Multiple Mentor Model: A Conceptual Framework

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Although mentoring has existed throughout time, career and human resource development professionals have only recently given it much attention (Gerstein, 1985). It has been demonstrated, for example, that being mentored has positive effects on a person's career progression. Mentored employees tend to be more satisfied with their jobs, get faster promotions, and make higher salaries (Farylo & Paludi, 1985; Johnson, 1980; Olian, Carroll, Giannantonio, & Feren, 1988; Roche, 1979). The positive effects of mentoring have not gone unnoticed. Some organizations have established formal mentoring programs (Fagan, 1988; Gerstein, 1985; Gray, 1988; Zey, 1985) and others are considering establishing mentor training (i.e., training on the skills, attitudes, and knowledge necessary to assume the mentor role).

Establishing mentor training programs is an acknowledgment of the importance of mentoring. In fact, Michael Zey (1985) explained that "mentor programs ensure the extension of mentoring to groups that have had the most difficult time finding seniors to serve as sponsors, namely women and minorities" (p. 53). Despite recognizing the need for and the growth of mentor training programs, many adults may never experience a mentoring relationship as a protege, or they will not perceive that someone is mentoring them (Burlew, 1989; Fagan & Gray, 1988).

If mentor training programs are to be successful, the following two questions should be explored:

1. What exactly is a mentor?
2. What is the conceptual framework(s) guiding the design of these programs?

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This article addresses both questions by providing a realistic perspective on what mentoring is and by describing a conceptual framework for the mentoring process titled the Multiple Mentor Model. Additionally, the article includes suggested implications for use of the model by counselors and human service professionals.

Defining Mentorship

Definitions of the term "mentor" typically contain phrases like: "a seasoned executive" (Olian, et al., 1988), "a trusted and experienced guide" (Johnson, 1980), and "a more powerful executive" (Bowen, 1982). These phrases suggest that a powerful being in the organization somehow makes a career happen. This image may perpetuate a belief that an all-powerful person can make or break careers, making the road to success happen. Many workers may wait for this type of all-powerful mentor which can inhibit career/life progression because a worker may be waiting for someone else to take contol of his/her career.

Perhaps a more appropriate definition for mentorship is: "A mentor is anyone who provides guidance, support, knowledge, and opportunities for whatever period the mentor and protege deem this help to be necessary." This definition seems more realistic and helps a worker view mentorship as it really is . . . a skill where one person helps another reach goals. A mentoring relationship exists because one person is helping another person progress through life (Burlew, 1989). The helping person is probably wiser and/or more experienced, but certainly not capable of controlling the outcomes of anybody's life . . . only the worker him/herself can assume that responsibility.

Multiple Mentor Model

As mentioned earlier, "formal" mentor programs have been developed. Michael Zey (1988) described how to establish mentor programs. Others have described phases in the mentoring process (e.g., Kram, 1983) or the mentor behaviors that should be exhibited in a mentor program (e.g., Lea & Leibowitz, 1983). To some extent conceptual frameworks have been introduced which guided the development of the "Multiple Mentor Model" to follow. Researchers have reported, for example, the need for several mentors or phases of mentoring

(Hulse & Sours, 1984; Kram, 1983). However, what is usually not clear is what is guiding (i.e., a clear conceptual framework) these program efforts.

Len Nadler's (1979) Human Resources Development (HRD) model can serve as a guide for a mentoring conceptual framework to address the above dilemma. The goal of Nadler's model is to "release human potential" (p. 10). The HRD model is a training model designed to help trainers provide appropriate training, education and development activities for workers as they develop with an organization. The three stages include (a) training, (b) education, and (c) development. Each stage requires different types of activities and provides essential skills, attitudes, and knowledge necessary for a worker's particular stage of development (i.e., an entry-level worker requires different activities and help compared to a mid-level manager working toward the next career move).

Therefore, the Multiple Mentor Model parallels Nadler's HRD model with regard to different activities required at each stage, thus requiring a different type of mentor. These mentors might more appropriately be referred to as "levels" of mentoring and can be titled: Training Mentor, Education Mentor, and Development Mentor. Each is described below.

The Training Mentor

The goal of the first set of activities in the HRD model, the training function, is to help a worker successfully master the job currently being worked (Nadler, 1979). If a worker cannot adjust to a work environment and be successful on the job with a particular company, the promotions will not be forthcoming. The "Training Mentor" helps a worker make a successful adjustment. The Training Mentor can be anyone who has knowledge of a particular job or certain job experience and shares it with the worker to enhance performance on the current job (e.g., a colleague who has worked the same job for several years).

Another type of person who could mentor at this stage is illustrated in the scenerio below.

John started his first "real" job as a stock boy for a local drugstore when he was sixteen. An older cousin (25 years old) took him aside before the first day of work and said: "Let me give you some advice on working. You want to go in there, learn that job fast, make yourself invaluable to them, and do extra

tasks you weren't asked to do. That's when you know you've done a good job and the company notices you." John often went to his cousin during that first year of work with specific work related issues and his cousin advised him on how to handle the situations. Within a year, John was promoted to head stock boy.

In the above scenerio, John's cousin did not work for the company and had never worked as a stock boy. However, he did guide, support, and provide knowledge to help John adjust to his new job and work environment. He also motivated John to perform in an exemplary manner.

Training Mentors need skills related to job coaching, instruction, and evaluation (i.e., of what an employee has mastered). However, they do not merely "coach" a new worker until he/she masters the steps of the new job. On the contrary, the Training Mentor (a) guides the worker to master the job and to acclimate to the new work environment; (b) supports the worker until he/she feels capable on-the-job and with the organization; and (c) suggests opportunities to make the worker more valuable to the organization. Additionally, Training Mentors also need knowledge specifically related to working various jobs and adjusting to corporate work environments.

The Education Mentor

According to the Nadler (1979) model, employee education involves activities preparing the worker for a new or different position. Employee education is vital to a person's career development whether that new or different position is within the same organization or with a new organization. Therefore, a mentor at this stage of a person's career development assumes a very different role from the Training Mentor.

The "Education Mentor" has a broader role involving foresight and understanding of how one progresses in an occupation. A mentor at this stage looks toward the future and may help a worker with the following: plan for the future; make decisions about educational activities, related work experiences, lifestyles, etc.; make contacts with successful professionals; work through hopes, dreams, and frustrations; succeed despite times of difficulty; find ways to improve the chances of securing an appropriate position when the opportunity arises; develop a strong support group (personal and organizational); develop the necessary qualities to succeed.

As can be discerned, the Education Mentor must be someone who has work experience and some good basic "helping" skills. The scenerio below illustrates this type of mentoring.

Barry, a programmer for a large data processing firm, found his job boring and uncreative, although he was successful at it. During a visit to the personnel office he met Alice, the Assistant Director of Human Resources. She spent a great deal of time with him and eventually referred him to a career counselor. After counseling he decided on a career in personnel with a special emphasis on developing employee related programs. During the next year, Alice met with Barry many times. She advised him on courses he needed to take, explained the ins and outs of personnel work, introduced him to her colleagues, along with colleagues from a local personnel association, and suggested activities he might try on his current job which would relate to his next position (e.g., developing an employee guide for new programmers). Trying activities related to his next position would "test" his interest and ability in the personnel field.

Within a year Barry had completed a benefits administrator certificate program at a local college and assumed the position as employee benefits administrator with his company.

Alice's role in the above scenerio did not involve helping Barry with specific activities to make him successful in his current job, but rather her role involved having foresight, being able to see what would make Barry successful in his next career move, helping him successfully complete the educational activities and supporting him until he had secured a position relative to his new skills, knowledge, and education

The Development Mentor

The Development Mentor is a unique person who must be a futurist; at least enough to help the protege perform activities that would benefit the future of the organization or the protege him/herself. Development, in a mentoring sense, might include any activity helping a worker become a more well-rounded individual. This more well-rounded individual can meet the changing needs of the organization and can feel confident enough in him/herself to be productive to the organization and society in general.

Because of the futuristic and growth orientation of development activities, the Development Mentor helps a worker grow as a person and perhaps even strive for personal/professional self-actualization. Some of the ways a mentor at this stage helps a worker include the

following: assess weaknesses and strengths as a person; develop plans of action to make positive change; gain insight into future directions of the organization and prepare to be part of that future; develop skills to help others; try creative talents in areas heretofore not explored; network with many types of people for exposure to new ideas and ways of behaving; and become a well-rounded individual both personally and professionally.

The Development Mentor is a special type of person who serves as a guide to the protege. Some people have referred to such mentors as "gurus, masters, or special people." The Development Mentor is not only a "wiser, more experienced" person, but also someone capable of guiding a worker toward a more fulfilling life, both with the organization and with the worker's personal life. It might be assumed that the Development Mentor has reached a certain level of personal effectiveness and self actualization in his/her own right. The scenerio below may illustrate this description.

Jenny was the vice-president of a large bank. She was considered very successful, and she enjoyed the praise and prestige she got from her job. However, at 35 Jenny felt like something was missing in her life. She mentioned this to Phyllis, a retired bank president, who had been very successful. Phyllis started exploring with Jenny her plans for the next 15 years, both professionally and personally. Jenny realized that her life at present was very one-sided, geared toward work. She missed some of the activities she enjoyed in college like sports, reading adventure novels, and discussing "life" with a few close friends. Phyllis encouraged Jenny to coach an adolescent soccer team and to get involved in a monthly reading group. She also encouraged her to meet with friends and discuss topics of interest to her (e.g., where could we improve ourselves; what have we accomplished; what do we yet want to accomplish). Jenny started feeling better about "her life" and began enjoying her successful career without those nagging doubts about herself.

Phyllis helped Jenny examine who she is now and what seemed to be missing from her life. Then, she suggested "development" activities that made Jenny more satisfied with her life which ultimately made her a more satisfied worker. Phyllis did not concentrate on any one job or career move; rather, she focused on developing Jenny as a person which, in turn, freed her from worry so that she could grow with the organization. She assessed Jenny's current life situation, helped her identify activities that allowed her to grow and finally, supported her during the time she spent on activities that seemingly had nothing to do with her current career or job. Ultimately, Phyllis

guided Jenny to examine her weakness (e.g., "something missing in her life"), thus preventing a future crisis.

Implications for Counselors

The Multiple Mentor Model above provides a conceptual framework to guide counseling and human service practitioners in working with clients. Listed below are activities which could be considered with regard to using the information in this article.

1. Individual counseling. During the career counseling process the present author found clients who either wanted a mentor or felt "hurt, cheated, or resentful" that nobody had mentored them. Counselors can help clients work through and/or avoid these feelings by clearly assessing their career development, the significant people in their development, and by applying this knowledge more realistically to the Multiple Mentor Model
2. Re-Education. Thinking in terms of community education, a general need exists to re-educate society regarding the definition of a mentor and what a mentor can help an individual achieve. This educational process could start as early as elementary school (i.e., when describing/discussing the world of work) and continue throughout life. The Multiple Mentor Model could be a guide in the educational process
3. Training. The Multiple Mentor Model will change the role of HRD, career development and EAP professionals in industry. Active orientation and training programs will need to be developed and implemented. These programs would be directed at two levels:
   a. Training workers regarding the roles and functions of a mentor and how appropriate mentors can actively be sought.
   b. Training appropriate key individuals to serve as Training, Education, and Development mentors. Because it is not clear whether mentoring is a developmental task and who becomes a mentor and why (Burlew, 1989), some of the individuals trained may never use these skills and knowledge directly for an organization.
4. Research. If being mentored does in fact produce positive gains for workers, then counselors, career development specialists, and human resource professionals should constantly be trying to improve (a) the process of mentoring itself, and (b) the chances for all peo-

ple to experience the mentoring process. The Multiple Mentor Model can be used as a framework for research in addressing the above issues.

Conclusion

This article focused on developing a conceptual framework for the mentoring process. The model is based on the premise that mentoring is not a single event in the life of a worker but rather several events with different levels of mentoring. Each level of mentoring requires a different type of mentor with different types of skills and knowledge, similar to Len Nadler's HRD training model. Therefore, people may need special training to assume the different mentor levels (i.e., Training, Education, and Development Mentors), and workers may need to be trained to recognize that such experiences and people exist to help in their career progression. Counselors can be in the forefront as far as accepting and advocating the use of the Multiple Mentor Model for this training

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