

Mentorship: Applying some methods from musical pedagogy and therapy to the training of Education students as mentors.

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Why mentoring in a pre-service setting?

Increasingly, research on mentoring in teacher education is connected with induction (Caldwell & Carter, 1993) but that is not its exclusive setting. As Hansen points out, the term 'mentoring' includes ideas of guidance and the development of a close relationship which fosters wisdom and the understanding of a new role (Hansen, 1992). It emphasises ideas of collegiality and support (Field & Field, 1994; Hagger, Burn & McIntyre, 1993). In positioning pre-service teachers to become mentors in their future profession, the School of Teaching and Educational Studies at the University of Western Sydney has initiated a mentoring subject in which final-year students in the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course develop their understandings of the concept of mentorship, acquire skills of mentoring, analyse significant readings and put theory into practice by mentoring first and second year students in their course.

Why focus on psycho-social functions of mentoring?

Two kinds of mentoring functions have been identified by Kram (1985) and Hays (1998). These are categorised as psycho-social functions and career functions. In the undergraduate subject, where the interaction of mentor and mentee is one of experienced to novice pre-service teacher, the career function - concerning the competencies related to the ethics, content and practice of teaching (New South Wales MACTEQT, 1994) - has been addressed by academics and not by student mentors. Consequently, the focus has been on psycho-social functions such as role modelling and fostering confidence, with some attention to providing an enculturation through 'inside' working knowledge.

Literature Review

In defining mentoring, Anderson and Shannon (1995) included what they saw as essential attributes of a mentor and discussed mentoring functions. They defined mentoring as a nurturing process in which the mentor encouraged the mentee, helping them to develop professionally and personally and this process was carried out in the context of an ongoing caring relationship. The nurturing idea was extended in ways that provided an environment for relating, acceptance and growth. At the same time, the mentor provided a model of the next phase of development. Encouraging the mentee included behaviours that affirmed as well as challenged (29-31).

While mentoring has been identified as a way of improving induction experiences for some years (Fogarty & Lennon, 1991: 47), the lack of a strong empirical base for internationally flourishing teacher-mentor programmes is remarked on by Ballantyne, Hansford and Packer (1995: 242). Their study surveyed 24 teachers commencing their first teaching assignment in Catholic primary schools in Queensland in 1993. These participants acknowledged the

value of mentoring by rating the assistance they received from experienced teachers as the most important influence on their teaching (249).

Maynard and Furlong (1995) outlined three models of mentoring in supporting beginning teachers: the apprenticeship model in which an inexperienced teacher is involved in joint planning and works alongside, emulating an experienced one; the competency model in which the mentor is a systematic trainer of teacher competencies; and the reflective practitioner model in which the mentor is a co-enquirer into the learning process (17-21). Rothera, Howkins and Hendry (1995) posited a 'process model' of mentoring in which the mentee through experiential learning, internalises the values of the mentor, participates in problem-solving and eventually becomes independent of the mentor (100). In a study of 51 mature-age teachers upgrading their qualifications, they found that, for the participants in the course, the roles of 'adviser' and 'object of trust' took priority over the role of assessor (102).

Bona, Rinehart and Volbrecht (1995) turn away from a notion of mentoring as indicating a presumption of superiority over the other and resist the idea that mentoring is only initiated by the mentor. They also want to claim that the benefits of a mentoring relationship flow two ways and that it might be seen as co-mentoring, where roles change depending on circumstances (116-124). The interactive process of mentoring is also discussed in a study by Campbell-Evans and Maloney with internship (school-based semester) pre-service teachers from Edith Cowan University (1997: 49). The study surveyed sixteen final-year education students and the data was drawn from journals and focus-group evaluation meetings. The researchers drew a distinction between co-operating teachers who, on the one hand, took on the traditional role of supervisor and, on the other, fostered a reflective stance towards teaching. They found that the mentoring relationship was potentially an opportunity for professional development for all participants - academics, pre-service teachers and co-operating teachers (50). This echoed a study conducted by Wildman, Niles, Magliaro and McLaughlin (1990) with fifteen pairs of beginning and veteran teachers over a period of three years. They made the point that the collaborative reflection on teaching sometimes resulted in the veteran teachers seeing things in their own teaching that they had not realised were there (159).

Hays' study, in the context of training musicians (1998) focused on mentoring from the mentors' perspectives, noting how the informants understood the concept of mentorship and how they gave meaning to the relationship in their lives. His interviewees were fifteen professional musicians holding positions in teaching institutions. He found that all fifteen informants described the relationship - one of mutual trust - in terms of its value to mentor and mentee. It was characterised as "passing on the baton of the work" (1998: 63). Hays also found, as did Morton-Cooper and Palmer (1993) that this relational phenomenon cannot be arbitrarily imposed by a formal system. Rather, the personal characteristics and priorities of mentor and mentee interact to influence the nature and direction of the relationship (1998: 64). Hays' informants highlighted the need for mentors to have professional involvement, openness, caring and genuine interest in their mentees (1998: 71).

Research in music therapy revealed certain objectives and behaviours of the discipline which are relevant to the purpose of mentoring. As discussed by Campbell (1991: 151) and Standley (1993: 4) these include stress reduction, development of self-esteem, improvement in learning and clarification of personal values. Kenny (1982) and subsequently Cullen (1993) emphasised music's intrinsic qualities in group interaction: that it can function as a non-verbal source of communication (1982: 4) and that it can reflect the feeling of the moment or change it by its presence (1993: 36). Bruinsma observed that many of music's properties have the potential to be nurturing: bringing people together into a supportive group, regenerating, renewing, providing opportunities for self-expression and exploring creativity (1993: 26).

Campbell found that the effect of music can energise, facilitating intellectual activity, or it can be restful and refreshing (1991: 102). Fast music, for example, can accelerate the heartbeat and modify muscle tension and skin temperature. Slow music with no consistent rhythm pattern may promote a sense of physical release, or even a feeling of safety (1991: 244). Working with these qualities, researchers have explored the technique of visualising images of success which has also been developed along separate but related lines by sports psychologists training elite athletes to achieve peak performance (Achterberg 1985; Orlick 1986; Green 1987).

Identifying features of mentoring musicians for a comparative study with the two-part process of the Mentoring Subject

There are five features of the mentoring process on which a small comparative study is based. These are:

- one-to-one relationships as compared to peer support relationships
- prior experience in communication and inter-personal skills
- construction of the relationship
- evolution of the relationship
- mutual benefits of the relationship

Mentoring musicians

The most obvious defining feature in the training of musicians - hence its consideration first - is that the mentor relationship is one-to-one and is frequently characterised as the experienced musician acting as a guide for the protege. The relationship facilitates the sharing of understandings, attitudes, insights, technical and interpretative expertise, life experience and professional philosophy. There is substantial written evidence that almost every notable performer, composer, conductor or musicologist acknowledges a mentor who exerted influence in the course of their professional life. However, there are provisos here. Hays notes that the aspiring musician needs, first, to have musical talent and second, "to find a teacher who recognises the talent and is prepared to nurture and develop (it) through a personal and professional interest" (Hays 1998: 12).

Second, musical mentors usually have developed their instrumental or composing or conducting skills and given concerts to establish themselves in the music profession. Music educator Bridges suggests that while some outstanding performers have been intuitive teachers, the expertise of the mentor has not previously involved a necessary requirement for formal paper qualifications in pedagogy or interpersonal skills (Bridges 1993: 273); and musicologist Comte, in discussing the relationship of the mentee Frank Callaway (later Sir Frank and founder of the Callaway International Resource Centre for Music Education) with Professor Vernon Griffiths, comments rather on Griffiths' being "a good salesman because (his student) captured his enthusiasm" (Comte 1994: 3).

The third distinguishing feature of the relationship is that it commences when the protege has "won" the professional interest of the mentor. It is the mentor who chooses the protege with whom to invest time and effort. The protege's "choice" of a mentor to whom they are attracted by their specific approach to performance, conducting, musicology or composition is conditional on the mentor's acceptance. The early stage of the relationship has an informational foundation, passing on not only strategies to attain technical competence but

also traditions and values. There is a sense that while the student learns to "speak the same language as the teacher" (Hays 1998: 67) there is an expectation of ongoing learning and discovering, in terms of repertoire, solutions to technical problems and routines for preparation for concert performance. The mentoring process involves not only the mechanics but contextualising the cultural background.

Mentoring is about changing and evolving, and this is the fourth feature to be discussed. Pianist Alfred Brendal has described this process of change in the musical mentoring relationship:

One is to build up a student over a long period... not only musically but psychologically (as) confidant and motivator... As the teaching period extends, when the student becomes more advanced there's much more discussion regarding such things as interpretation, and you might be saying (to the protege) "what ideas do you have?" (Mach 1981: 31).

The relationship change occurs when the protege is confidently moving forward in their career towards becoming an independent professional. For the protege, the relationship allows space for decision making. For the mentor, the relationship extends from one-to-one into the professional community in which the mentor sees the protege begin to take their professional place.

The final feature of comparison is that the mentoring relationship is mutually beneficial. Hays notes that mentoring relationships help provide proteges with skills and training that goes beyond the playing of a particular instrument, and that these musical skills transfer to teaching and conducting situations (Hays 1998: 106). For the mentors, it brings a sense of pride and continuity to their own work, in sharing experience and carrying on a tradition (Mach 1981: 87).

Mentoring pre-service educators

In the training of the education students as mentors, the input sessions preparing the student mentors occurred in the first semester and the student mentors' practical experience of mentoring came in the second semester. By contrast to the one-to-one relationship, the student mentors' practice mostly involved a peer support approach. The groups of mentees with whom they met varied in size, with the average being four mentees. Some mentors did work with one student mentee. The student mentors went to massed lectures of the first and second year students, described the program they offered and advertised their availability in the second semester. The response was voluntary on the part of the student mentees, with no suggestion of necessary talent. Again in contrast to the musical mentoring process, interpersonal skills and communication are at the very heart of the Student Mentoring subject.

The third feature, the construction of the relationship, also provides some contrast with musical mentoring. The contrast is marked by the mentees' choice to be involved. Nevertheless, there is a similar expectation that the relationship involves mutual commitment. There is also a component of passing on not only strategies to attain competence but also traditions and values, the cultural background of the teacher's role.

Another similarity is seen in the fourth feature, the evolving nature of the relationship. While the student mentors operate in a smaller time-frame from that described in the literature on musical mentoring, they are still able to observe the mentees confidently moving forward in their achievement of goals. Their approach aligns with the 'process model' of mentoring espoused by Rothera, Howkins and Hendry. Through shared experience in the meetings with

the mentor, the mentee internalises the values in which the mentor has been initiated, participates in problem-solving and eventually becomes independent of the mentor. The mentoring relationship has enabled them to discuss situations that arise such as difficult assignments or problems encountered on practicum. It is to be hoped that these relationships can carry forward into the profession, so that the network relationship may support teachers through the development of their career.

The final feature of comparison is that the mentoring relationship is mutually beneficial. In the opinion of the the student mentors, the skills and training that the mentors and mentees develop can also transfer beyond the boundaries of a subject outline.

Some of the Uses of Music in Preparing the Student Mentors

In preparing the student mentors, music was used in a variety of ways. In the initial session, music was used in ice-breaker activities to facilitate the students' knowing each other. This was important to the subsequent mentoring practice, using a 'buddy' system. There was considerable input for the students to absorb, including mentor qualities and behaviours such as sensory acuity and rapport, theory and principles of mentoring, skills and strategies for mentors to use, learning styles, multiple intelligences, left and right-brain thinking, states and goals. A second way that music was used, then, was to re-energise the group. Sometimes this might take the form of movement to music, in a framework where a structured section is followed by an unstructured section allowing for improvisation in the space and interaction with each other. Sometimes it might be a set series of movements. Sometimes it was led by the facilitator, at other times by one or other of the students.

A third use for music was in visualising exercises. The students were invited to see themselves as taking on the role of mentor. An exercise was used which prompted mentors to 'store positive feelings' and bring them back from an imagined future into the present. In a fourth way, music made a link into problem solving exercises, where a student mentor would interact with one other student, typically grappling with an issue such as time management, and the group would support both mentor and mentee with feedback.

Some of the Experiences of the Mentors in Practice

In the first session where student mentors reported back to the group, they discussed everything from making initial contact with the first and second year students to exercises they explored with their mentee groups. They gained support from each other in this free-ranging discussion. Eight of the students are referred to by codes here.

Student 4: I called my mentees but I didn't know how many times to call in case I was pressuring them.

Student 6: In the group I worked with one of the mentees on her time management. She came back: 'I did it! I did it! It worked!' The thing I learned for myself was that I can do this.

Some of the student mentors tried exercises that used music with their groups. Another saw the mentoring possibilities reaching forward into the professional contact of the school:

Student 1: When we had our meeting I asked the group what they thought the support program was about. And I did a little exercise, playing some music in the background, on where they think they'll be in ten years' time. It worked really well.

Student 7: My mentees are keen, exciting and energetic. They think they're a wild bunch. I set about building rapport and discovering that probably I'll learn more than they will. One of the things I've been thinking about is, in the teaching situation, we can use the mentoring idea of establishing relationship and collegiality in the school. Not just leadership. Trying to get everyone to do it. That's where I'm going. Building the kind of experience I want to continue.

After the semester break, the group met again and discussed where they felt they were with their mentee groups. One mentor felt that his mentees might limit what they discussed at meetings. Another concern was about mentoring students who were unknown:

Student 1: I felt a bit weird at first because two of them were total strangers to me. But the meetings are going really well. I think we are comfortable with each other.

A considerable amount of discussion grew out of the contact experiences that people had that were not face-to-face. One of these was an internet experience which led to some positive mentoring:

Student 2: I was talking to another girl on the internet, studying primary school teaching at the same Uni. She's in first year. So we talked about Student Mentoring and we've continued emailing each other. We've not met yet but have been talking a lot. It's good for my confidence as well because I'm trying things out with her, seeing what feedback I get and then trying it with my group. It's heaps different from the group because it's not face-to-face.

For other mentors, phone contact had followed face-to-face experiences and was working effectively; one of these mentors balanced this with an appraisal of its disadvantages:

Student 8: I'm having fun mentoring. I'm mainly talking on the phone with my mentees. I was going to try to get it more face-to-face, but listening to all of you, I think I might leave it on the phone. The main thing is the contact. I actually feel one of the mentees feels less threatened in this way. She's able to open up more. But I do think there are disadvantages to it. The fact that you miss out on a lot of non-verbal communication. And you really have to be careful about your listening. Making sure you're getting the right message. You're missing out on eye contact and actually visually picking up on learning styles. I'm still not quite sure how this mentee learns. Whether she prefers the tactile, the visual or the auditory. Something that would be easier face-to-face.

One of the student mentors was getting a new mentee joining her group:

Student 6: The group hangs together and we can talk about anything now. Now I've got a new mentee coming. She's looking for help in projecting her voice. On prac she had trouble getting over the kids' voices. I'm going to start finding out from her what actually went wrong. And if she's tried different tones to bring attention back to her.

Another part of the discussion was about goals. There were a variety of these. The first comment was a general one:

Student 1: In the input sessions last semester, we talked about setting goals. I've been doing that each day and it's really working. In fact, if I don't do it, I feel guilty.

Another comment was about actively seeking the support of the group:

Student 8: My goal now is to network with this group more and get their feedback. I need to get the volume from this group into the small group of mentees.

Still another commented about evaluation. This led to a discussion in which the evaluation issue was turned into a question for the mentees on the value of mentoring for them. Turning this into an indirect appraisal made it possible for the student mentor to be able to deal with in the group. Several of the other mentors commented about evaluation needing to be continuous rather than at the end of several sessions.

Some Conclusions

What is evident in the student mentors' comments is a remarkable growth in the development of the psycho-social skills of mentoring. Their ability to share experience and carry on a tradition has begun. They have taken on the nurturing process of serving as a role model and fostering confidence - their own and other students' - and have shared 'inside' working knowledge. It is evident that there are differences between the mentoring of musicians and the student mentoring program, especially in the matters of choice - that is, which party chooses - and training in mentoring as opposed to acquiring a developed practitioner expertise. There is a need to investigate why some mentees chose a mentor for themselves individually. These one-to-one experiences, few in number, were between women. None of the male mentors in the program had this experience. That in itself prompts researching. It is also apparent that the exercises with music in preparing the mentors had a positive effect and some of these were able to be used by some of the mentors. Further research will investigate the kinds of musical choices which are of significant benefit to the program.

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