CHAPTER 4

Mentoring in an International Professional Development Program

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Introduction

As the link to postsecondary education and socioeconomic well-being strengthens globally, interest has developed in adopting the US community college model. The US community college model provides a mix of access, fluidity, and interactivity with industry that lends itself to development of curricula that meet the needs of multiple populations, varying lengths, and with recognized value in the workplace (Raby 2009). The driving forces that lead to international interest in the US community college include institutional adaptability, workforce development, an egalitarian ideal, and a student-centered orientation that is not always found in traditional higher education instructional methods (Valeau 2009). Approaches to adoption of the US community college include opportunities for study, faculty, and administrative professional development in US community colleges by international colleagues Cohen and Cohen (2013).

This study explores the role of mentoring of international faculty and administrators in the Community College Initiative Instructors and

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Administrators of Egypt (IAE) program developed and delivered by Community Colleges for International Development (CCID). CCID is a "global network of community, technical, and vocational institutions dedicated to creating globally engaged learning environments" (CCID 2015). CCID provides a variety of opportunities including institutional professional development, study-abroad and international study tours, technical training for international institutions, partnerships and development projects.

The IAE, sponsored by the US Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (DoS ECA), provided faculty and administrators from Egyptian Technical Colleges an immersive experience aimed at developing:

- Enhanced understanding of the US community college, its mission and governance, and approach to meeting technical workforce needs
- Ability to better communicate in spoken and written English
- Ability to design technical curricula incorporating collaboration with industry and integration of teaching, learning, and technology

Over two years, 26 IAEs participated at five US community colleges, including pre-academic English at a central location. While each US community college developed unique approaches to providing professional development for the IAEs, the program substantively met the program aims as described in a previous publication (Treat 2010). Development of mentoring relationships between US community college faculty and the IAEs was a common element of the program delivery across the institutions. This paper explores the role of these relationships in more depth.

Mentoring

Mentoring has been recommended for a variety of higher education practices including leadership development, orientation and optimization of daily work skills, exposure to different contexts, feedback to challenges, and succession planning (Reille and Kezar 2010). For leadership development, a variety of diagnostic tools, inventories, formal activities, and reflections can be used to aid in the personal development of the participant in conjunction with coaching from the mentor (Eddy 2008). In particular, studies of the role of faculty in the development of faculty colleagues points to the development of social support, career development,

and "models of teaching excellence," which are particularly important due to the learner-centered approach often supported in community colleges.

Elements of successful mentoring programs have been identified (Ennis-Cole and Lawhon, 2004; Zunz and Oil, 2009). These include administrative support, voluntary participation, broader programming to support professional development, careful matching of mentors and mentees, orientation for both mentors and mentees, flexibility, sharing of teaching resources, observations of teaching, recognition, and program evaluation for improvement (St. Clair 1994). The attributes of a good mentor generally include availability, flexibility, honesty, and collegiality, being a good listener, providing resources and perspectives about the institution, and helping mentees balance various faculty roles (Gaskin et al. 2003).

VanDerLinden (2005) posits mentoring in terms of social capital—the connections gained through shared practice, common understanding and values, and creation of social network and cooperative activity (Cohen and Prusak 2001). Social capital is gained through both internal and external activities and exhibits itself, at least generally, in the ability of an individual to organize activity among teams or groups based on expertise or interest, underpinned by a shared sense of purpose. Mentors play a particularly important role in exposing mentees to experiences directly or through introductions/recommendations.

In community college mentoring programs, the level of formality matters. In a study by Hopkins and Grigoriu (2005), mentees were shown to value support and desire structure, but not rigidity in the structure. Mentees value topic lists, for example, but want to retain the right to customize their learning in mentoring relationships. On the contrary, Vega et al. (2010) finds that structure is beneficial, particularly for mentoring minority faculty, and suggests that mentoring programs have the following components of specific goals with measureable outcomes:

- A defined time commitment each week or month
- Preparation of mentors
- Clearly articulated descriptions of clinical or internship experiences associated with the program
- Attendance expectations and records for supplemental events
- Measurement of use and outcomes
- Notetaking
- Surveying participations for continuous improvement

The literature on mentoring in the community college is focused on leadership or faculty development of community college employees, not international visitors. An increased interest in adoption of the US community college model internationally has led to creation of programs to facilitate mobility of international faculty to US community colleges for professional development. This study aims to fill the gap in the literature by providing an increased understanding of mentoring of international administrators and educators.

Conceptual Framework

The framework of intercultural competencies provides a useful lens through which to consider mentoring of international administrators and educators. While various theories have emerged around cultural and intercultural competencies, the Association of American Colleges & Universities has codified competencies to include cultural self-awareness, knowledge of cultural perspectives and worldviews, empathy, highly developed intercultural communication skills, curiosity, and openness (AAC&U 2015).

As a qualitative study on mentoring of Egyptian administrators and educators, this study addresses cultural issues that may not be relevant to international programs elsewhere. Likewise, the mentors described in this study reflect highly technical programs from five geographically distributed community colleges. International professional development programs in nontechnical fields, of differing duration, or from different cultures may result in very different experiences and readers should weigh the findings of this study carefully when determining transferability to different contexts.

Method

The purpose of this study is to better understand the role mentoring plays in shaping the experiences and outcomes of international administrators and educators.

1. How are mentoring roles integrated into overall program models?
2. What knowledge and skills do mentors need to effectively serve international administrators and educators?
3. What are the implications of various mentoring roles on international professional development programs?

A case study approach was utilized to address these questions. Twenty-nine mentor–mentee relationships were developed in two cohorts participating in seven-month programs at five institutions disbursed geographically in Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Pennsylvania, and Washington. A multisite case study method was thus utilized to gain information. Individual interviews with IAEs and mentors, focus groups with college staff, presentation and document analysis, and participation in coordinator meetings were used to collect data. The data collection consisted of interviews with each IAE early in the program and again late in the program leading to over 40 IAE interviews. Institutional site visits led to over 15 focus groups, several individual mentor interviews, and several hours of conference participation.

Interviews were semi-structured. Care was taken to ensure that each participant experienced a similar line of inquiry to enhance the credibility of the study. The interviews were recorded and observer's notes taken. The interviews were coded using open coding and analyzed for emergent themes. Participants were advised of the protections and risks and voluntarily consented to participation. While the findings in this study have been reported accurately and honestly, care has been taken to protect the participants' identities. Thus, while the names of agencies are provided, the names of both individuals and colleges have been replaced with pseudonyms.

Characteristics of IAEs, Mentors, and Institutional Approaches

The characteristics of the educators were varied in terms of age, gender, position status, disciplinary background, and institution of employment. Twenty-one males and four females participated in the program. The IAEs in their 20s and lower 30s made rapid adjustments to American culture, engaged the program more fully, and made greater gains across the spectrum of goals (English; teaching, learning, and technology; community college concept). By contrast, the institutional approaches to program implementation and roles/backgrounds of mentors were quite varied as illustrated in Table 4.1. Institutional variation did not seem to affect overall program efficacy. In fact, institutional self determination within parameters was a strength of the program.

Each institution developed an organizational structure built upon its own culture and capabilities. Generally, chief responsibility for program implementation and staffing fell to a coordinator, but the coordinator's primary role at the institution varied considerably. The expertise of the coordinator, for example, might be in faculty development, or in interna-

Table 4.1 General approaches to mentoring at each community college

Institution	*Primary coordinator role*	*Mentor roles*
Midwest Grand	Director, Faculty Development Center	Department Chair Faculty, Welding Faculty, Plumbing
Steeltown	Dean, International Education	Faculty, IT Faculty, IT
Piney Tech	Coordinator, ESL	Department Chair, IT Faculty IT Faculty IT
Beachtown	Full time grants funded international educator	Faculty, IT Faculty, Engineering Technology Faculty, Culinary
Puget Sound	Director, Career and Employment Center	Faculty, Engineering Technology Faculty, IT Faculty, International Business

tional education. Furthermore, the coordinator might be responsible for all aspects of the program, including designing, implementation, reporting, and so on or might share these responsibilities with others in the organization. Finally, the role of the mentors might be narrow (instruction related, limited time and activity) or broad (cultural mentoring, general faculty mentoring, extended time and effort).

As outlined previously (Treat 2010), each institution took a different approach to providing professional development for the IAEs. In particular, some institutions utilized more formal mentoring relationships with an individual mentor, while others used an informal team approach to mentoring.

Findings

Reliance on Mentor Guidance

The IAEs in both cycles of the program came to rely heavily upon their mentors, particularly early in the program cycle, in understanding the purpose of the professional development and the need to be actively engaged in it. In the hospitality program, for example, IAEs initially did not see the need to participate in food preparation, but only to observe students.

> *US Mentor 1.* Well, probably that's part of the culture. They feel that they are not part of the student body. So, they're probably more comfortable just to observe some of the theory, for instance, handouts, PowerPoint presentations—get those information and observe how we present those information, and then when you go into the kitchen part, they kind of stay set back. Either they leave or taking some pictures. That's about it.

Over time, the mentor was able to establish a sense of purpose and engagement.

> *US Mentor 1.* Actually, when I was teaching the baking class last term when they were around—they would get involved—if I was showing them how to roll up a Danish or something like that, they would actually try it and get involved in doing that. I welcomed to participate in just about whatever they wanted.

Eventually, IAEs began cooking and even washing dishes, a departure from common practice for instructors in Egypt.

Cultural Competency and Mentoring

The need for cultural competency was reinforced throughout the two years in which the program was offered. Successful mentors repeatedly showed sensitivity to the IAEs cultural differences. As examples, IAEs demonstrated a marked preference for home cooking as opposed to typical US food or food service where college dormitories were utilized. IAEs also practiced religious traditions, such as Ramadan, which sometimes required flexibility in meetings or instruction. Personal needs or conceptions of time required adaptation from mentors. Finally, the differences in the way Egyptians interact with one another sometimes required patience in developing trust between the mentor and mentee.

Culturally competent mentors understood these needs and adjusted their approach to accommodate the IAEs needs. Remarkably, however, cultural competence was not a result of training. None of the institutions developed specific programs for mentor cultural competence development. Instead, institutions selected mentors who (a) had prior experience or cultural roots in the Middle East, or (b) showed an openness to new ideas, flexibility, and curiosity.

Demonstrations of cultural competency sometimes came from unlikely places, such as faculty with no prior training or cross-cultural experience. For example, US Mentor 2 describes working with his Mentee (Mentee 2) and their discussions about gender and religion.

Author. And you went to the Mosque with him.

US Mentor 2. You heard about that. And it was very funny because we had made arrangements to get together and originally I said, "Let's go to my house and we'll show you traditional Christmas dinner." And he said, "No, no, no, you come to our house, and we'll do Christmas together." Okay fine. So we brought the food items and we were gonna finish things up, it was myself, my wife and my daughter and both my wife and my daughter are employed in the Lutheran church, and Mentee 2 looked at me and said, "Let's go to Mosque." And my wife and my daughter were excluded from that invitation. It was like okay, this is Christmas day this will be very different for me. And it really was. I learned a lot that day. It was the first opportunity that I had to witness, to observe a Muslim service, and it was very different.

Author. Well, it speaks to a level of trust between you that I think reflects the spirit of the mentoring program, that you were in their home, they were in your home, they went to church with you, that you went to mosque with them. I mean, that's really a testament I think to what you were able to accomplish.

US Mentor 2. I think most mentors should do it. It made the whole experience better for us. It was win–win.

US Mentor 2 was able to learn from Mentee 2 and vice versa, in part because of a commitment to openness, but also because of the presence of his own mentor, his wife, who transferred cultural competence through her work as a minister. In the following example, he expresses the need for counsel from a culturally competent mentor. He goes on to say that he frequently asked for guidance as issues arose for which he was poorly prepared to address.

US Mentor 2. So my wife said, "These are things you've got to be aware of when you're dealing with [your mentee]." She was very good at bringing me up to speed. How important personal face is. That's a big, big deal, and I can damage that relationship if I wasn't careful.

US Mentors repeatedly spoke to the value of working with colleagues who had a deep understanding of Egyptian culture and Islam for advice, in addition to serving as mentors to the IAEs themselves.

Building a Community of Mentors (CoM)

The need for mentors for orientation, communication, and support was expressed repeatedly. One of the mentors who was involved in formal professional development workshops with the IAEs, suggested:

> I would have loved to have had just a before meeting to see the people that were involved, who are going to have that common contact, to be able to use them as resources, to maybe even call and chat about things, "Are you seeing this? Do you think—" it would have just been a great time to know who else was involved, I think. As far as ongoing meetings, I don't know how I feel about that, but certainly a before meeting would be of interest.

In some cases, communication was lacking between mentors on the same campus. In such cases, mentors were assigned roles, and did not even know who the other mentors were.

> I was talking to my person about some things and found out that one of the other mentors was talking—that we were repeating ourselves, and we could have just done that all at once, [so we suggested] having a meeting, periodically, of the mentors and the educators together, just to have kind of a lunch every three weeks or something, just so everyone's together—of the mentors and the educators.

Mentoring and Teaching

In addition to observations of instruction, many of the mentors engaged in explicit discussions about how career and technical education is delivered in US community colleges. For example, US Mentor 3, a plumbing faculty member, expressed how mentoring related to teaching methods, saying,

> *US Mentor 3.* Well, we met daily. Every morning he would come in about 20 minutes to the hour [and ask questions] from "What are we doing today?" through to questions he would have on, how I dealt with students, how I interacted with my students, which I think he found different. And it was very interesting early on, he would question me on my pedagogy. "When do you let a student struggle? Why do you let that student struggle? … And he felt bad for the students":
>
> *US Mentor 3.* I want to go help [a US community college student]. If you really want to, but we shouldn't. Ivan needs to learn how to do that.

And if he struggles, he struggles. And we won't let him fall, we'll build a safety net for him, but he's got to struggle a little bit.

Author. Interesting. Did he talk much about how his shop works?

US Mentor 3. He did. He did relate some of the experiences, he compared and contrasted the shop space we have here compared to what he has back home. He has been giving some thought to how some of these technologies would fit into his shop, how he's going to develop his budget to be able to purchase some of the materials. And he feels in some ways overwhelmed, I think with the scope of the work that he sees down here versus what gets done in Egypt. I tell him he shouldn't. I tell him it's not going to be an overnight sensation, it's going to take him a long time, but you know, one small change per semester, will add up to large changes over the long run.

Discussions of teaching often became quite sophisticated as IAEs wrestled with methods of instruction and assessment and tried to conceptualize ways to import methods into technical institutes in Egypt. In one discussion, a US Mentor and IAE explored the nature of expertise and method of assessing it.

US Mentor 4. We did talk a lot about assessment, he was really interested in how I assessed a student's achievement … As opposed to generalized testing, you know, that type of assessment, I would get the students into a lab atmosphere, where I could get closer, more one on one, and that's where we need to find out if they're actually capable of performing the tasks that they're going to need to perform. [And] he was wondering you know, like why did he get the grade that he got in my class, and that was part of the assessment.

Benefits of Mentoring

In the end, selection of individuals with a desire for learning about other cultures, patience in dealing with ambiguity, and expertise in the culture, or ability to lean on someone with that expertise, lead to deep relationships and development of shared understanding as expressed by US Mentor 5 who ended his interview by saying,

I really enjoyed this opportunity. I found Mentee 5 to be really receptive to the new ideas that he sees and he was willing to share, so it became a real

> communication back and forth. I felt that I was invited into their private lives into their home and you know, I wanted them to see how I live, the typical Midwesterner. I will miss him … we are true friends.

This view was also expressed by US Mentor 4:

> [My mentee] said to me last week—he said, "I want all your emails" and, of course, Facebook, "Because we will stay friends forever," and so I think that that gets to the heart of where you were going with all that. They are—they're giving out that. They are very thankful for the experience and thankful for the people that have been in their lives during this experience. I was pretty touched by that.

Mentoring Gone Awry

Over the two cycles of the program, there were cases in which the mentor–mentee relationship went very much awry. While the root causes in these instances were complicated, they speak to the care that must be taken in the selection and preparation of both participants and mentors. In one instance the mentor, a technical instructor, had no experience with international faculty and had not engaged in domestic mentoring either. The instructor was eager to engage in instructional settings—a major goal of the program—but failed to understand basic principles of mentoring, particularly the need to provide private and informal engagement opportunities. The lack of sufficient time and inability to engage informally left the IAE dissatisfied generally with the program overall, in spite of the fact that the program elements outside of mentoring were clearly in place institutionally. The opportunity to fully realize program aims was thus lost: the mentor relationship provides "glue" for related activities and grounds the overall program goals in a relationship of trust and openness. Breakdowns due to a lack of understanding of concepts might be resolved through mentor training and better communication regarding professional obligations in mentoring relationships.

In a second instance, a married male mentor with no international experience, little domestic mentoring experience, and no mentor training was assigned a divorced female as a mentee. The formal elements of the relationships—observation of class, and transfer of technical elements of the program and curriculum—proceeded much as other mentoring

relationships. However, the lack of understanding of Egyptian culture, Islam, and prior experience internationally led to a fear of informal relationship building that prevented meaningful development of trust and hindered full realization of learning outcomes. The faculty member expressed being "petrified" that he might do or say something that would be offensive, in spite of the fact that the participating female IAE expressed no concerns. Similar circumstances at other participating colleges, in which an internationally experienced male faculty member mentored a single female IAE and in which a female faculty mentor mentored a single male IAE, did not exhibit this challenge. Breakdowns due to lack of understanding of acceptable gender roles and interactions between genders could be mitigated through specific cultural competency training or assignment of mentors of same gender.

Finally, Beachtown Community College hosted IAEs in very different programs in year one (Hospitality/Administration) and year two (IT/HVAC). The program elements were substantially the same in each of the two years and included comparable housing situations, formal faculty professional development program participation, co-involvement with student activities relate to a parallel multinational CCID program, and the college leadership and program coordination. Two IAE participants were matched with mentors who had little prior experience and no cultural training. The participants themselves had low adaptability and disregard for program aims in favor of personal aims. The inability of mentors and mentees to adjust to *cultural dissonance* led to degradation of program satisfaction both on the part of IAE participants and the mentors.

One mentor in particular, who described himself as "an old country boy" with no international experience indicated frustration with many elements of the IAEs attitude and participation. He stated,

US Mentor 6. It was all against his religion. He couldn't do it.
Author. But in the formal course settings, was he an active participant?
US Mentor 6. No, it seemed like he was more interested in whatever he could—like, obtain anything with his name on it. He was so adamant about his name. Everything had to have his full four names on it. Everything.
Author. And so, you're frustrated. This wasn't a good experience for you at all.
US Mentor 6. I will never do it again. Never.

US Mentor 6's experience was by far the most negative of all the mentors in the program. However, by the end of the interview, he conceded that he might consider mentoring an international faculty member again, if he is adequately prepared.

> It was just a rough one, I guess, for my first—[my supervisor] came to me he said "I'd like for you to do me a favor." And I first didn't want to do it. I said, "Nah, I don't think I'm capable." And he said "Yeah, you'll be fine." I have a really good rapport with the students, and it just didn't work out the way I wanted it to.

US Mentor 6 was willing to mentor, but doubted his ability. He was eager to "make a friend" from another culture, but ill-equipped to address complex issues leading to cultural dissonance between he and his mentee. His personal doubts and lack of formal preparation for this role are not uncommon. In fact, only a few of the mentors in the entire program were prepared to serve IAEs. Overwhelmingly, however, their collective spirit of giving, enthusiasm for teaching and for community college, and natural curiosities led to dramatic influence and life changing experiences.

US Mentor 7, a welding instructor at Midwest Grand, mentored a technical instructor from Egypt with very low English skills, in the first year of the program. US Mentor 7 had no prior international experience and, in many ways, had similar concerns to those of US Mentor 6. Unlike US Mentor 6 and his mentee, however, US Mentor 7 and his mentee developed an instant rapport and deep connection that led to dramatic progress toward program aims. US Mentor 7 had never been on an airplane, let alone out of the country, but accompanied a delegation on a follow-up visit to Egypt one year after his mentee returned. On a celebratory evening atop the Fulbright Commission office in Cairo, US Mentor 7 presented his mentee, who referred to US Mentor 7 as "his brother," with a flame painted welding mask in honor of their time together.

Discussion

The purpose of this case study has been to explore the role of mentoring in developing quality international professional development opportunities in general, and more specifically, within the context of the US community college. Results suggest that, while the roles of mentoring vary, the importance of mentors is high for developmental progression of participants

from reliance to self-directedness. In the presence of culturally competent mentors, participants in international professional development programs experience enhanced comfort, inquisitiveness, exploratory behavior, and learning outcomes (Treat 2010). In this study, the negative outcomes of lack of cultural competency also become apparent, as both the mentors and mentees experience severe frustration and lack of sense of worth in the relationship. On the other hand, culturally competent mentors provide transformational experiences in which enthusiasm, commitment, and friendships develop.

The mentoring relationships between IAEs and college faculty and staff established a foundation upon which program success could be built. In the best of cases, mentors provided both formal and informal guidance. At Puget Sound, where all of the IAEs initially were placed for intensive English as Second Language (ESL), two US mentors who were native to Middle East countries and fluent in Arabic provided considerable *cultural bridging* for IAEs. The guidance provided in the initial weeks of the program by these two mentors continued throughout the program, even as IAEs disbursed to other colleges.

The necessity of *cultural competence* was clearly visible in both successful mentoring relationships and those that were unsuccessful. While the mentors were universally respected and admired, many of the mentors took narrow approaches to their work—concentrating on teaching, learning, and technology at the expense of cultural, professional, and organizational mentoring. The institutions learned over time that out-of-classroom mentoring has great importance for the educators. Institutions recognized the need for specific mentor training in advance of international educators' arrival. A broad view of mentoring should be applied to all professional development programs, but has particular importance for international educators whose desire to learn extends far beyond the classroom. Such a view incorporates multiple roles (teacher, advisor, counselor, role model, cultural coach), varied support (institutional norms, rules, processes, curricula, access and openness, and help in documenting learning (Gaskin et al. 2003). In the case of international mentoring, prior cultural knowledge, flexibility, and patience are also traits that are needed. In one college, for example, two of the mentors were native speakers of Arabic and provided excellent "broad" mentoring to the benefit of educator satisfaction and learning.

A key finding in this study is the recognition that cultural competence can arise through informal means, given a propensity of the mentor to seek

guidance. The *preconditions* for development of cultural competence can be found in faculty who lack cross-cultural experience, but who are open to new ideas, have excellent communications and team-building skills, flexibility, and patience, and who understand basic concepts of mentoring from prior experience in nonculturally different settings. Development of cultural skills are, however, extremely important and can be developed through access to *cultural guides* and norming/sharing activities in a *community of mentors* (CoM). This suggests a taxonomy of mentorship development that can include both formal and informal elements. Foremost in this taxonomy is selection of mentors whose openness, flexibility, and enthusiasm for new experiences will ensure capability for learning. Next, while formal training was not evident in this case, the desire by mentors for it clearly existed. Mentors want translatable mentoring skills, including deeper understanding of reciprocity in the relationship, recognizing time commitments and how to negotiate shared understanding of time, and developing broad concepts of learning, that incorporate in and out of classroom learning on both academic and nonacademic issues. Finally, training into culture, whether designed for formal or informal delivery, provides needed common threads for development of deeper mentoring and enhanced program outcomes.

Implications for Mentoring in International Professional Development Programs

The results of this study point to several factors for consideration in developing international professional development programs with mentoring components. These include:

- Affirmation of the importance of matching appropriate mentors and mentees
- Ongoing need for cultural competency training for mentors prior to mentee arrival
- Support requirements for mentor–mentee relationship
- Critical nature of mentor role in meeting program aims
- Policy and quality assurance in mentoring for international professional development

Culturally competent mentors are only one-half of the equation: building cultural competence in the participants in terms of readiness to accom-

modate program expectations and work with the mentor is also necessary. Preparing mentors–mentees includes both orientation to enhance readiness and matching of characteristics coupled with competency development.

Mentoring is a very effective means of development within international professional development programs. The connections gained through shared practice, common understanding and values, and creation of social network and cooperative activity and the ability of an individual to organize activity among teams or groups based on expertise or interest, underpinned by a shared sense of purpose. Mentors play a particularly important role in exposing mentees to experiences directly or through introductions/recommendations.

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