionally, more meetings could have been arranged by the group to make full use of the mentor's expertise. It is noticeable by the result obtained that there were parts of the report where the mentor's knowledge and experience would have helped them obtain a greater result. There were occasions where the mentor ended up invited themselves to the group meetings once a suitable time had surpassed without contact. In the work place, the mentee would normally arrange the meetings with the mentor. This is done as the mentor would not have the time to continuously question if the mentee needed advising or had any questions. In this situation, the mentor had other commitments which took priority over chasing up the group for meetings.

Looking back over the whole process, the actions that this mentor would do differently include:

- Asking more questions.
- Prompting more contact time with the group.
- Putting aside more time to get to know the group.
- Encouraging them to think outside of the box and discuss ideas at meetings as a group rather than trying to work as individuals.

By fully employing a method with similar principles as the Moore's method, it will enable the above changes to be adopted with ease. Consistently

applying this type of approach will make for a more successful mentoring experience.

Would have been hard to put the mentoring techniques into practice with the lack of communicating

The information I have gathered through the various research I have undertaken for this assignment, indicates that mentoring is a two-way mutually beneficial learning situation where the mentor provides advice, shares knowledge and experiences, and teaches using a low pressure, self-discovery approach. It can be seen that each mentoring scheme within different organisations will vary and the techniques which the mentors will undertake will also differ between mentoring individuals. The methods and theories discussed have been adapted to the changes in society over time.