

A mentor is a more
experienced
individual nursing
essay



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My belief in mentoring is to let a mentee develop their skills and to progress professionally on their own rather than a mentor being directive. My idea is in line with Hawkey, (1998, p. 665, in Harrison, Dymoke & Pell, 2004, p. 1065) that mentoring is about mentors giving help to develop mentees skills. However, a mentor plays many roles in the life of a mentee and the mentor role has been defined in various different ways. Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD, 2010) has pointed out, for example, that mentoring is a reciprocal professional learning relationship between the mentor and mentee on what happens in the classroom. In short, mentoring is typically viewed and presented as the process of supporting and guiding the mentee with the aim of helping them to progress professionally. Mentoring has featured in a variety of ways throughout my professional life as an educator.

As a first time mentor, it was quite difficult to be a mentor though I am still learning to become more confident and an effective mentor. However, I became interested in unpicking the concepts and practices of mentoring in direct response to my role, which demands me to be more critically aware of the process in order to support my mentee effectively. I have had the good fortune of being both a mentee and now a mentor. In an effort to help build the best mentoring relationship possible, both mentor and mentee need to see if they can communicate with each other since this is an important aspect in the mentor relationship. Pittenger and Heimann, (2000) explores this mentor relationship in George & Mapilly (2012) advocating that “ mentoring relationships require mentor and mentee to engage in challenging activities, utilizing new skills...” (p. 140). Being a first time mentor, it was

vital to my continuing practice that I critically examine my own practice in relation to my mentee, since being a critically reflective mentor would help me "...to define a way of thinking that accepts uncertainty and acknowledges dilemmas..." (Dewey, 1933, 1938; King & Kitchener, 1994; Sparks-Langer & Colton, 1991; Zehm & Kottler, 1993, in Larrivee B. 2000, p294).

The purpose of this assignment is to provide information about effective mentoring practice and to suggest how mentors and mentees can get the best out of a mentoring relationship which is highlighted by Holloway and White (1994), by emphasizing that there is a need for an unbiased relationship to enable the mentee to effectively explore their own development (in Woodd, 1997 p. 335). The assignment will further evaluate my own practice in peer- mentoring a member of my own department. We both teach Home- Economics and I have been working alongside her for four years. My mentee is an experienced teacher who has been teaching for four years, the same as me. After I arranged a day and time to go observe my mentee, she asked me if we could meet before the class to give me a brief overview about the class. We discussed class size and level. We also briefly discussed the activities that they were going to be doing that day. This initial meeting was important to make her feel at ease (Maynard, 2000). Basically, the outcomes of my mentoring relationship depended on the interpersonal qualities of both mentor and mentee. Through the mentoring relationship the mentee could achieve " guidance practice" (Harrison, Dymoke & Pell, 2004, p. 1058) provided by the mentor. An effective mentor involved being a " reflective practitioner" (Schön, 1983, in Russell T. 2005, p. 199) as stated by

Larrivee B. (2000) that becoming an effective teacher involves considerably more than accumulating skills and strategies.

The first week lesson observation (see appendix 1) was not that easy for me as the teacher (mentee) was not feeling at ease and my presence was not highly appreciated. Roberts (2000) quotes Smith and Alfred in saying that “ it is extremely difficult to fulfill the role of mentor...” (p. 161). Therefore, mentors need to be good “ role models” (Stammers, 1992, in Roberts, 2000, p. 159) who have the respect of their mentees and are held in good regard for their personal attributes. I hold the opinion that my engagement as a mentor was not as effective as I would have liked in the initial period of mentoring. So, the ability to critically analyze my own performance and to seek ways to improve was fundamental. Hence, being engaged in reflective practice could help to improve professionally and is a great way to increase confidence. I recognised therefore and decided to look closely at Gibbs’ reflective cycle (Gibbs, 1988) so that I could use this as a better model for future meetings. I was new to the role of mentor and did not fully understand the challenges of mentoring as I was not demonstrating enough attention and support to my mentee. Only upon being engaged in the mentor-mentee relationship really opened my eyes to the potential of mentoring and the role I could play. “ Lester and Johnson (1981), envelop the holistic nature of mentoring by saying that mentoring is a one- to- one learning relationship between an an older person and a less experienced person based on a modelling of behaviour and extended dialogue between them.” (in George & Mampilly, 2012, p. 137). With this increased understanding, I started to engage much better in my role. I was not there to answer all the questions

but to listen and hopefully help my mentee find her own answers. As a mentor, I felt there was an obvious need to use a range of strategies that would enable my mentee to develop her skills. For a successful and productive mentoring relationship, it was important for both mentor and mentee to have a common view of their roles and to understand how to get the best out of the mentoring experience.

Once I completed the Bell (2002), mentors scale, I realized that I am very kind- hearted and a generous person where I am inclined more to openness, sociability and less to dominance. This is significant, as I am open to criticism and this positively helped me while mentoring. I furthermore laid stress on the significance of communication as I would have failed as a mentor if there were communication barriers between us. It was very noteworthy for me that my mentee sensed as resolved as she could, as this shall aid to strongly build a hopeful mentor and mentee relationship. My mentee has been teaching the same length as me. Since my presence was not highly appreciated during the first week, I thought we should have a feedback meeting as soon as possible. It is identified by Waite, 1997; Hyland & Lo, 2006; Copland, 2008a, in Copland (2010) that “ In order to perform these duties, tutors/mentors usually hold a feedback session with the trainee teacher after having observed them teaching” (p. 266). In the course of this meeting while questioning her, it became clear that she felt pressured due to my presence in the class. Therefore it was very important that I build her confidence by being as supportive as I could and wanted her to be independent. Korthagen & Vasalos, (2005) claimed that “ many teacher educators use Kolb’s model (Kolb & Fry, 1975), which describes experiential

learning as a cyclical process of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation” (p. 50). I followed the Kolb model of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984). This suggested that by going through the different stages of the learning cycle could help both mentor and mentee engage in professional learning development. As a result, mentors can thus help mentees “ develop the skills of reflective practice and acquire initial experiences” (Russell T. 2005, p. 199) On the other hand, a mentor’s responsibility is also to “ help another individual to address the major transitions or thresholds that the individual is facing” (Megginson, 1994, in Woodds’, 1997, p335). Mentors do not need to be perfect but they do need to be willing and able to grow in a relationship and build on mutual contributions where this role is seen as an occasion to learn from the mentee as well as providing training to her.

During the second week observation (see appendix 2), I believe there was a shift in our relationship. We were encouraging each other with our own professional development and there was a new air of confidence surrounding us. As I assisted my mentee to develop her own professional practice, I was interested into improving my own mentoring skills (Coombs and Fletcher, 2005). Working in a collaborative way enabled me as a mentor to start finding solutions to the problems arising. Since a mentor is someone who imparts knowledge and experience and shares it with a less experienced person; he/ she acts as a guide (Roberts, 2000), master or advisor (Gibbs, 2003). Thus, the mentor also uses specific skills, frameworks and processes to develop insight and to promote change. “ In regard to knowledge development, good mentors are seen as sources of knowledge” (Little, 1990,

in Orland- Barak & Hasin, 2009, p. 429). In this respect, mentors “ access their theoretical knowledge and translate it for mentoring purposes in order to enhance the mentee’s teaching- learning processes” (Arderly, 1990: Roberts, 2000, in Orland- Barak & Hasin, 2009, p. 429). The term mentor has been used for a number of different models, as I believe there are many factors that affect the role including the mentee’s level of experience and the time in the mentoring relationship. As a mentor I had encountered some difficulties in finding the best way to work with my mentee so I was keen to adopt a different approach to my mentoring relationship. If my skills of mentoring were lacking then my mentee might have received less support during mentoring relationship than she otherwise would have done. Yet, I veered more towards the directive approach and was offering suggestions rather than waiting for my mentee to come to her own conclusions. My focus was very much on the development of my interpersonal skills and practice. Nevertheless, it was in listening where I felt that there was actual development in my practice over the two observations. My understanding to a mentors’ role was that I should be “ a good listener” (Cain, 2009, p. 55) so that I enable my mentee to “ reflect on the actuality of her practice” (John and Gilchrist, 1999, p. 102). I was actually in the moment, listening to what was being said and then responding to it, rather than listening and trying to work out what was my own response to them might be. Likewise, the Mauritian Teaching Competencies 2. 3 (See Appendix 6), teachers should be able to gain learners’ attention and be able to sustain their interests. My mentee used video lesson to gain the learners’ attention. Moreover, she did not meet the terms with the Mauritian Teaching Competencies 1. 2. 4 and 1. 2. 5 (see Appendix 6), which are: an understanding of the special needs of <https://assignbuster.com/a-mentor-is-a-more-experienced-individual-nursing-essay/>

individual learners and of specific learning difficulties, an understanding of how to develop the thinking and problem solving skills of learners across the curriculum. She should pay attention “ to the development of literacy and numeracy skills in every subject, every lesson” (DfES 2004, 3, p. 2). It is imperative to highlight the features of each subject that need constant attention in order to boost performance and ensure progression. It is thus significant to realise what motivates lower-attaining students to learn and what methods could be used in in order to create motivation.

By following the third observation (see appendix 3), there may be, therefore, a mismatch with a teacher who, as a qualified person, would wish to be able to make their own decisions about personal and professional development and about their pupils’ needs. In my communications with my mentee consequently made me feel assured by seeing her able to use appropriate teaching strategies relevant to the age, ability and attainment level of learners which is an area which is linked to Mauritian teaching competency 1. 3. 4 (see appendix 6). When I observed my mentee in class, she did engage the students in group work which was lacking during the first observation, conformed to the active engagement techniques (DfES, 2004, 11). My mentee involved the students in sharing their “ knowledge, ideas and perspectives and arrive at a fuller understanding than they might have done working alone” (DfES, 2004, 11, p. 5). In order for a successful mentoring relationship take place, I believe that skills and qualities such as open communication (Bradbury & Koballa, 2008, p. 55), listening (Edwards and Collison, 1996, in Hobson, 2002, p. 2135), mutual trust (Awaya et al., 2003, p. 55) and being supportive should prevail. Mentoring and coaching

provides a vital link with positive reflective practice. Throughout the mentoring relationship, there need to be a strong sense of self belief and efficacy, as goals can be realistically achieved. Through this experience, I managed to prove myself and help my mentee by not giving up. The foundation for being a good mentor is in building a good working relationship with the mentee. Achieving this one initial, important goal will solidly underpin every other aspect of mentoring. In mentoring, time is at a premium. As such, there should be effective use of time in order for good working relationships to be achieved as quickly as possible. However, to achieve this, the mentee's first day and week should be managed in a productive and welcoming way (Maynard, 2000, p. 26), and furthermore the mentor should make use of good communication skills and active listening. The effective mentor does not feel that they are perfect nor that they know all the answers. They are real people who are still learning themselves but are willing to share what they do know. Good mentors are non-judgmental about their mentees and in being so are able to develop a relationship based upon trust and acceptance. Only in such an open and trusting atmosphere can a student really feel at ease and free to ask for help and to question. Perhaps the most useful communication skill in mentoring is that of active listening.

I then proceeded with my fourth class observation (See Appendix 4). By identifying my strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats helped me to develop and improve my own mentoring skills. For this assignment, a personal SWOT analysis (QuintCareers. Com) was developed where I reflected on my own development as a mentor. The SWOT analysis (see

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appendix 7) was then used to identify my personal development goals. The goals were centered on consolidating strengths and thinking about how best I could use them. The goals were also about overcoming my weaknesses, exploiting opportunities and nullifying threats. The personal SWOT analysis proved to be a useful tool for helping me to be self-reflective. As a consequence my aim as a mentor was to increase teacher effectiveness where while mentoring I assumed my responsibility to help mentee evaluate and overcome challenges in the classroom in order to become better teachers (Korthagen, 2004). Particularly, my idea is in line with Lopez-Real & Kwan, (2005, in Kwan & Lopez-Real, 2010) that in the process of mentoring, my own personal and professional understanding developed as I worked collaboratively and reflectively with my mentee (p. 724). When I observed my mentee in class, she portrayed an image of a teacher who “stands at the front of the classroom and explaining things” (Korthagen, 2004, p. 81). Learning can be described as a process (Edwards & Protheroe, 2003). The environment such as: school culture and classroom, where the learner will evolve is an important fact. Therefore, the teacher (mentee) has to act as a facilitator. The teacher has to be more student’s centered and less dominant in the classroom. Thus the teacher’s approach to interaction with learners should be different. To some extent, my mentee have used engaged learning technique in the classroom. Basically, in terms of building prior knowledge of students, this is done by conducting a brainstorming session in class (DfES, 2004, 19) My mentee organised the students into group so that they could discuss, plan, monitor and reflect on their work. As such they developed their thinking and problem solving skills. As a result, the role of the mentor became “one of raising the ante by gradually” (Edwards & Protheroe, 2003, <https://assignbuster.com/a-mentor-is-a-more-experienced-individual-nursing-essay/>)

p. 231) facilitating the mentee to distinguish and answer to the difficulty of the situation even though, the mentee as learner is involved in practice.

My first time as a mentor allowed me to learn a lot where I learnt about my individual development as a mentor. It has also helped me out to achieve the ability to challenge, motivate and reflect. In sum, if mentoring relationship is successful then inevitably the coach themselves will notice an increase in their own awareness. I feel that the process of trying to identify myself as a mentor has equipped me with skills which will serve me well both professionally and personally and I can say without doubt that the journey thus far has been very enlightening. This piece of work underlined, “ the significance of the affective in students’ school-based learning: the close relationship that exists between the personal and the professional” (Furlong & Maynard, 1995, in Maynard, 2000, p. 29). In mentoring, mentee often discussed good practice and made reference to how mentors made them feel. For example, welcome, accepted, included, supported and recognised as an individual (Maynard, 2000). The way in which the mentee responded to me in this respect impacted on the mentor mentee relationship and eventually contributed to her success. There is absolutely a need for mentors to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to work effectively with the mentee.