

Leadership Practices in Mentoring

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Introduction

Mentoring has been around since time immemorial as leaders have guided the learning and development of their followers. Mentoring is centered on a relationship wherein a person with more experience works with, guides, and sometimes cares for another person with less experience, typically to identify and promote personal and professional development (Hansman, 2001; Johnson-Bailey, 2012; Mullen, 2000; Murrell & Tangri, 1999). Mentoring involves a dynamic relationship between two individuals and can be beneficial to both the mentor and the mentee. The values inherent in such exchanges are derived from relationships that are usually hierarchical in nature and which assume a teacher centered concept of learning and growth (Bowman, Kite, Branscombe, & Williams, 1999; Margolis & Romero, 2001).

Many definitions also speak to coaching and counseling as critical elements which foster and define the learning, typically from the mentor to the mentee. A common denominator to many well-established mentoring programs is a focus on establishing relationships or partnerships which aim to assist mentees in their development and in overcoming challenges, working through a structured process of improvement (Dawson, 2014). In a study of mentoring in higher education, Nakamura, Shernoff, Hooker and Csikszentmihalyi (2009) observed:

It can be argued that when mentoring encourages novices to strive for excellence and care for the ethical commitments and basic purpose of their profession, the experience

contributes in an essential way to their subsequent pursuit of work that engages them personally, strengthens the profession, and furthers the welfare of the communities they serve. (p. xviii)

In its fullest expression, mentoring goes well beyond simple advising as most academics would define it (Creighton, Creighton, & Parks, 2010). While academic advising involves setting goals, fitting programs to interests and abilities and evaluating progress, mentoring is far more relational with an emphasis on socialization and support (Gaffney, 1995). Perspectives on mentoring may be found across a diverse set of disciplines (Borman & Colson, 1984; Fagan & Walter, 1982; Rawlins & Rawlins, 1983; Wildman, Magliaro, Niles, & Niles, 1992). The literature has explored multiple sub-elements of this framework, inclusive of the role of the mentor (Combs, 2011); the elements of a strong mentoring relationship (Bell-Ellison & Dedrick, 2008); the components of a solid mentoring program (Gaffney, 1995); and the outcomes of effective mentoring (Creighton et al., 2010; Fracasso, Franco, MacDonald, & Friedman, 2011; Noonan, Ballinger, & Black, 2007).

An understanding of mentoring in the academy is influenced by a number of factors, including institutional tradition, context and delivery. With that said, certain universal components of effective mentoring support the concept that it is a managed process, that it involves human behavior and relationships and that it incorporates elements of planning, organizing, directing and leading. This final element – leadership - is the focus of this chapter.

Mentoring in Academia

Academic mentoring, through the expression of scholarly inquiry and intellectual tasks, encompasses many aspects of leadership inclusive of designing courses, facilitating learning

activities, assessing learning outcomes, and exploring new pedagogical ideas (Hutchings, Huber & Ciccone, 2011). Effective mentorship is not simply a matter of good technique, but is also a function of the identity and integrity of the mentor as teacher (Palmer, 2007). Mentors lead their students in part by interweaving their thoughts and actions by continually questioning how they are supporting their students.

The most effective mentoring relationships emphasize active, self-directed learning on the part of the mentee, working in a collaborative partnership with the mentor to pursue the mentee's own goals. Mentors help facilitate this transformational learning throughout this process, both through direct leadership and by encouraging and nurturing self-directed actualization in their students (Zachary, 2009).

Establishing collaborative relationships between the mentor and student is a critical element in effective mentor leadership. The collaborative aspect of such relationships implies a challenge to the traditional hierarchal arrangements of expert and novice, going beyond the mentor simply dispensing knowledge, to achieving a sense of balance in providing the student with support while encouraging their independence. It is tempting for mentors to rely purely on their own expertise and to being too prescriptive with students. In developing truly collaborative relationships with students, mentors need to engage in active listening while encouraging their students to develop and articulate their own positions.

While pursuing the goal of establishing collaborative relationships with students, mentors need to be aware of and manage the challenges of setting boundaries. These include deciding how much to do on behalf of students, providing support when students' academic and personal difficulties conflate and blur and establishing an appropriate communication style

that is both professional, warm and caring. Mentors need to acknowledge that they alone may not be the exclusive resource and solution to all of their students' challenges. Effective practice may indicate that while recognizing students' strengths and needs, mentors serve an important role in helping to connect the student with other services like tutoring, writing center help and career or personal counseling.

The Mentoring Relationship

The mentorship relationship can be complex, given the demands placed on students in terms of time, activities, responsibilities and expectations. Add to those factors differences in socioeconomic background, academic preparation and aptitude, this complexity can be challenging to framing the mentorship relationship in a positive light. There are obstacles to overcome, fears to be confronted and confidences to be established and reinforced. Accordingly, the strengths perspective (Saleebey, 1992) is one theoretical framework sometimes applied to mentoring students dealing with life's normal issues. Instead of focusing primarily on the problems a mentee presents, the strengths perspective encourages the mentor to identify, draw upon and build upon the individual's strengths.

These mentee qualities may include skills, inner motivation, or family/social support networks. The basis for such an approach is founded on a belief that individuals possess certain strengths, which when recognized and encouraged, increase one's capacity for learning, growth and change. Students who have made the decision to pursue higher education often arrive with a sense of curiosity, varying degrees of anxiety, of wanting to fill a need and to achieve certain goals. Mentors can serve an invaluable role in helping these students in addressing these concerns and aspirations by identifying and developing their strengths.

An essential component to applying the strengths perspective in mentoring is for mentors to help students reframe their perceptions and expectations in a positive manner. Students often enter their college experience with mixed emotions and frequently with many questions as to whether they will be successful in this new endeavor. In some cases the student may enroll as a result of a poor economic climate or feeling pressure from family and/or their peers.

A strengths-based reframing of this context might help the student focus on the fact that they have made an important life decision to enroll despite those circumstances and to help them realize that they have the capacity to realize their potential. The mentor would encourage the student to develop a sense of confidence and empowerment to make changes in their life and to taking ownership of their future by leveraging the strengths that they bring to the experience.

The Role of Leadership in Mentoring

Leadership involves guiding and supporting others growth and development and thus it can be argued that mentoring and leadership are inextricably linked. There are many ways to define leadership in the context of academic mentoring. According to McCaffery (2010), leadership is associated with the path or course one guides another on a journey, thus inferring progressive movement. Taylor, Peplau, and Sears (2006) observed that leadership usually refers to the social influence of individuals who guide or inspire others in the right direction. Davis (2011) stated that leadership implies movement, solving problems, and building capability.

Bass and Stogdill's (1990) analysis of over 3,000 studies on leadership provides a number of broad conceptualizations to the practice. Common to most definitions are the concepts of process, influence, group context and goals (Bensimon, Neumann & Birnbaum, 1989). Northouse (2009) noted that leadership involves a process, coupled with a degree of influence and is directed toward accomplishing some task or goal. The expression of leadership frequently involves influencing others and creating a vision for change (Bennis & Nanus, 1985). What constitutes good leadership may be debatable, but leadership in the context of mentoring is generally considered effective when it enables students to adapt to change and move to a place where they and others are constructively better off (Kotter, 1990).

Effective mentors understand the importance of context and know that their effectiveness can be affected by the environmental and cultural conditions, the relative strength of collaboration reflected in their institution's culture and the leadership challenges being addressed (Astin & Astin, 2000). These leaders have the ability to modify their actions accordingly, in response to unique institutional characteristics (Birnbaum, 1992).

Kezar, Carducci, & Contreras-McGavin (2006) stated that leadership has evolved over the past few decades from being hierarchical and emphasizing power to an approach that is more connective, collective and context/process centered. Many leadership theorists share the understanding that effective mentorship is founded on a relationship and represents an interactive process that entails social processes, practices and engagements through which followers respond to the influence of leaders and leaders respond to the needs and values of their followers (Morrill, 2007).

Principles of Effective Mentoring

Certain principles guide effective mentorship. Mentors are well served to acknowledge that what they believe they know about their students is only provisionally true. It is difficult to know a priori what our students need, what they are curious about, or how they learn best. Students often times surprise and inform mentors about themselves as learners and to the knowledge and interests they possess. All students learn when their curiosity is engaged, so mentors need to be attentive listeners. Anderson and Shannon (1988) found that mentoring involves a high degree of personal focus:

In which a more skilled or more experienced person, serving as a role model, teaches, sponsors, encourages, counsels and befriends a less skilled or less experienced person for the purpose of promoting the latter's professional development. Mentoring functions are carried out within the context of an ongoing, caring relationship between the mentor and protégé. (p. 40)

Effective mentors possess a strong sense of self-management and interpersonal relationship skills. According to Goleman (1998), a major factor influencing those qualities and by extension, the leadership capabilities of the mentor, is the emotional intelligence of the leader. Goleman defined emotional intelligence as a function of self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skill. In terms of the self-management focus, mentors need to establish and project the sort of skills and other qualities that he or she is trying to impart to the mentee.

In addition, the mentor needs to be clear as to how those skills were acquired and thus be able to explain the acquisition process to the follower. Effective mentor-leaders express

emotional intelligence by both knowing and stretching themselves; by demonstrating their ongoing growth, development and learning; and by tapping into and helping their mentee's realize their own goals and aspirations.

Mentors may consider engaging in reflective practice (Schön, 1983) in acknowledging the values, attitudes, and assumptions that guide their work. Reflective practice goes beyond technical expertise by acknowledging and examining one's practical knowledge and intuition (Papell & Skolnik, 1992). This involves spending time thinking about what we do and why we do it as mentors. Effective leadership in mentoring recognizes differences in backgrounds and through that discovery, finds intellectual challenge and strength. Mentors can benefit from reflecting on other aspects of their practice, including their own assumptions, past practice (inclusive of successes and failures) and challenges overcome.

Faculty are well served by acknowledging that diverse learning opportunities invite individuals to transform curiosity into academically substantive learning based upon a community (Herman & Mandel, 2003). This philosophy aligns with the Socratic tenet of *daimonion*, which encourages collaborative learning. Effective mentors further understand that learning is multi-contextual in that students exist in multiple aspect of life. By respecting students' college, work family and other public and private communities wherein students create meaning and context to their learning, mentors are able to consider the "whole person" (Herman & Mandel, 2003).

Leadership Applications in Mentoring

Mentoring is about informing, advising, guiding and otherwise helping the mentee identify and set a course for transformative personal and academic change and growth. Given

that context, of the many possible leadership theories that may be applied to mentoring, transformational leadership is an arguable model to consider. Transformational leadership complements other leadership theories such as leader traits theory, leader behavior theory, path-goal theory, group maintenance theory and participation theory, in the sense that its focus is on effecting change. It further complements the competing values framework, which manages the competing need for stability and the need for creativity.

The very nature of transformational leadership theory is consistent with the behaviors that are essential to effective mentoring: individualized consideration to a follower's needs for achievement, growth and development; idealized influence or personalized charisma that supports the mentor as role model; inspirational motivation to inspire followers; and intellectual stimulation to help followers recognize and develop their innovative abilities (Scandura & Schriesheim, 1994).

Transformational Leadership Theory

Broadly speaking, much of the research on leadership over the past 50 years has in fact been centered on transformational leadership theory (Kezar et al., 2006; Wolverson & Gmelch, 2002). According to Pearce and Sims (2002), the foundations for transformational leadership lie in the sociology of charisma (Weber, 1947), charismatic leadership theory (House, 1977), and transforming leadership (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985). Bass and others (Avolio & Bass, 1988; Bass, 1985, 1998; Bass, Avolio, & Goodheim, 1987; Hatter & Bass, 1988; Yammarino & Bass, 1990) extended Burns' foundational research in defining transformational leadership to include charisma or idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized focus.

Significant research has been conducted in the last ten years on the application of transformational leadership within the context of higher education (Barling, Turner, & Simola, 2010; Filan & Seagren, 2003; Kelly, 2003). Much of this research notes that transformational leaders in academia focus on motivating, engaging, and satisfying their followers while simultaneously providing inspiration and vision (Astin & Astin 2000; Barling et al., 2010; Filan & Seagren, 2003). Transformational leaders sometimes engage students on moral terms, engaging them to higher levels of ethical understanding and commitment. These leaders demonstrate the ability to move individuals or groups of individuals to higher concerns of social justice and equality and, in the process, effect meaningful and enduring changes in their lives (Burns, 2004).

According to Burns (1978), transformational leaders appeal to the values and aspirations of their followers by focusing on a commitment to shared purpose. Transformational leaders express their leadership through charisma, consideration of their followers and intellectual stimulation (Bass, 1985). Inherent in their relationship to their followers, these leaders support higher levels of motivation and morality. Transformational leadership is participatory in nature and involves awareness and self-reflection (Treslan, 2006) and is directed toward a change in the existing order, and empowerment more than control (Conger, 1999).

Goleman (2000) stated that transformational leaders tend to be self-confident and inspiring, motivating their followers to exceed their own expectations and achieve higher performances, and tend to have more committed and satisfied followers, in part, because transformational leaders empower and pay attention to the needs and personal development of their followers. Transformational leaders inspire their followers to commit to a shared vision

and challenge them to contribute at high levels through personalized coaching, mentoring, and support (Bass & Riggio, 2005). These leaders encourage their followers to rise above their personal interests, values, fears and perspectives in favor of larger goals by creating a sense of shared purpose (Bateman & Snell, 1996).

Transformational Leadership in Mentoring

A distinguishing characteristic of transformational leadership lies in its allocation. “In transformational leadership, authority and influence are not necessarily allocated to those occupying formal administrative positions. Rather, power is attributed by members to whoever is able to inspire their commitment to collective aspiration” (Leithwood & Duke, 1999, p. 49). Academic leaders themselves are transformational when they increase the collective awareness of what is right, good, and important, when they help elevate followers’ needs for achievement and self-actualization, when they foster higher moral maturity and when they help their students consider what is good for the greater society (Tourish, 2008).

Implicit to the application of transformational leadership is the premise of change, the creation of a new perspective and the institutionalizing of that system, some form of transition that entails the unmaking of past policy and practice followed by a remaking of new structure, purpose, goals, or behavior while establishing a new sense of social contract and community (Eisenbach, Watson, & Pillai 1999). According to Goldring, Crowson, Laird, and Berk (2003), the early transitional stage of transformational leadership involves the process of passing from one state to another, acknowledging that loss is integral to change. Goldring et al. underscore the need for bridging from the old state to the new, while emphasizing the need to ensure balance of continuity and change in guiding students through their development and transformation.

Morey's (2006) research on academic leadership addressed two types of transformational leaders, connective and directive. Connective leaders tend to carefully assess their institutional cultures to determine how to achieve their goals while focusing on building relationships and establishing trust. Lipman-Blumen (2000) referred to an approach whereby these leaders emphasize ways of working with and through followers, moving beyond competition, and forming enabling environments in which people want to commit themselves, as "ethical instrumentalism." Lipman-Blumen further stated that connective-style leaders are usually good long-term strategists and planners and that the impact of these types of mentor-leaders is frequently realized over extended periods of time.

Leaders who embody more directive styles resemble Burns' transformational leaders in that their approach is founded on qualities such as charisma, personality, intelligence, and credibility, and have the ability to apply creative innovations to effecting transformative change (Morey, 2006). Transformational leadership is centered on the practice whereby mentor-leaders provide their students with a framework for decision making and action that is in alignment with the leader's clearly communicated vision (Fiedler, 1989; Sagie, 1997).

Morey (2006) observed that these leaders have a decidedly future-focused orientation and an ongoing commitment to improvement, are charismatic, command loyalty, are decisive and clear delegators of responsibility, and routinely establish and communicate specific plans to accomplish institutional goals along with clear mechanisms for assessing their progress. In regard to Burns' research on the moral foundation of transformational leadership, Morrill (2007) noted:

It [transformational leadership] involves the leader's ability to summon followers to a higher level of ethical understanding and commitment, the capacity, for example, to move the group or the society to the more elevated concerns of justice and equality, rather than just the satisfaction of material wants and needs. The transformational leader who engages followers at these encompassing levels of values and purposes also creates pervasive, enduring, and fundamental changes in organizations and societies. (p. 13)

Benefits of Effective Leadership in Mentoring

Howarth and Rafferty (2009) found that transformational leadership establishes a relationship between the trust that employees have in their leaders and the extent to which they embrace change. This perception of an underlying basis and process of trust and fairness is a critical element according to Atuahene-Gima (2005), as followers need to overcome both passive and active resistance to change. As a consequence, transformational leaders are more likely to be effective when they treat their followers in a consistent manner that reflects the values of others. As this relates to the faculty as mentor-student relationship, students realize confidence and success when they believe that mentors care about them and support their interests and aspirations.

Fisher (1996) noted that, while transformational leaders believe in collaboration, it is only with the proviso that individual (student) accountability is equally important and critical. Supporters of the directive leadership style (Hogan, Curphy, & Hogan, 1994; Murphy & Fiedler, 1992; Sagie, 1996; Sagie, Zaidman, Amichai-Hamburger, Te'eni, & Schwartz, 2002) point out

that a high-directive style encourages followers to accept challenging goals established by their leaders and are able, in turn, to achieve their objectives.

Today, academic mentors face a broad array of significant challenges, encompassing many values and objectives, including instilling a supportive environment where students and learning can grow and prosper, to encourage collaboration between various people(s), and to create a sense of community which reflects a sense of mutual respect and shared values. In doing so, these leaders effect positive change that enhances student learning and development. In this context, academic leadership, which successfully motivates and directs others in collaborative transformations, can have a significant impact (Koen & Bitzer, 2010).

Butcher, Bezzina & Moran (2011) stated that academic leaders need to transcend the “quid pro quo” transactional leadership described by Burns (1978) wherein leaders and followers enter into relationships for their individual reasons in order to demonstrate effective transformational leadership. In a study concerning the application of transformational leadership theory in education, Brown (2010) found that as a result of certain negative treatment that students, sometimes as a consequence of underlying social inequalities, academic leaders have the opportunity to effect. They do so by validating and incorporating students’ personal knowledge and experience.

For mentor-leaders to be effective, mentoring needs to be perceived as a positive experience to both the mentor and to the mentee. According to Goldstein (1993), mentees benefit in several ways from effectively led mentoring:

- Receiving encouragement and building self-confidence
- Acquiring new or improved knowledge and skills

- Developing life and professional goals
- Being provided resources and increased visibility
- Gaining knowledge and confidence on how to overcome challenging situations

Goldstein also addressed various benefits and advantages that mentors might receive from the mentoring relationship: effective mentoring experiences can serve to further one's professional development as a consequence of learning by teaching; through the reciprocal development of skills and the attainment of goals in a caring and productive relationship; and by the returned investment of mentees who involve their mentors in their ongoing developmental activities.

Mentoring can present significant benefits for both mentors and mentees. In a study of formal mentoring programs, Chun, Sosik and Yun (2012) determined that the effects of mentoring support and modeling had more of a positive effect on mentors than on their followers. They found that when mentors provided significant levels of support and modeling to their protégés, the mentors experienced enhanced transformational leadership behaviors, higher levels of organizational commitment while the protégés experience increased levels of affective well-being and satisfaction. Orpen (1997) found that there are a number of potential benefits that stem from effective mentoring activity. Mentees typically gain added confidence, learn faster and more effectively and realize enhanced levels of satisfaction, while mentors realize a greater sense of job satisfaction, career rejuvenation and commitment to their organization's mission.

Impact of Effective Leadership in Mentoring

Certain leadership qualities can have a positive contribution to effective mentoring. Dukess' (2001) study found that academic leaders are more effective when they possess a

sound record of success, have well-developed interpersonal skills, are reflective and compassionate, and are effective listeners who consistently communicate on the basis of trust-based relationships. Strouse, Sieverdes, and Hecht (2005) studied the effectiveness of leadership mentor-protégé relationships as reported by college students and found that highly effective leader-mentors were perceived as adding value to students' self-discovery and reflection, personal leadership development, and to the students' academic achievement and overall life success. Schuman (2007) stated that the presence of effective leadership mentoring programs can have a positive impact of follower satisfaction.

Leaders may need to serve as mentors in fully realize their transformational leadership potential. In a study by Scandura and Williams (2004), respondents found that mentoring enhanced their transformational leadership effectiveness, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and career expectations. In another study, Godshalk and Sosik (2000) examined whether mentor-mentee agreement regarding mentor transformational leadership behavior has a positive influence on the quality of the mentoring relationship. Their results indicated that mentoring relationships which featured traditional transformational leadership behaviors had a greater degree of mentoring effectiveness. Mentoring can have a positive impact on leadership development and effectiveness.

Middlebrooks and Haberkorn (2009) examined the potential role that mentoring can have in fostering individual leader development. They found that effective mentors conceptualize their role and activities in alignment with established leadership concepts, specifically those behaviors associated with transformational leadership theory. The study indicated a statistically significant relationship between the implicit influences and benefits

associated with mentoring and the individuals' growth in psychological capital and leadership development.

Pounder's (2008) study on the relationship of college faculty and their students found a positive relationship between students' perceptions of transformational leadership and the students' relationships with their professors. The individual attention and intellectual stimulation that faculty mentors provide to students, critical elements to effective transformational leadership, can be important predictors of student participation in their academic experience (Bolkan & Goodboy, 2009).

Bolkan and Goodboy's (2009) research indicated a relationship between transformational leadership and student achievement, suggesting that students benefit when they perceive a personalized element to their academic study. This finding is consistent with the foundation that transformational leadership is undergirded by a recognition of individual values, needs and intrinsic motivations. Transformational leadership involves leaders and followers raising each other to higher levels of achievement and in the context of academia, can have a significant influence in the attitudes and assumptions of students in committing to and achieving their academic goals and objectives (Slack, 1997).

In addition to contributing to student learning outcomes, transformational leadership can have a positive influence on guiding students' ethical conduct. Academic leaders directly and indirectly help students make informed, responsible and moral decisions. A number of researchers have examined the relationship between transformational leadership and the expression of ethical behavior. Pounder (2008) stated that transformational leadership may have a greater influence in establishing ethical behaviors and traits than transactional

leadership models. Carlson and Perrewe (1995) identified a similar relationship between transformational leadership and students' ethical behavior, stating that "transformational leadership is viewed as the best approach for instilling ethical behavior" (p. 5).

Conclusion

Developing the collaborative relationships that are at the heart of mentoring can be complex, demanding and highly rewarding. Mentor-leaders have the opportunity to effect transformative personal and academic change and growth as they help students realize their potential. Effective mentor-leaders leverage a strong sense of self management, well-developed interpersonal skills and years of experience and knowledge in making a difference in their students' lives.

The qualities of effective leadership in mentoring are not always obvious and oftentimes take the form of subtle expression and application. As faculty, we share our knowledge, develop curricula and programs based on our authority, and engage in research that validates our credentials. In articulating and effecting difference-making leadership in mentoring, academics would be wise to acknowledge the taken-for-granted assumptions concerning the professor-as-expert, assuming instead a subtler leadership framework of collaboration, mutual respect and discovery. Surrendering the traditional professorial role requires confidence when seen as challenging our conventional sense of academic identity (Mandell, 2011).

Effective leadership in mentoring can be challenging when perceived as competing with traditional conceptions of the professorial. As mentor-leaders, we need to give academic significance to the myriad and oftentimes seemingly small ways we are engaged with our students' aspirations, successes and failures and embrace these opportunities for mentoring

leadership as critically important aspects of our scholarly lives. By acknowledging these guiding principles of mentoring, we realize the benefit of embedding our professorial expertise with humility, and that can be a very good thing.

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