



Mentoring Handbook

Providing Systemic Support for
Mentees and Their Projects

A Handbook for Facilitators

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Mentoring Handbook

Providing Systemic Support for Mentees and Their Projects

A Handbook For Facilitators

Providing Systemic Support for Mentees
and Their Projects. A handbook project
from Theodor-Heuss-Kolleg.



The Theodor-Heuss-Kolleg supports young people who want to become engaged as active and independent citizens. It provides seminars, further education, support for volunteer work in projects, and guidance through mentorship.

With its empowerment concept, the Kolleg concentrates on individuals' personal development, strengthening their social skills, and encouraging them to assume responsibility. In its focus areas, it works collaboratively with partners in local or cross-border programs.

The Kolleg promotes a culture of active citizenship, which entails transparency, openness, trust, diversity-consciousness, equality-orientation, and social responsibility.

It is a program facilitated by the Robert Bosch Stiftung and the MitOst Association.

www.theodor-heuss-kolleg.de

MitOst Robert Bosch **Stiftung**

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Editorial

To support another person in personal development is a fulfilling and ambitious task. You get to know a new person in an intense way and hear about his or her motivations and ideas. As a mentor, you also develop your knowledge and increase your networks. Mentors also develop coaching and leadership skills that are useful for their work in other contexts. On the other hand, this is challenging. You have to get involved with a new person. Sometimes you become aware of your current limitations and face new challenges. In short: Mentoring is a journey involving two people. They work together and learn from each other.

We developed this handbook for those mentors who, like us, see their roles as facilitating and cooperative ones. The inspiration for it came from mentors working with volunteer project managers in the Theodor-Heuss-Kolleg's international programs. Some of the quotes we use in the text are recommendations they made to other mentors. But we also wanted to write a book that would be useful for those who work in mentorships in other contexts.

Regarding the structure: We first give a short overview describing mentoring and what forms of mentoring exist. We view mentoring as a form of non-formal experiential learning, and we thought it would also be helpful to outline some of mentorship's basic systemic principles. We did not want to focus only on theory, but rather wanted a handbook that would also serve as a practical guide. Hence you find practical tools, checklists, and templates throughout this publication.

I would like to give special thanks to the Theodor-Heuss-Kolleg's coordinators and facilitators, Matthias Haberl, Ivana Kiprijanovska, and Mollie Hosmer-Dillard.

Berlin, October 2012
Nils-Eyk Zimmermann

1 What does Mentoring Mean?

Mentoring is a relationship between two people who have different amounts of experience. The more experienced mentor supports the mentee for a certain period of time. Political or managerial mentors are sometimes mentioned in newspapers. These are influential people who foster the careers of ambitious young professionals. This informal style of mentorship is the traditional model. Today there are numerous programs that create more focused structures for mentor-mentee relationships, which can take place in companies, in institutions, universities, schools, or social work.

Mentor, from whose name the word “mentoring” was derived, was first described by Homer in the 8th century BC. Before he ventured out on his Odyssey, Ulysses, king of Ithaca, appointed Mentor to care for his kingdom. Homer tells us that Mentor “was Ulysses’s friend, and had been left in charge of everything, and even had full authority over the servants.¹” This included authority over the young prince, Telemachus. Mentor was not only teacher in the traditional sense of the word, he also gave the prince everyday tools – practical education and empowerment. He accompanied Telemachus on his dangerous task of trying to find Ulysses.

Providing this kind of support is a job with complex specifications. One needs to fulfill many roles. Mentor had to organize (i. e. the boat for the trip), introduce his mentee Telemachus to his worldly

networks, to provide practical knowledge and to motivate.

The goddess Athena assisted Mentor in fulfilling this ambitious task. Through Mentor, she addressed Telemachus with her wisdom: “Telemachus, the men are on board and at their oars, waiting for you to give your orders, so make haste and let us be off.” A mentorship like the one in the Odyssey is a challenge, comprising the mentee’s ambition, a mentor with some life experience and a challenge they want to face together.

Relationships and Learning

We can take three points of inspiration from this story. First and foremost, people with extraordinary capacities and with more life experience can help other people confront life challenges. Therefore, Mentor’s work emphasizes *learning about life in a practical way*.

1 Homer Book II

On one of the first parts of his journey Telemachus traveled to Pylos. He carefully prepared for the meeting with the powerful king. Feeling unsure of himself, he asked Mentor how he should address the king properly. But Mentor did not give the clear advice - but rather the opposite. Trusting in the prince's intuition, he encouraged Telemachus to just do what felt right:

*"Some things will be suggested to you by your own instinct, and heaven will prompt you further; for I am assured that the gods have been with you from the time of your birth until now."*²

Today we know how important personal relationships and role models are in the development of people's personalities and their learning processes, especially in informal practical education.

Motivation and Personal Goals

Mentoring is a relationship between two people with different levels of experience. Its main goal is to foster learning and growth, often as practical education with the use of extensive methodological tools.

The second lesson we can learn from the story is how important personal connection is to the learning process. Telemachus shows that motivation develops when clear goals and a strong personal connection are at hand. Today it

² Homer: Book III

Mentor and Telemachus



What happened

Ulysses was detained by the goddess Calypso "who had kept him in a large cave and wanted to marry him." He had spent days, months and years on ships, battle grounds, and finally ended up on this island. The gods were divided in respect to his destiny. Jove was of the opinion that it served Ulysses right for his disrespectful deeds. Athena, on the other hand, felt sorry for the man: "He is tired of life, and can think of nothing but how he may once more see the smoke of his own chimneys." She wanted to give Ulysses a chance to come back, so she supported Telemachus's expedition.

Chaos at home

In Ulysses's absence, Penelope's suitors wanted to steal the throne and vied for her hand. They lived in the palace for years and behaved "atrociously." Athena wanted to change this situation so she traveled to Ithaca, assuming the body of the king of the Taphians. She met Telemachus and encouraged him: "You are a fine, smart looking fellow; show your mettle, then, and make yourself a name in story."

Mentor and Telemachus

During extended stays abroad, it is good to have a housekeeper you can trust. In Ulysses's case, it was a man named Mentor. Mentor took care of young Telemachus. With Mentor's help and encouragement, the expedition became possible.

The Journey

The duo took off to the dangerous expedition to find Telemachus's father. The goal was to return with Ulysses and reestablish order.

Types of Mentorship

*slightly different levels
of experience*

*very different levels of
experience*

Peer Mentoring

Mentor and mentee share characteristics
Volunteer project mentoring
Theodor-Heuss-Kolleg
- - -
Cross cultural mentoring
University of Economy and Law, Berlin, DE
- - -
memi Mentoring for Immigrants,
Bremen, DE

Social Mentoring

Mentor is a role model
Balu und Du, DE

Informal Mentoring

No mentoring program
Personal tandems

Internal Mentoring

Mentor is in a higher position in an institution
Mentoring Die Linke, DE
IGP (RWE AG), DE

Cross Mentoring

Mentor from an outside institution
Cross-Mentoring Munich, DE
Federal Cross Mentoring, AT
genderize! National Youth Council, AT

Reverse Mentoring

Younger Mentor, older mentee
Deutsche Telekom, DE

is common knowledge that successful teaching depends on the willingness and capacities of the learner. This is the opposite of the teacher-centered approach most of us experienced in school. Mentorship involves disciplined self-motivation, rather than a teacher administering discipline. In this sense, mentorship serves as a complement to formal education. It facilitates self-directed learning, which makes use of a person's existing capacities for acquiring knowledge.

Additional Knowledge

Third, without knowledge there can be no development. Role models and sharing experiences help us grow. A motivated learner with trustful teachers or *facilitators* will acquire practical knowledge easily. But sometimes *mentees* need additional

knowledge or external motivation to succeed. These have to be confirmed by experience in reality and must serve to help us fulfill our goals.

These priorities were the groundwork for developing this handbook. The handbook summarizes our experiences in supporting mentees and their self-directed work, projects, and development.

Mentors provide a great variety of support. Sometimes they provide inspiration. Sometimes they are motivational, encouraging friends, or more experienced members of an older generation. Sometimes they are advisors. Such a broad use of methodological tools is now a standard characteristic of a mentorship.

Duration of Mentoring

Mentoring is essentially a developmental process involving two individuals with different levels of experience. The duration of the mentorship varies from case to case. The relationship between mentor and mentee develops over time, sometimes the nature of it changes, sometimes the connections that have formed gradually loosen. This is what distinguishes a mentorship from other kinds of support like coaching or advising, both of which have clear contractual limitations.

Programs

Mentorship programs exist in many different contexts today. They take place within companies, political institutions, universities, social work, civic activism, and in schools. In each of these environments, the nature of the mentorship depends on the respective establishment's purposes, or nature of the people involved. For example, comparing cross-cultural mentorships that take place in universities with mentorships that take place in companies makes it clear that very different kinds of relationships form in different contexts, resulting in very different perspectives.³

Mentorships in companies have distinct networking priorities, while a study investigating students of applied social sciences found that this was not a focus of their mentorships. These mentors were

³ See the findings of Frank Edelkraut/Nele Graf and Pakize Schichert-Güler/Faye Preusse

Outcome for Mentors

Extension of personal **networks**

Involvement in & close relationship to an **institution**

Feedback and authentic statements

Increased ability for self-reflection and improved **soft skills**

Developing **coaching** and **leadership skills**

New **knowledge** and new **perspectives**

Appreciation for - and the satisfaction of helping others

A shared sense for **idealism** and **involvement**

Source: Edelkraut/Graf and Theodor-Heuss-Kolleg

more motivated by social engagement – which was a secondary interest for the manager-mentors. Both groups saw mentoring as a way to acquire new knowledge and background information – about other areas of expertise, companies, fields of work, and cultures. They also both put a strong emphasis on learning new skills through practice. These focal points make up the groundwork for any mentoring relationship, and the specificities are based on the particular skills and knowledge desired and the purpose of acquiring them.

Mentoring is a relationship between two people with different levels of experience. Its main goal is to enable learning and growth, often understood as non-formal practical learning.

Purposes of Mentoring

Sharing Power

qualifies mentees for particular positions. The result is closer connections between various hierarchical levels. Both sides see results over the long term (shadowing program for a junior manager).

Teaching

transfers knowledge from the mentor to the mentee. The relationship places emphasis on results (staff mentoring in a larger institution)

Learning Life Skills

develops mainly within the personal relationship. The effect is most evident in the mentee, who gains knowledge and experience (program for underprivileged youth).

Assisting in Transition

supports the mentee in transforming personal interests and skills into forming new perspectives. The effect is most evident in the mentee (academic mentoring for female graduates).

Building Personal Relationships

creates positive experiences and trust. It forges connections between mentors and mentees (peer mentoring in a volunteer initiative)

Purposes of Mentoring

We recognize five cardinal functions for mentoring. Sometimes these functions complement one another. However, some mentoring programs have very specific profiles that emphasize a few or even just one of these functions, giving much less attention to the others.

The variety of reasons to create mentorships is illustrated in scientific mentorship programs, for example. Such programs have been widely established, especially for women. Why? They are rooted

in the feminist movement. In opposition to male scientists' exclusive "buddy networks," women in universities wanted to establish their own informal networks that would serve to empower and integrate young academic professionals.

One important objective of this mentorship was to influence the structures in universities by implementing feminist thinking and raising the quota for female scientists. The intended outcome was the establishment of better working conditions for women – the mentorships helped them use and *share power* and influence.

Sharing knowledge is another intended outcome. Mentorship is an efficient form of *teaching* the mentee about current trends and relaying the knowledge necessary for a successful academic career.

This kind of mentorship can be of great personal import to an enthusiastic young researcher. During periods of *transition* like the shift from being a student to becoming a young professional, the support of a trusted person can be very helpful. *Learning life skills* can be even more meaningful. These skills play a more important role in mentoring contexts like social work.

One way that mentoring tandems can establish friendship is by gradually bridging the gap between the different levels of experience. In this case, the mentoring relationship involves an essential *personal attachment*. For example, the first female professor in a conservative department could develop a personal interest in helping a young woman meet the challenges posed by this environment.

Asymmetry of Experience

All mentorships involve an asymmetry of experience. In companies, mentors often have a lot of experience, a relevant position in the hierarchy, and a personal network. Mentors are significantly older than mentees, often members of different generations.

In some cases, especially in volunteer work, the asymmetry in ages may not be so significant. Such *peer-mentorships* require extensive social similarity, similar backgrounds, and personal interests.

Hierarchy

There is an inherent inequality in mentorships. Different salaries and privileges manifest this inequality. However, mentoring can change corporate culture and relativize hierarchy, which is sometimes a mentorship program's objective. It can even integrate a mentee into leadership culture.

In parts of civil society and the non-profit sector, the asymmetry and inequality between mentor and mentee are viewed critically with respect to fundamental values like equality, institutional democracy, and transparency. In a traditional mentoring relationship, however, emphasis on the differences between the mentor and the mentee can still persist. Both people involved have to be aware of this fact. In peer-mentoring, the mentor acts as a role model and his or her empathy is more important than his or her position. In cross-

What Mentees expect

Support in their **work** and professional **career**

Involvement in **new networks**

Trustful space for discussion and feedback

Optimization of performance and resources

Close relationship with an **institution**

Specific **expertise** and **new knowledge**

Support in **procedural routines**

Increased ability for self-reflection and acquisition of **soft skills**

Receiving help in **challenging situations**

Source: Edelkraut/Graf and Theodor-Heuss-Kolleg

mentoring programs or reverse-mentoring programs, different positions within an organization are essential. They are even more significant in mentorships in which the mentor holds a top-level or second-level position.

Mentoring Programs

In investigating the scope of purposes behind mentorships, we began to see some of the environments where mentoring is used: in large institutions and companies, in social work, in universities, or in volunteer work. Mentorships are usually informal relationships between two people: an older senior staff member who supports a younger staff member with encouragement is also recognized as a mentor.

Results for Institutions

Development of mentees

Development and performance of mentors in new capacities

Fellows and staff form **deep connections** with the institution

Knowledge is transferred between employees

Corporate culture and the **network** is strengthened.

Support is provided in procedural routines

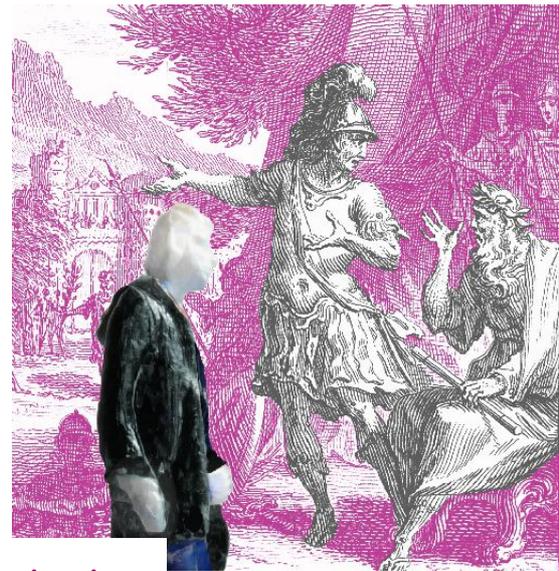
Structural discrimination can be overcome

Source: Edelkraut/Graf and Theodor-Heuss-Kolleg

Most mentorship programs take place in professional environments. Most occur concurrently with a job. A majority of mentors and mentees take part in a mentorship in addition to performing their usual tasks and fulfilling their everyday professional responsibilities.◇

A mentorship's framework is specific to the institution where it takes place. Mentors and mentees often have an interest in helping their institutions. Common values or support received in the past can result in the desire to give back to the institution as a mentor.

Institutions also have objectives. The most common are supporting corporate culture (e.g. leadership culture and gender issues), optimizing knowledge transfer, training mentors and mentees to acquire skills, and supporting administrative routines (reporting, knowledge of procedures). The expectations concerning mentorship and how to conduct them can differ depending on the three variables: institution, mentor, and mentee.



*“Mentoring is a
journey involving
two people.”*

2 A Dynamic, Systemic Approach

Establishing a new relationship for learning and development is based on essential values like self-directed learning, personal autonomy, and reflection. This chapter gives a short introduction to systemic thinking and explains how we apply it to mentoring. “Systemic” means taking into consideration not only variables related to mentor and mentee, but also ones related to problems and solutions, challenges and results.

From antiquity to the present day, the intellectual models we use to describe ourselves and our relationship to the world have changed. For Homer, Plato, Aristotle, St. Augustine, or any ancient philosopher, human life could not be imagined without a fundamental divine legitimation. The individual is orientated in what he or she perceives to be the “natural” order of the world. Who legitimizes our contemporary society? The divine? The state? A president? A revolution of individuals? Money? Law?

We tend to agree with all these answers to some degree, and much less so with the classical view. Modern approaches emphasize the interrelation of several complementary or competing values or models for understanding the world.

Modernism is described as the result of an evolution toward “functionally differentiated” societies. This concept is becoming more and more influential. Pluralism and people's sovereignty are increasingly accepted in politics. Enlightenment and rationalism are important aspects of philosophy. Modern

literature developed with the decline of traditional views of the world. History accounts that do not recognize multiple perspectives would be boring and dismissed as lies, just as psychology without the recognition of the unconscious or cultural studies without semiotics.

Systemic theorists like Parsons, Luhmann, or Maturana put forth explanations of the development of society. Their shared point is that society follows a fundamentally rational structuring principle. This is the paradigm for *functional differentiation* of complementary and competing aspects of society.

Systemic theories sound rationalistic. Their theorists did little to prevent this impression from taking root. In his major work “Society of the Society,” for example, Niklas Luhmann claimed that his theory involved a “radical anti-humanistic, radical anti-regionalistic, and a radical constructivist definition of society.”⁴

At first glance, this is mechanistic

4 Niklas Luhmann, p. 35

thinking. But what does it actually mean? Simply that there is no exclusive outside objectivity in the form of numinous beliefs or the nations that have always been constructed by society. Different beliefs and models compete within each individual. Without being familiar with systemic approaches, Max Weber labeled this the “polytheism” of modernity: “It is commonplace to observe that something may be true although it is not beautiful and not holy and not good.”⁵ Several disparate rationalities compete in society.

What are people’s roles in this? Every day they fill many different roles and communicate in various ways within specific subsystems. In mentorships, we focus on the capacities of individuals we want to empower. In relation to the abstract theory we ask: What are the conditions that play a part in our behavior and our mentee's behavior? How can we behave successfully in this complex world? The skills needed to lead an organization are different than those needed in a partnership. In acting as part of a volunteer project team, one achieves some degree of self-actualization, though maybe not in a role as a teacher at the university. Mentees have to strike balances between many different variables.

Autonomy

Self-awareness and autonomy are imperative for successful and satisfying action in different fields of society.

Individuals have to understand the

⁵ Max Weber

causes and effects of their behavior. Defining goals entails acting intentionally to accomplish them. We think of this ability to view ourselves as complete, responsible people as a “key competency.” This competency also definitely involves an active element, the capacity for action. This is the ability to observe, reflect on personal behavior *and* adjust accordingly. Reflection as a result of *objectified* reality is antecedent to *subjective* behavior.

„Thinking reflectively demands relatively complex mental processes and requires the subject of a thought process to become its object.”⁶

Basically, this takes place through the process of observation. By means of observation, people can see their behavior from a meta-perspective. People can step out of their own *subjective* points of view, putting themselves in positions to better *analyze* their situations. Where do my conclusions and opinions come from? What values do they imply? What are the alternatives?

With regards to mentorship, we need the freedom to develop our own abilities to perceive. In this way, the person learning is more important than the person teaching.

“Anyone who observes is responding to an internal impulse, a feeling, a special preference, and chooses from among numerous impressions.”⁷

⁶ OECD, p. 8

⁷ Maria Montessori, p. 71

Educational reformer Maria Montessori said a child has everything he or she needs to grow. To these ends, the mentoring relationship should support the autonomy of the person learning in developing his or her personality, capacities for reflective thinking, and conscious actions.

Identity

Reflections result in interactions, decisions, or choices from among several options. We gain experiences over the course of time and in many different environments. At some point we internalize them and act automatically rather than consciously – our behavior becomes part of our identities. Individuals' behaviors and traits develop based on their abilities to observe and reflect. One's actions and life are fundamentally connected to one's perspective on the past and one's patterns of behavior. "People don't just 'exist,' they 'behave.'"⁸

Biologist Umberto Maturana emphasizes the impact of society's physical conditions. "The paradigm of self organization's central metaphor is the network (outlined in original)."⁹ Networks are simultaneously chaotic and ordered. We absorb and process stimuli chaotically. This is how we create order.

Identity is a combination of ambiguous elements that make the world complex for us. An individual's challenge is to strike a balance among all the conflicting

personality traits, components of identity, archetypes, and interests. Modern psychology recognizes "good" and "bad" behavior as different sides of the same coin, not as inherently different qualities.

"All characteristics, all values, and every strength in behavior can only develop when they are balanced by their counterparts."¹⁰

In accompanying people in their development we have to take these ambiguities into account and appreciate them. It is not effective to simply define a desired behavior as a developmental goal. We should also ask: What qualities does the "problematic" counterpart have? To what extent is it part of our identities? How will it change through the course of our development?

Systems and Interaction

Observation and reflection are not the result of a single action carried out by one person, but rather from *interactions*. Interdependency is one characteristic of systems. This means that we must be able to observe our behaviors, feelings, and problems within the specific context in which we are embedded.

Systemic theorists claim that society generates its own structures and values. Individuals determine and define their goals and priorities in response to their environments' demands. They need to

⁸ Sonja Raddatz, p. 44

⁹ Horst Siebert, p. 30

¹⁰ Fischer-Epe, p. 110

communicate and interact within society's systems and sub-systems. This is how they improve skills and learn to behave and communicate within society's functionally differentiated systems.

The ability to choose from several options is simple, and involves determining the difference between a system's internal world and its external one. When individuals perform this task, the systems also differentiate what is "within" and what is "outside" them. The system called "society" consists of divided patterns of systems that are constantly dividing further into sub-systems and sub-sub-systems. These patterns follow the logic of "functional differentiation." This does not mean that systems become completely separated. They can interfere, conflict, and connect with one another.

As members of one such differentiated society, we have to increase awareness of the interactive nature of these processes. Our actions are interconnected with the actions of others.

This is not limited to communication between physical people, but also includes communication among various subsystems in a complex network. Every system employs different channels of communication. The economic system uses money, the legal system uses law, and the political system uses power. The challenge for us is interpreting, translating, or communicating in several different forms of subsystem-specific media.

There is no such thing as non-communication. Every interaction is a form

of communication. And mentorship deals primarily with the mentee's capacities to interact.

Autopoiesis and Self-Direction

Systems have specific rules and create their own vantage of society and its constituent parts: Every subsystem generates its own *rationale* and creates its own legitimation. What makes sense within the system? Who decides what makes sense? One of systemic thinking's central paradigms is that systems behave *autopoietically*. Humberto Maturana came up with the concept of autopoiesis, which is an appreciation of a system's internal logic. For example, some systems are composed of organisms, which can react to stimuli in their environments. But their reaction does not usually impact the system's organizing logic. They do not cease to exist. Instead, they react to stimuli in their environments and adapt to or align themselves accordingly. Autopoiesis means that a system's internal logic is not dependent on external sources: The system creates its own logic, makes its own meaning, and designs its own structures.

If logic is a result of observations, then we have to concede that there are many different realities – as many as there are individuals and systems. "Reality" is what one sees and interprets to be real. Coach Sonja Raddatz

Our society's differentiation demands that we balance competing roles, personal qualities, and developmental goals.

Self-reflection is the ability to observe one's behavior and communication from a more objective point of view. It stems from mindful perception.

points out the consequences of this conclusion from a practical point of view. There is no "objective reality – it is created in the eye of the beholder."¹¹ A mentee's reality is not necessarily the same as a mentor's reality, but it is equally real.

"When they are able to choose their own courses of action, people always do what makes the most sense for them."¹²

As an observing mentor, it is more important to discover the logic behind a mentee's actions than to give advice. Mentors and mentees have different perspectives. A simple step for one person might be extremely demanding for someone else. An individual's actions that are unsuccessful in one situation might have proved more effective in other ones.

We have to learn to take a person's subjective experience into account and not to discredit his or her point of view.

Learning as a Circular Process

From a constructive perspective, "logic" results from observation, action, and reflection. Experience is the basis for interpretation. In systemic terms, this means that we process things "recursively" and a sense of logic develops with this

access to past events. "Identities do not exist." Instead, they are a way of organizing and storing experience. They are a necessary way of drawing on experience and making use of it in the future.¹³

Every subsystem and its constituent parts recur based on available pre-existing communication patterns and experiences. In contrast to a linear understanding of learning, this dynamic could be described as circular development. It involves referring to previous experiences, anticipating outcomes, and negotiating between the two.

In regard to education, this process demonstrates why it is so difficult to track and trace what a person has learned – tests cannot reveal exactly how deeply knowledge has been incorporated and whether the person will be able to implement it when it is needed.

Personal learning processes are full of "confusions." Progress is often a surprising result of former regressions or recursions to old patterns. This pattern is not a pure cognitive model. One model posited by neurological science uses neuronal maps that display qualitatively and quantitatively different clusters of similar experiences within the mind. Behavioral patterns are "extracted from recurring examples and model situations and condensed into rules and patterns."¹⁴

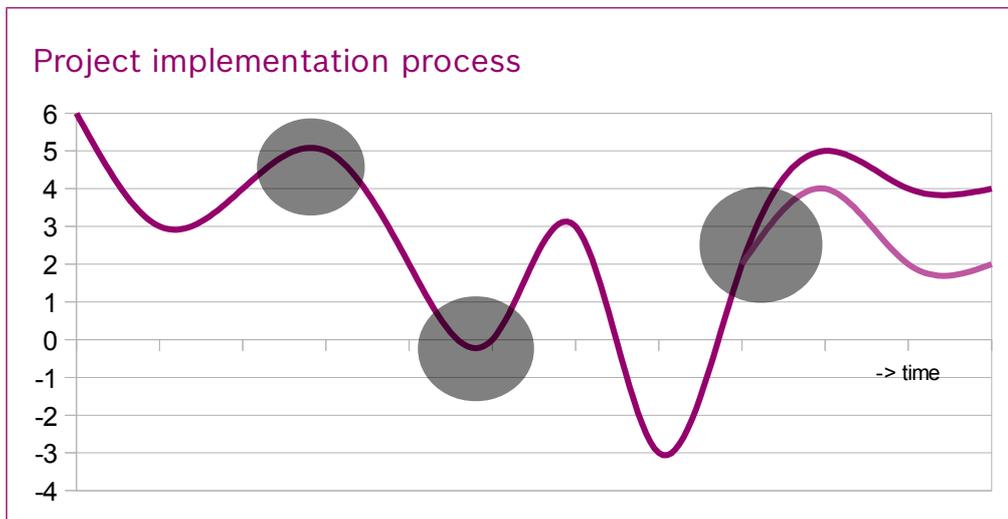
In our trainings, we sometimes ask participants to visualize their projects and their learning processes in a subjective

¹¹ Raddatz; p. 33

¹² Raddatz; p. 39

¹³ Luhmann, p. 46

¹⁴ Heinz Schrip, p.106



curve. The horizontal axis describes time, the vertical axis describes the feeling associated with the project and its outcomes. Project work is characterized by ups and downs. The most valuable points for reflection are the curve's turning points or the ambiguous areas (confusions, source of learning).

We can analyze experiential learning processes with regard to the popular model developed by David Kolb, as cycles comprising different phases: 1. concrete experience, 2. reflective observation, 3. abstract conceptualization, and 4. active experimentation.

Individuals cannot give their resources and energies constantly. They do not know what will happen tomorrow, and experience helps them to figure probabilities. Furthermore, they cannot perform at 110% for a long term period even if they want to or think they can. Especially in volunteer projects, life is a wild combination of

certainty and uncertainty involving personal friendships, studying, need for further learning, or dramatic life changes.

The confusions represented by the turning points in the curve confront us with uncertainty. We lose control and certainty but gain new experiences. This stimulates reflection and learning.

Systems and Mentorship

Our mentorship relationships are defined by the belief that both mentors and mentees are autonomous individuals. They are guided by principles like "self-direction, self-initiation, self-organization in a specific sense (the organizational form for one's learning), and self-evaluation"¹⁵ This means

Progress in learning involves organizing recursions, processing ongoing trial and error, harmony and conflict.

¹⁵ Horst Siebert (2006), p. 30

Phases of Experiential Learning



1. Concrete Experience

We are often in situations in which we cannot behave intuitively. Think of being a visitor in this hotel. The subjective view.

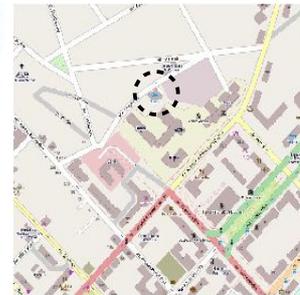


2. Reflective Observation

Does this approach lead to success? Observation helps to order new experiences and compare them with older ones.

3. Abstract Conceptualization

Now we learn to understand the surprisingly symmetrical rationality behind "chaos."



4. Active Experimentation

Let's explore all the floors of the hotel where we're staying. Now is it easier to find your way?

5. New Experience

By applying our new knowledge to future situations, we will be able to read city maps, instruction manuals, etc. In the future we might even grow to love the architect.

taking full "responsibility" (Whitmore) and being your own "chairperson" (Cohn).

With respect to this responsibility to autonomy, there are several legitimate points of view. They develop from the needs and demands of the involved systems, which can include one's job environment, a mentoring-program, or one's family. People act, they communicate with systems, and they "are" the perceived results of these communications.

Mentoring can help raise awareness in terms of people's needs and intentions.

*"[Awareness] is gathering and clearly perceiving the relevant facts and information, and the ability to determine what is relevant."*¹⁶

Mentors cannot change their mentees – this is the mentee's responsibility and is based on his or her ability to decide what makes sense. Mentorship basically helps one reflect on the relationship between cause and effect. One of its tasks is to facilitate the ability to observe.

16 John Whitmore, p.34

Recurring tasks or events and individual and shared experience all contribute to an individual's identity. Identity inherently involves ambiguity and multiple perspectives. Mentoring can help one observe these ambiguities with a sense of trust, sharpened observational skills, and reliable feedback.

Our lives consist of many recurring experiences and patterns of behavior. Taking this into account, mentoring is a circular process determined by personal development. It is important that we appreciate and value this in ourselves and others.◇



Individuals' behaviors and traits develop based on their abilities to observe and reflect.

3 Self-Directed Learning

Our activities are not primarily focused on documented results, but rather are a process of self-directed learning. The most positive results of an adult's educational experience do not come from schools, from seminars, or from books. Learning from life, defining priorities, and finding intuitive ways to succeed are the most important educational elements. While progressive schools claim that these elements should complement the courses they offer, we think that it's the other way around. Formal learning environments supplement the rich experience of autodidactic learning. This chapter reveals how mentorships can contribute to establishing good frameworks for self-defined learning.

Learning in a mentorship environment is affected by the amount of autonomy granted to the mentees. In some mentoring settings, mentees are not able to behave autonomously – their work is limited by rigid expectations and procedures. While this is different in voluntary informal mentorships, most mentees are not completely independent and their autonomy can be limited by resources and how to allocate them, funding

objectives, appointments, outcome definition, and corporate culture.

Learning arrangements take place on a spectrum ranging from autodidactic to externally controlled learning. Mentorship or project coaching should help teams to increase autonomy and to find strategies to balance the desire for responsibility and autonomy with environmental demands.¹⁷

Learning Arrangements		
	Autodidactic	Externally Controlled
Learning Orientation	Focuses on the person learning	Focuses on the person teaching
What the person learning does	Learning by acting	Consuming learning person
Time and space restrictions for the person learning	Flexible	Fixed times and learning places
Defining objectives and content	Freely determined by the person learning	Defined for the person learning

Supportive Environments

Some environments are more supportive than others in this regard. Project groups are one example of a potential place to facilitate autodidactic learning. In contrast to an institution's permanent or long-term procedures, a project is a temporary allocation of people who collaborate on (a few) specifically described, realistic, and measurable goals.

A project team is not usually part of a larger structure's hierarchy, but rather horizontal to it as staff members or part of a matrix organization. A project even can be conducted without a larger institutional background. It enables individuals from several contexts to work together with minimum regard to the demands and rules of other environments. Projects provide good opportunities for defining frameworks for activities and constructing them according to the needs and demands of the people involved. It is not uncommon for project teams to have learned something different from what was intended. They experience an informal style of learning.

“Informal learning is learning that results from daily activities related to work, family, or leisure. It is not organized or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support. It is in most cases unintentional from the learner's perspective.”

Thinking of mentorship as a learning environment initiates the conditions for

experiential learning. Mentors support mentees concretely by shaping the mentorship space, and facilitating the mentee's reflection on the possibilities within the given environment.

The Non-Formal Point of View

In informal learning, the goal is less consciously planned out. Mentorship can support the autodidactic learning process more effectively by increasing awareness in its participants. It is helpful to direct this increased awareness in mentees to the learning process. The process then takes on a non-formal, rather than informal, character.

“Non-formal learning is embedded in planned activities not explicitly designated as learning (in terms of learning objectives, learning time, or learning support). It is intentional from the learner's point of view.”¹⁸

Mentors are especially important when a mentee is too busy and deeply involved in work or a process. The mentor has a more observant perspective and can help the mentee to temporarily break his or her routine and also observe. Tools and techniques for project coaching can help and support this strategy.

Focus on The Solution

When facing a challenge, people use one of two approaches. In the academic sphere,

18 OECD 2010, p. 22

problem-orientation is very common: We test a hypothesis critically. This criticism helps us to understand the hypothesis's complexity and we elaborate on it. At conferences, other people review it with a critical attitude. In public relations we often define ourselves as "critically thinking people."

We know that lively democracy requires two paradoxical attitudes. First, an attitude characterized by benevolence, trust, and support. Second, a opposite critical attitude in regard to ideas, politicians and their projects.

When a politician puts forth "practical solutions," we asked to mobilize two paradoxical attitudes: We have to ask ourselves whether this will actually lead to the desired results and what the real intention is. This is the critical approach. On the other hand we need to see constructive alternatives and to generally mobilize trust in our representatives' capacities.

The problem-oriented approach can be helpful in understanding, but it often causes conflicts. And too much focus on the critical approach often makes situations more complex. When none of the possible solutions can meet the ideal requirements, a general solution may become something to plan in the distant future. This can cause strain, especially when individuals are under pressure and feel stressed.

The broad field of systemic coaching literature, therefore, concentrates on the opposite approach: helping people to find and develop *solutions* not based on their problems, but rather on their *abilities*,

Questions Aimed at Solutions

These questions focus on existing capacities, successful approved strategies, and realistic descriptions of the situation and the experienced behavior.

"Tell me when 'the problem' is a bit smaller!"

"Tell me about the last time this happened. How did you respond?"

"What do you want to achieve?"

"What do you need to avoid in order to achieve your goal?"

"What will you need to do differently if the situation changes?"

"What would your best friend say if I asked her what you usually do when the situation changes?"

"solutions to problematic patterns in thought and behavior – and finding solutions dialogically."¹⁹ Our mentees are able to find solutions from among their problems. Their solutions come from their

¹⁹ Marion Fischer-Epe, p. 59

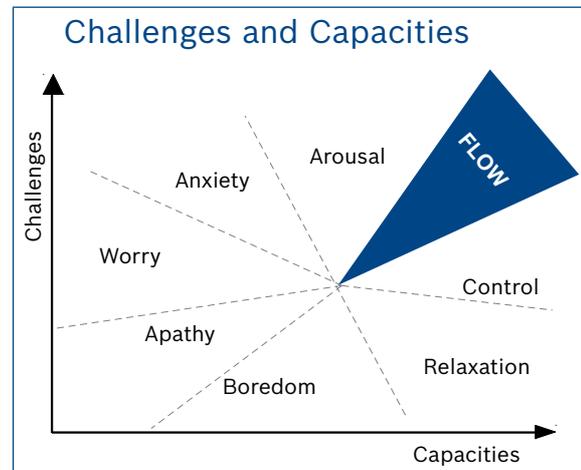
realistically described abilities.

That being said, we do not want to overlook the productivity of critical observing. We do want to point out that being oriented on solutions helps mentees concentrate on their strengths and adjust their goals more easily. Mentors can support this with an optimistic attitude and an appreciation for their mentees' *existing* abilities. To this end, there are constructive solution-oriented techniques that mentors can use in their dialogs.

Motivation

Motivation is vital to self-directed learning, the *intrinsic* joy in doing well - when we want to achieve something for the resulting personal satisfaction alone. Environmental motivational forces like money, popularity, good grades, or power can be effective, but not necessarily over the long term. Mentees have to be in touch with their own intrinsic motivations. A person's motivation corresponds to available resources and to his or her own personal needs: The key to intrinsic motivation is the achievement of self-actualization.

What does that mean? Maslow defined it as the top part of a pyramid, in which basic needs form the base. Critics argue that this tiered way of thinking leads to incorrect assumptions - even people who have problems meeting their basic needs can develop sophisticated motivation to achieve self-actualization, certainly more complex than simply earning money to survive. What



motivates a person depends on his or her personality, the other people involved, and the context. The mentee determines where he or she feels the need for action.

Self-actualization relates directly to learning. It is an incredible feeling. People encounter great excitement when they leave their comfort zones and face new challenges. Mihály Csíkszentmihályi describes this self-actualization as “autotelic experience, [being] totally taken up in an activity.”²⁰ In this kind of situation, one moment flows into another. One action leads seamlessly to the next, the person does not feel separate from his or her environment, and is able to meet challenges in a meaningful way.

Csíkszentmihályi examines the conditions of this “flow” experience. He identifies the optimal relationship between the challenges a person faces and his or her own abilities. If the two are well balanced, a person acts with passion and without feeling like he or she is exerting tremendous

²⁰ Mihály Csíkszentmihályi, p. 59

effort. *Creative activities, play, and elaborate rituals* seem to stimulate and foster intrinsic motivation more than competitive ones. A person who has been deprived of such “flow” activities often shows symptoms that can include hunger, tiredness, sleepiness, sensitivity, and headaches.

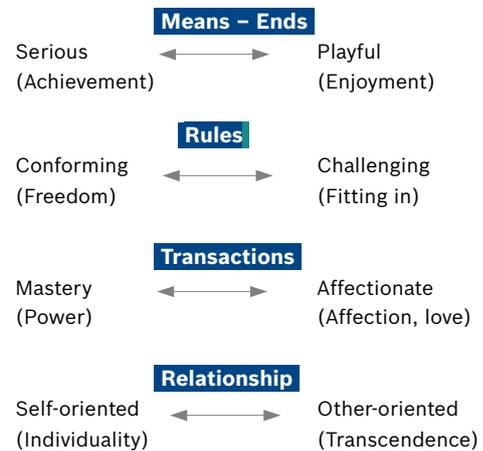
What role can mentors play in terms of all this? First, mentors can invite mentees to identify challenges and to describe *specific measurable and realistic goals*. We can ask critically if these goals correspond with their personal abilities. We can also emphasize the mentees’ abilities and competency. Third, we can create conditions that make it easier for a mentee to find a creative, playful way to face his or her challenges.

Flow is produced by a host of changing variables. When we do something for the first time we feel excited. If we do it repeatedly, we feel secure. If we do it every day, there is a danger we will start to feel bored. Therefore, we have to be aware that activities that once produced flow may fail to have the same result in another situation. Soccer coaches know this: They work hard so that every game provides a new balance of challenge and ability and leads to increased performance.

Certainly mentors and mentees have personal preferences that influence their motivation. Michael J. Apter has identified specific motivational profiles. The underlying question is: What motivates you and how do you express this intrinsically driven behavior?

According to Apter, motivation expresses itself in four ways: Relationships, rules,

Motivational Styles



Source: Apter

transactions and means. Everyone has preferences here, but at the same time, living a healthy life entails experiencing every type of these. The types are formed by pairs of opposites. For example, there are two sides to a “relationship”: a self-oriented and an other-oriented one. One cannot act in both ways at the same time; however, a “reversal” can occur in which “the opposite state takes over at that moment.” Apter concludes

“[Mentors should help mentees] experience all these states at work, and in this way to display motivational versatility and psychodiversity, especially since organizations tend to privilege the serious, conformist, and achievement states.”²¹

21 Michael J. Apter/Stephen Carter, p. 293

For example, a mentor can help a mentee who has a strong tendency to take control by encouraging him to experience an affectionate state of mind. Or to find motivation in another pair.

Some mentors' predispositions support the mentoring process. People who tend to be "other-oriented" instead of "self-oriented" may be better suited to working with a mentee. Also, having a "playful" approach may help you to deepen the relationship (in contrast to concentrating primarily on achievements).

Competencies

The style of autonomous and reflective action depends on our environments. Autonomy, rationality, and reflection are not values that are always celebrated by the mainstream. Instead, they are conditions for successful, goal-oriented behavior. Even in dictatorships, people behave rationally, reflect on their positions, and develop their individual solutions in terms of identity and logic. On the other hand, what distinguishes democratic approaches of empowerment from the way the North Korean government would define leadership? Reflecting on the norms of any society is important and the skills to do so should be improved.

What is a competency? The OECD had to define this to form the foundation of their international comparative projects in educational systems.

Core Competencies

Using Tools Interactively

Use language, symbols and texts interactively
Use knowledge and information interactively
Use technology interactively

Interacting in Heterogeneous Groups

Relate well to others
Co-operate, work in teams
Manage and resolve conflicts

Acting Autonomously

Act within the big picture
Form and conduct life plans and personal projects
Defend and assert rights, interests, limits, needs

Source: OECD

„A competency is more than just knowledge and skills. It involves the ability to meet complex demands, by drawing on and mobilizing psychosocial resources (including skills and attitudes) in a particular context.“²²

According to a dynamic constructivist learning model, empowering people to become reflective, interactive, and autonomous is of utmost importance. In reality, people's working structures do not reflect this paradigm. They tend to subordinate people under their autonomy. Even democratic societies' institutions like families, companies, or non-governmental organizations do not necessarily respect the rights and needs of their members.

Civic Competencies

Therefore, we can add a normative component to the OECD definition. In his historic reflections on “Democracy and Education,” John Dewey cited two qualitative criteria for a citizen's “democratic” education. First, he states that people must have the ability “to receive and to take from others,” sharing a huge number of common values and interests. Acquiring civic competencies means creating inclusive communication and structures – giving new colleagues and other interested parties the opportunity to gather information, to participate, and to discuss their own concerns.

Second, Dewey pointed out that individuals have to “change their social habits” to develop the “fullness and freedom” with which a democratic group seeks interaction with other groups.²³

Robert Putnam uses the term “social capital” to describe how a society’s interpersonal communication

leads to positive outcomes: “to call attention to the ways in which our lives are made more productive by social ties.”²⁴

Bonding social capital is good for “undergirding specific reciprocity and mobilizing solidarity.” It is generated by joining existing relatively homogenous

23 John Dewey (1916), Chapter 7

24 Robert Putnam, p. 19

Skills

Intrapersonal Skills

me - reflection, flexibility,

Interpersonal or Social Skills

me and you - empathy, communication skills,

Methodological Skills

me and a topic - analytical thinking, planning, describing objectives,

Cultural Skills

me and society - acting as a conscious citizen, accumulating social capital, using media, sharing values

Strategic Skills

my visions - acting in a long-term framework of values and visions

structures/sub-systems. *Bridging* social capital is generated by joining a heterogeneous social environment, “for linkage to external assets and for information diffusion.”²⁵ In order to change something, one must step outside one’s own group and solicit others’ consent.

One basic assumption of humanism is that all people and creatures have a special value, and that we should harbor a fundamental respect towards all living things.

This platform of share values is not self-explanatory. Commitment alone is not necessarily desirable or worthy of support. “Civic” is that which counters the previously mentioned back-handed methods or arbitrary systems. As transcending cultures and systems, we see the individual’s rights and opportunities for societal participation

25 Robert Putnam, p. 22

Civic competencies enable people to act in a responsible way in society, in interaction with other individuals, and according to values like transparency, openness, social responsibility.

as the focus of this moral system. We consider individuals to be seeking self-realization, to be in touch with the “purposes and beliefs” (Whitmore) behind their behaviors. Their intrinsic motivation is activated when they feel their behaviors and beliefs are in harmony. In light of this, we want to develop our own definition of civic competencies.

Practicing Mindfulness

Our success depends on the implications we draw from our observations, we have to improve our observational skills. What am I feeling, hearing, smelling, seeing, tasting? What feelings are influencing my observations? Are these negative ones or neutral ones? Mindfulness is “owning each moment of your experience completely, no matter if it is good, bad or ugly”.²⁶ Mindfulness is cultivated by consciously observing things we ordinary do not.

Increasing awareness can be practiced in everyday life. Close your eyes and listen attentively. Or focus on tasting what you are eating – do you feel the difference? Observe your body’s cues – temperature, perspiration, heartbeat. Mindfulness improves our observational skills as well as our behavior. Being open to all the senses is imperative in order to create the mentoring environment comfortable. New knowledge

and skills are first incorporated through responses to visual, tactile, auditory, and kinesthetic impulses. People can also be influenced by specific spaces or locations and the presence and absence of certain people or social groups.◇

*“What keeps
us moving is
the experience
of acting without
fear or boredom.”*

Mihály Csíkszentmihályi



²⁶ Jon Kabat -Zinn, p.11

4 Attitudes as a mentor

I am a mentor and my mentee needs my support. What should I do? We see two main approaches: giving advice and asking questions. When you want to buy something in a store, a clerk can help you in any number of ways. One person might describe the product's specifications to you. Another person will ask you what you need the item for. Both approaches accomplish a goal. In this chapter, we will discuss the inner logic of different approaches and what implications they each have on our roles as mentors. Some tools will help to elaborate your supportive style.

With regards to this example, a clerk's strategy might also change. For example, imagine entering an electronics superstore. You want to buy a complex device you are not familiar with – so you ask for help. A clerk will often bombard you with a cloud of confusing terminology you do not understand. If he's smart, he might be flexible enough to take a different approach if he notices your confusion. A shift in awareness can make him ask first: What do you want? How are you going to use this device?

These decisions are influenced by both the customer's and the clerk's personalities. In mentorships, this is illustrated in the fact that both mentors and mentees have approaches they prefer to others (which can vary depending on whether they are addressing someone or being addressed). A mentor's decisions in regard to approach have a huge impact on mentorships.

The Exclamation Mark: Advice

Advice involves interpreting the problem and formulating a unique solution. Presentations, comments, or active suggestions from a mentor are also "advice" in this sense. "In my opinion, the problem appears to be..." "This is what I can do for you..."

Advice is perhaps best described as an exclamation mark. It expresses a point of view or a solution that began in the mentor's mind. From the mentee's perspective, it is:

"Tell me how you would solve this problem."

Or sometimes even: "Dear mentor, solve this problem for me." Giving advice typically causes the mentee to take a more passive role in developing a solution. It transfers responsibility for finding a solution to the mentor.

Advice

- Based on a consultant's capacities
- Focused on the solution
- Proposal, presentation of solutions
- Estimations, Commentaries
- Transfer of knowledge
- Actively offering suggestions and contacts
- Intervention in team processes: Meetings, moderations, ...



However, in order for mentors to be able to give advice, they have to become more involved in their mentees' activities to some degree. Typical examples of this include when a mentor is actively involved in the team process: A mentor moderates a meeting. Or he or she actively offers his or her contacts and resources instead of waiting for the mentee to ask for them. Seeking advice is a quick solution and helps us divide our labor: If we do not have the capacity to understand a problem or to solve it, we look for someone who can help. We do not have to learn anything and can arrive at a solution very quickly.

When one asks for advice, one problem can involve two advisors and four opinions. What then? This common situation illustrates one limitation of seeking advice: It quickly brings other people into the context, which can then become complex. On a related note, the quality of the advice depends on the mentor's understanding of

the situation at hand. If a mentor does not, then his or her advice decreases in value. And since it requires us to show our expertise and find the best possible solution, giving advice is a challenging cognitive and psychological task. In conclusion, we can say: Mentors should exercise caution when giving advice. Are you sure that you really understand the problem from your mentee's perspective? Even if a mentor creates a solution for a mentee to carry out, the approach has to be one that the mentee can handle. The mentor will not be the one carrying it out.

Giving advice causes the mentee to take a more passive role in developing a solution. It transfers responsibility to the mentor.

The Question Mark: Coaching

The opposite of the energetic exclamation mark is the question mark. Questions can be very powerful. Think of a clerk in a store who asks a customer: Do you need this item? What does your partner think? Can you imagine what life would be like with this item? What about without it? This kind of questioning would have a huge impact on the customer's tendency to reflect on his or her needs and resources. The customer will reach a decision more easily. He or she might even make a decision that the clerk had not foreseen. As in this example, coaches are people who pose challenging questions to help their clients or, as they are sometimes called, "coachees" identify possible solutions and think about them independently. This close

relationship to systemic qualities like autonomy, the validity of multiple perspectives, and rationality gives some authors cause to use the term “systemic coaching.”

“In systemic coaching, our role is to clearly support our coachees in solving their problems independently and responsibly. In their private lives, in their professional ones, or anywhere in between.”²⁷

Coaching approaches are positive in that they are based on autonomy and personal responsibility. This prevents the coachee from becoming dependent on the coach. In this sense, a coachee will always receive what he wants. And if not, then the client is responsible for clarifying and reflecting on his or her goals. An advisor says, “I’ll give you a solution.” A coach says:

“I’ll help you to understand your concerns and find a way toward a solution.”

Advice has its limits, as mentioned, if the concerns and the solution don’t coincide. The advisor is not responsible for implementation. The coaching approach is often more effective because the client has already spent time

thinking about what his or her concerns are and how to best begin to work with them.

²⁷ Sonja Raddatz, p. 87

Coaching

Based on the coachee’s capacities

Enables coachees to work on and find solutions

Coachees choose goals, pace, and when the process should end

Focuses on process

Facilitates the incorporation of knowledge

Questions from an observational perspective: what, when, how



He or she knows that no one else can or should be responsible for them.

These ideas have many implications. The success of the process depends on the mentee’s ability and willingness to reflect. So coaching produces effects more slowly and focuses on the decision-making process more than giving advice, which is good for finding solutions problems quickly. A coaching relationship also needs to have a foundation of trust. If a client cannot or does not want to define goals and work toward solutions, then nothing will happen.

General Virtues of a Mentor

There are some principles that are not exclusive to either coaching or offering advice. Some mentors think that coaching is a “softer” approach that encourages and emphasizes feedback and the “soft skills” so popular in today’s modern world. And

Coaching helps individuals find solutions independently. A coach is responsible for creating the appropriate environment and for the methodological approach.

advice is often thought of as challenging, something that the “tough guys” do. But the clerk who carefully tries to find out what a customer needs before giving advice might also be the more successful salesperson. A good consultant uses questions and is oriented to the client's needs.

Universal Principles

All three of these activities entail respecting basic human principles and moral values. There are people who work as coaches but do not respect their clients and do not reflect on the consequences of their actions. There are also consultants who just want to sell their point of view and do not truly take their clients into account.

Mentorships take this a step further in that the quality of the relationship is the responsibility of both the mentor and the mentee. The necessary conditions for this are appreciation and respect.

Mentorship is pure communication based on trust. Mentors and mentees have to establish an atmosphere of respectful, validating, and non-violent communication. The chapter on communication describes specific tools and models that illustrate this.

Is Mentorship Psychology?

As you might guess from the descriptions of coaching so far, the literature about it covers a lot of territory. The difficult questions that come up in mentorship trainings include: “What kinds of damage can coaching techniques potentially cause?



Am I qualified for this role? To what extent can mentorship affect fundamental changes?” The more a mentor’s role concerns basic patterns of behavior or beliefs and values rooted deeply in an individual, the more perceptive mentors have to be. The limitations of a role as a mentor, coach, or advisor are not always fixed and objective. Mentors are responsible for knowing the topic to be discussed, for creating concrete questions, or for trying to see things from the mentee's point of view. But they are not responsible for the mentee’s person. Coaching in the professional field deals with questions also posed in mentoring, such as “How can I manage my project team more efficiently?” But it also addresses more fundamental behavioral patterns, likes, and dislikes. So mentorship lies somewhere between coaching and advice. If, as a mentor, you find yourself wondering where the limitations of your role are, you might follow this general guideline: The limitation is where you no longer feel able to fulfill your

role as a mentor. Even very experienced mentors have to take this into consideration on a regular basis. This becomes especially relevant in the performative phase of mentorship. We will come back to this topic in the chapter “Performance and Intervention.”

Shifting Between the Approaches

A mentorship can involve many different roles and degrees of responsibility. Sometimes mentors are more involved in the process, sometimes they have a more observational and passive role. Ideally, mentors make a deliberate choice to act one way or another and make clear to their mentees that they are doing so. If a mentor has used constructive, solution-oriented questioning techniques in a discussion about a project proposal, he or she should not suddenly adopt an advising approach. This could give rise to misunderstandings or make the mentee feel insecure. Shifting from one approach to another should be done deliberately and openly.

Those involved in coaching circles frequently discuss whether unsolicited advice should ever be given. Mentors should not give too much advice that is not goal-oriented or practical for the mentee. It always helps to ask: “Would you like any advice?”

Counterproductive Roles

Mentors can have subtly varying approaches to mentoring based on their

own subjective definitions of the roles they play.²⁸ There are several different approaches that we observe critically:

Some mentoring relationships have a *fatherly or motherly* tone, and work from a very harmonious and personal basis. But does this support growth or development?

The second type is the *super hero*. She solves problems and removes difficulties. Mentees recognize her involvement with gratitude – is that what she wants?

The *copyist* understands his job and capacities as a role model and tries to shape the mentee in the same way. But what if the mentee’s reality is different and the mentor’s personal model is not suitable?

The *king-maker* seeks to promote her mentee’s position, which is one way to measure the success of a mentorship – but sometimes it is not clear who is more ambitious in this regard, the mentor or the mentee.

Open Questions

Just because a mentee or a project team finds themselves in a desperate situation, it does not mean that the mentor should automatically switch to an advising approach. Here it can be especially helpful to remain firm in a coaching role. Asking questions and staying solution-oriented are helpful tactics.

A closed-ended question requires a specific answer. An open-ended question encourages multiple possibilities. Open-

28 Bernd Schmid, Nele Haasen, p. 51

ended questions are especially important in mentoring. If a mentee is complaining and you can ask her yes-or-no questions, what will happen?

“Are you having trouble with your work?”

“No, not really...”

“Problems with your family?”

“No, not really...”

An open-ended question puts the mentee into an active position of responsibility. The conversation can then take unexpected turns.

“What makes you feel this way?”

Open-ended constructive questions that start with “who,” “what,” “when,” “where” help locate the problem. Questions should not try to cover too much ground at once.

“What is the decisive factor in making you

feel this way?” (too abstract)

“Hmmmmm...”

“When do you feel really happy?”

“Hmmmmmmm...”

These are solution-oriented questions, but they demand too much reflection. Sometimes mentors tend to increase the scope of their questions when they feel the mentee’s attitude is one of uncertainty. But this only strengthens the negative effect of asking questions. It is better to address things in smaller increments that reflect mentee’s capacity in the specific situation.

Miracle Questions

“Suppose a miracle took place while you were sleeping and the problem you’re dealing with now has been solved. What would you be doing differently?”

“How will your best friend notice that this miracle has taken place?”

“How will you yourself become aware of the fact that the miracle has taken place?”

Miracles and Exceptions

What if... What is the ideal situation and how is it different from our actual situations? Steve de Shazer developed a coaching method that makes use of ideal situations. The focus is the path that leads to the ideal. The miracle is simply an “opening move.” It does not require any specific answer. De Shazer sees the miracle question as a “frame-setting device, a way to initiate a language game that determines and defines what it is that the client and therapist are to talk about next.”²⁹ Through a series of solution-oriented questions, the coachee approaches this goal. The inner

29 Steve De Shazer

ideal becomes visible from the outside. Miracle questions focus on the description of a positive, imagined world and make solutions more concrete and achievable.

A smaller step than the miracle questions could be suitable for people who are currently more rooted in reality. We call these “little-miracle-questions.”

These lead us to constructive thinking about solutions and not about problems. It can be paralyzing to imagine a dark sea of problems. “When was the last time it happened, even to a small degree?” These questions take a mentee's thoughts in a new direction. The next step can be to appreciate what one has experienced, and to put it in relation to one's goal.

Exceptions are the situations in which something different was done successfully. By paying attention to them, we can understand what has to be done differently. Then the way to the solution and to different behavior is not impossible to imagine.

Scaling

Scaling shows us where our goals fall along a scale. Where our initial positions are and what distance we have to cross to get there. When one uses scaling, one can talk concretely about what has to happen in the future in order to make progress along the scale. Or to reach the goal. Steve de Shazer used scales in his short-term-intervention based on the miracle question. First, one imagines what the optimal solution looks like. In the next step, scales help to visualize the necessary steps to get there.

Using Exceptions

“What you do different now?”

“What can you do so other people see the difference?”

“How has the situation changed?”

“What has to happen for this to take place more often?”

Little Miracle Questions

“When was the last time it happened - even to a small degree?”

“How did you do that?”

“What would it take to do it again?”

“If you were to pretend, even for a little while, that a small miracle had occurred, what one or two things would you be doing differently?”

The combination of different scales can help us to analyze complex problems or to take stock of different aspects of a situation. Scales can be used with: teams, personal goals, outcomes, partnerships... The ways multiple scales can be used is illustrated in the chapter “Reflection.”

Coping

We support our mentees by showing empathy. Coping questions help construct a solution-oriented focus. Let’s take this as an example: “Where does your optimism come from?” Initially the person asked feels a sense of connection and appreciation. Then, he or she hears the question more precisely and asks him or herself: “Hmm, where does my optimism come from and what how can I make it something reliable for myself in different situations?”

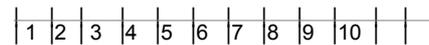
Multiple Perspectives

Changing perspectives can help one observe a situation in its totality. Circular questions make complex relationships visible. Without being able to ask the people involved directly, we can better visualize how everyone works together and what their differences would be in the same situation.

“A problem is a behavior in which different people participate. It is not a ‘qualitative feature’ that a person or a social system ‘has.’”³⁰

³⁰ Arist v. Schlippe, p. 7

Scaling



“Imagine a scale from 1 to 10. 1 is the lowest level 10 means, the problem is solved - where are you at the moment?”

“Where are you NOW on the scale?”

“How did you get there?”

“What will be the next step?”

Coping

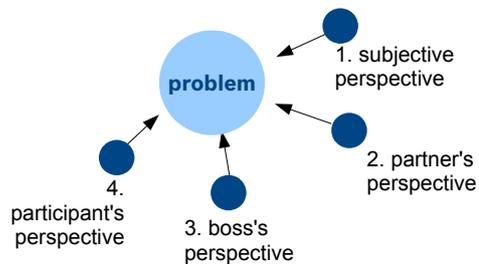
“How did you manage all this?”

“Where does your energy come from?”

Where does your optimism “come from?”

“Why aren’t things worse?”

Multiple Perspectives



“What does your partner think about the situation?”

“What does your boss think?”

“How do your participants observe this?”

“What would people have thought ten years ago?”

A pessimist might claim that one person alone cannot change anything. The good news is regardless of how grim a situation appears, it can always be changed by learning to understand the relation between cause and effect.

Circular questions also stimulate consideration for how other participants feel and how they perceive different behaviors. They help us develop empathy and to relativize our negative feelings about other people.◇

*“A mentor’s challenge
is to balance active
involvement and
letting go.”*



5 Mentorship Process

Mentorship is an inherently open-ended process. It lasts as long as both mentor and mentee want it to. Mentorship often takes place as part of a mentorship program or focuses on projects of specific duration such as a mentee's first year at a university. The mentor's and the mentee's needs help develop a structure to define roles. This chapter introduces tools for taking this first step.

Mentoring is a team process and a learning one. It is non-linear and dynamic. Several models for these processes have been developed, especially in regard to systemic approaches for coaching. Some models focus more on individual meetings, like Whitmore's G-R-O-W model, introduced later in this chapter. Others take all the phases of a longer process into account.

Similarities exist among most models.

The first phase deals with defining conditions and coming together for joint-projects. It is followed by a period of reviewing, collecting information, and analyzing. Afterward, in a very performative phase, solutions are implemented. A reflective phase attempts to evaluate what has been done.

Structuring the mentoring process is also based on how regularly and consistently a mentee can work on his or her goals. Mentorships based on project coaching are oriented on the various phases of project work including: preparation, conceptualization, performance, and reflection. If managing a team presents a challenge, then team dynamics can also be an important factor. If a mentee does not have a specific goal but has a broad agenda, the process will entail stringing together many individual meetings. In summary, several variables influence a mentorship's structure. We recognize four phases present in learning models and models of providing support.

Structure of a mentoring process



“Work demands structure. If you don't structure it, you can't expect your mentee to do as much.”

Characteristics of the Phases

Joining & Contracting

From the mentee's perspective this phase entails meeting the mentor and becoming familiar with the new situation. Here a virtual contract is signed by agreeing on expectations and goals.

Development & Analysis

Mentees develop their project ideas or take the first steps toward doing so in their environment. The mentorship focuses on the analysis of demands and potentials.

Performance & Intervention

The "hot" phase of the mentee's activities. Mentorship oscillates between silence, short meetings, active support, and intervention. Typical questions in this phase include: How will this mentorship suit my specific needs for performance? From the perspective of the mentor: To what extent are intervention and active involvement useful and needed?

Reflection

From high performance back to a more observational focus: In the reflection phase, mentees take stock. What skills did they gain? What were the outcomes – of the project, on the mentee's personality, her or his network, the environment? What future perspectives did they develop? And last but not least: Did the mentor and the mentee meet the goals they set in the joining & contracting phase?

Structure and Planning

Most mentorships are embedded in a program's framework. These programs can last from a few months up to a year. Most have clear guidelines for how regularly mentors and mentees should meet or communicate.

Mentors and mentees have expectations in terms of how much time and energy they want to dedicate to the mentorship, how

regularly they can meet, and the intensity and medium of communication used. The schedule on page 50 can serve as an overview. An initial orientation establishes a mentoring-program's conditions (obligatory meetings or deadlines), the schedule for meetings between mentees and mentors, and the events, vacations, business trips, phases of intensive work in which they participate.

Matching

Matching is the forming of mentorship teams. Mentees and mentors come together to form trustful relationships.

In some programs, mentors select their mentees, thus increasing the feasibility that mentors find one with whom they like working.

In other programs, mentees select their mentors. But, as a study in Germany shows, in most cases mentors and mentees are selected by a third party based on specific criteria (personalities, positions, specific experience, and motivation).³¹ Therefore, having both mentors and mentees fill out mentoring profiles is very useful.

In some cases, mentors and mentees have the opportunity to meet in group workshops and then to choose how to pair up. We have successfully matched people in project management workshops in which future mentors coached their potential mentees in the process of project development.

³¹ Frank Edelkraut/Nele Graf, p. 61

Responsibilities

Mentors' and mentees' awareness of their own responsibilities can change throughout the course of a mentorship. This can lead to lack of clarity or, at times, disappointments. Therefore, we advise that responsibilities be addressed in every phase of a mentorship, not just the first part. General responsibilities should be clarified at the program's outset, but a more practical and specific discussion about them happens over time. Our experience has been that particular awareness should be given to this topic during the performance phase.

The mentor's main responsibility is to establish the first steps in a mentorship and then to maintain it throughout. On a related note, mentors should also give their meetings with mentees clear formal and methodological structures.

The mentee is responsible for communicating with his or her mentor actively and regularly, developing his or her activities independently, and implementing the ideas that came about through meetings.

Documentation

It can be useful to document activities between mentor and mentee. For mentors, we recommend a *checklist for preparing for a meeting* and an *assessment sheet* for reflecting on them. Mentees can also complete assessment sheets: In *questionnaires*, they can give the mentor feedback or discuss the impact of their

meetings. A protocol or assessment sheet can also be a valuable tool. See the checklist Assessment Sheet.

Mentee journals are less formal but very appropriate tools. Their pages are basically blank and mentees can write notes or thoughts about meetings or other relevant topics in them. Such journals raise awareness of independence and self-direction. They can accommodate people's various preferences for documentation techniques and increase in value the more they are used. If mentors hand out well made, practical, and inviting notebooks for this purpose, they are more likely to be used and valued by mentees.

Preparing the First Steps

What do you as a mentor look for in becoming part of a mentorship? What are the goals of your mentee or the mentoring program?

Take the time to prepare these first steps carefully. The contracting phase is always an adventure for mentor and mentee alike. You may find yourself thinking of many different thoughts at once as you get to know the other person in your mentoring pair. The dynamic of the conversation and concentrating on the other person can make it easy to forget what needed to be clarified. Along with solid preparation, good documentation makes these important points accessible later. Mentors and mentees will need to remember them later on. We recommend taking precise notes on the topics listed under "Expectations and

Identifying Milestones

- | formulated from a past tense
- | specific date
- | not too many milestones

Milestone 1

Date: May 31th

Name: End of Preparation

What: Fundraising completed, call for participation has gone out, website is online.

Aspects to Keep in Mind

Personalities

- | Mentee and mentor personalities,
- | Experience
- | Learning and advising attitudes
- | Personal values, interests and knowledge
- | Development goals

Environment

- | Intentions of the institution
- | Specific conditions: resources, duration, duties, degree of formality, other relevant stakeholders
- | Attachment of the mentees and mentors to the institution

Project framework

- | Internal resources, schedules
- | Managerial demands, complexity
- | Internal communication, project team
- | Main current and future challenges

Initial Contact,” which was developed for precisely this reason. Certain questions are specific to particular forms of mentorship. The “Mentoring Schedule” can also help mentors and mentees prepare for their initial meetings.

First, it helps record the mentor and mentee's important and set dates. It can be easier to talk about how to fill the rest of the time in a second step. For regular meetings, the intensity of preparation can depend on how strongly mentor and mentee want to concentrate on mentoring.

The milestones are a particularly important part of this checklist and deserve careful attention. These are the dates by which your work should have completed important steps, and they are a good way to gauge how realistic your planning has been.

Conducting Meetings

Before meeting with our mentees, we have to prepare deliberately. Think of the

space in which your meeting will take place. Someone who is already stressed will only feel more overwhelmed if he or she is invited to a meeting in your office where lots of people are coming in and out and your desk is a mess. Sometimes it can be useful to take a break from work spontaneously, to have a nice evening out, or an informal event during a break in the workday. This demonstrates that you are not just interested in the results of the mentee's work, but also in his or her well-being. Additionally, it creates space for addressing issues that are difficult to express in formal settings. On the other hand, formal settings can help to bring order to chaos, create discipline, or address the mentee “professionally.” Some meetings should be prepared for more thoroughly.

Preparing Meetings

Become a host

Your collaborative mentorship should be different from everyday life. Little things like occasionally providing a slice of cake, a bowl of fruit, or even a modest present can make a mentee feel welcome. And taking a walk in the park or in the forest can be beneficial as well. Fresh air might help re-frame a mentee's difficult situation. If you are not meeting in person but just talking on the phone, it is important to make sure that you are both in quiet and comfortable spaces: On the sofa and not in an office chair, outside where you can hear the birds singing instead of your colleagues talking.

Your Questions

- | Which topics are relevant for you?
- | What might be the mentee's fears or expectations?
- | What are your goals for the meeting?
- | What outcome or behavior will signal to you that you have reached your goal(s)?
- | What are your mentee's goals?
- | How much time do you have? How should the meeting be structured?
- | How can you structure the meeting methodologically?
- | How can you determine the outcome?

The Beginning

Focus on mood, not on content. Mentoring is a relationship, after all. And when we know our mentees a little bit better, it is easier to observe what is happening at the moment, than if we simply refer to the items on the agenda.

Progress and Development

Briefly summarize what you have understood to be the project's progress and development. Don't forget to mention positive developments. Concentrate on solutions and not on descriptions of problems.

Concrete Points

Address specific points that were identified as challenging at the last meeting. Focus on the solution, not on the problem.

Support and your role

Ask how you can support the team/mentee best. Consider what might be necessary, adequate, and possible for you? Make your availability very clear. Encourage your mentee to communicate with you actively.

G-R-O-W Model

This organizational approach to meetings between a mentor and a mentee was developed by John Whitmore. He suggests a way to structure conversations without a coach or mentor quickly falling into the role of the solution provider. This involves working diligently toward a solution and avoiding unnecessary problematization. It

has proven especially suitable for situations that demand immediate support and helps in establishing clear continuity. During a conversation, a mentor can refer to these sample questions in order to create a structure whose various parts build upon each other: goals; analysis; work on real, achievable options; concrete decisions.◇

G-R-O-W

1 = Goal setting

What would you like to work on?

What would you like of the result of this conversation to be?

What would be the most helpful thing for you to take away from this conversation?

Is the goal specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, set within a time frame, and positively formulated?

How detailed do you want conversations about it to be?

How much do you want to invest in reaching your goal?

What is your long-term-goal?

2 = Reality checking

What is the exact situation?

How would you describe it? How would other people describe it?

What doubts do you have and how significant are they?

Which other people are involved?

How do you feel in relation to this situation? Where in your body do you experience tension?

What has prevented you from doing more?

What resources are available to you already?

To what extent can you affect the results?

Who else has control and how much do they have?

What steps have you taken so far?

3 = Options

What different styles can you employ to manage the situation?

Make a list of all your choices – large and small, complete and incomplete solutions.

What else could you do?

What would change if you had a larger budget?

What if a certain obstacle did not exist? What would you do then?

What would it be like if you could start over with a new team?

Would you like any advice?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of this solution?

What solution is most appropriate?

What solution would be most satisfying?

4 = What, when, who, how

When are you going to do it?

Will your planned course of action help you achieve your goal?

What obstacles might you meet along the way?

Who needs to know about this?

What support do you need?

How and when will you get that support?

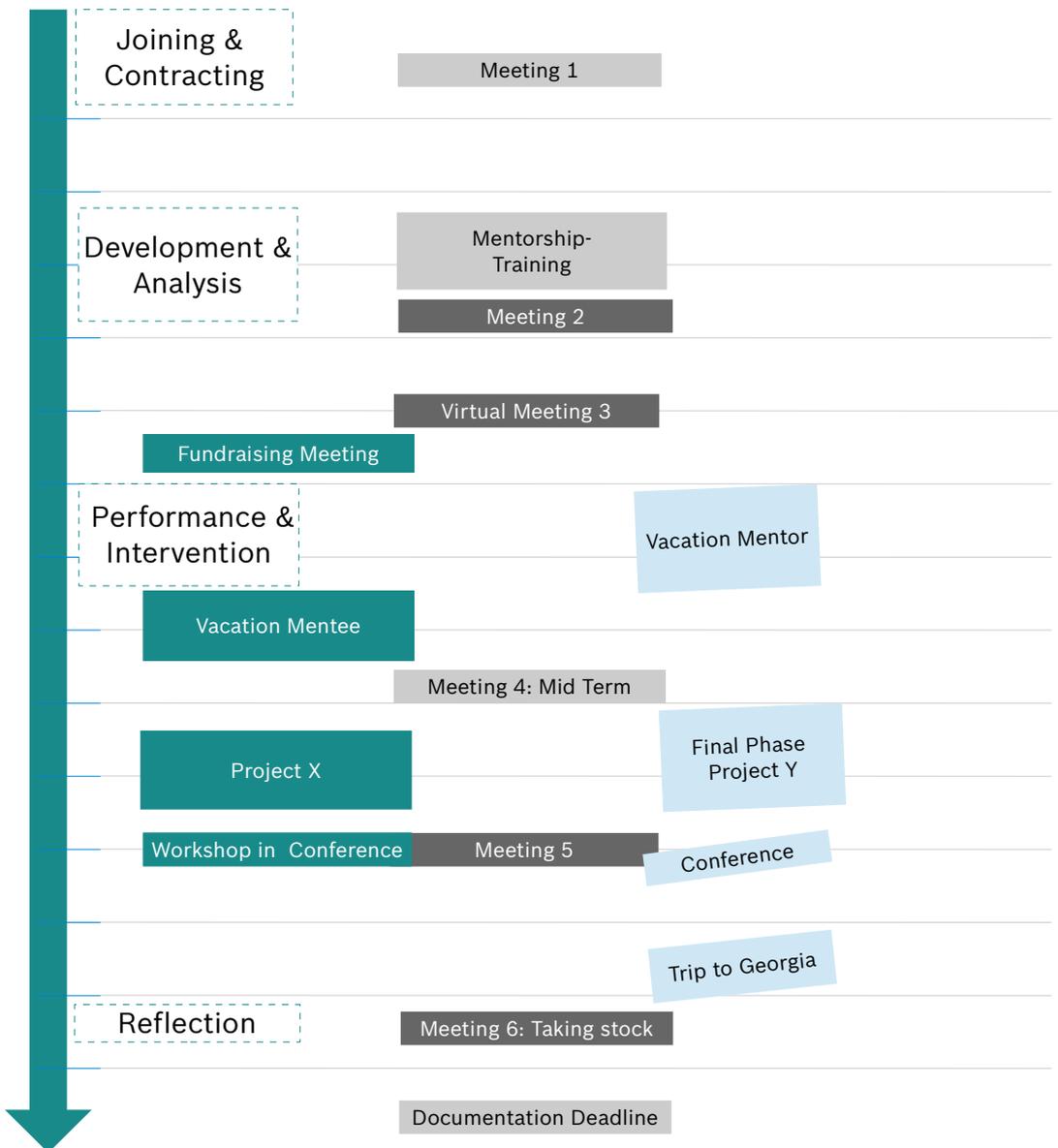
What other considerations do you need to take into account?

On a scale of 1 to 10, rate the how certain you are that you will carry out the planned course of action.

If this is not a 10, why not?

Mentoring Schedule

- 1. Milestones referring to the outside conditions: opening, closing, trainings, ...
- 2. Milestones referring to the process; opportunities to take stock beyond the necessities of the daily routine: like mid-term-meetings, ...
- 3. Phases of intensive personal occupation of the mentor
- 4. Phases of intensive personal occupation of the mentee



Expectations and First Contact

1. Meaning of Mentorship & Mentor's Project

Who is a mentor for you and who is not?

Advising attitude, purpose of mentoring

The planned activities/project

Idea, background, goals and state

Your attachment to self-directed learning and autonomy

Capacities, learning- and performing-style

The environment

Describe your journey as a part of the institution that brought you to mentoring.

2. Personalities

Your topics

What mentees want to experience
What the mentor wants to experience

Which of your values

will be realized by the project? Are your three most important included? (see list below)

Your personal background and values

Values concerning self-directed learning, cooperation and principal orientations to society

3. Targets and Resources

Measuring goals

What outcome of behavior will indicate that you have reached your goal(s)?

Resources

Which are required for reaching your goal(s)?
Time, personal, money, other contributions.

What are you doing, thinking, seeing, hearing, hearing now that you have reached your goal(s)?

4. Experience/Expertise

Mentor as an expert

Which expertise and experience does the mentee need? Which should be shared?

Mentee as an expert

Which fields of knowledge are interesting to the mentor?

Knowledge and Network

Personal Development

Management Competencies

Dealing with authorities

Self-directed learning

5. Communication

Communication Style

Preferred medium, personal preferences

Feedback

How would you like to give and receive feedback?

If you feel dissatisfaction or disappointment, how can you express it?

How often should we be in touch?

How often should in-person meetings, phone calls, Skype, e-mails, etc. take place?

Contact Info

Phone numbers of other important team members, e-mail addresses, Instant Messenger names, etc.

Besides the mentor and the mentee, who should receive a copy of important documents?

6. Values & Attitudes

- Accuracy
- Activity
- Assertiveness
- Autonomy
- Austerity
- Awareness
- Benevolence
- Facing Challenges
- Clarity of goals
- Compromises
- Communication
- Concentration
- Act consistently
- Cooperation
- Friendliness
- Credibility
- Creativity
- Curiosity
- Discretion
- Egoism
- Dedication
- Enthusiasm
- Environmental consciousness
- Fairness
- Determination
- Fitness
- Forgivingness
- Flexibility
- Freedom
- Generosity
- Sincerity
- Helpfulness
- Humor
- Justice
- Kindness
- Leadership
- Love
- Mobility
- Modesty
- Motivation
- Open-mindedness
- Optimism
- Patience
- Pragmatism
- Principled
- Punctuality
- Reliability
- Responsibility
- Respect
- Security
- Sensitivity
- Spirituality
- Solution-oriented
- Solidarity
- Teamwork
- Tolerance
- Trust
- Willingness to perform

Your most important three

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Assessment Sheet

For Evaluating and Documenting a Meeting.

Have you **achieved** your goals? Which goals?

Were you able to implement your **methodological concept**?
Was it successful? What steps were helpful?

Was it **specific enough** for the mentee?

Did you both have **enough time**? -- - 0 + ++

How would you have felt in the **mentee's position**?

What was **your contribution** to the meeting's success, challenges, or failure? Which conclusions can you draw from it for the future?

Which are the **next logical steps** that you should take?

6 Development & Analysis

Mentees develop their project ideas or take the first steps working in their new environments. After the matching phase, the mentorship begins to develop. The key questions now include: What challenges does the mentee face? What behaviors do I want to improve? Working in a new environment requires vast amounts of new knowledge: How should I plan the budget? What is the nature of meetings and culture within the company? What are my next steps and what resources do I need to accomplish them? The intensity of the mentee's impressions and his or her environmental demands will increase day by day.

It can be difficult to address a mentee's challenges. "I want to gain experience fundraising." This sounds relatively clear at first, but it should be analyzed in a more detailed way. What has prevented the mentee from doing this before? Is it a serious desire or does it simply reflect the project team's expectations? And if it is a serious desire – which specific skills and weaknesses are involved? Time management? Personal financial planning skills? Fear? To break down complex issues, we can think of things in the categories of motivations, challenges, and necessities. One suggestion is to ask where changes need to take place - on a personal level, within a group/project team, or in general, on the level of the institution and its culture.

These types of challenges can take place on two levels. The first is the level of personal involvement: Fears are probably more a personal issue than the ineffective

use of resources, for example. *Where is the problem evident?* It is good to make analytical distinctions between someone's fundamental personality traits, how he or she works in groups, and what his or her role is within a larger environment (like a company or a NGO).

The second level involves a person's specific capacities. We ask: *What skills need to be developed?* Referring on our competency model, these can be divided into intrapersonal skills (me), interpersonal or social skills (me and you), methodological skills (me and a subject matter), cultural skills (me and society), field competency (my knowledge in the environment). The following table organizes these skills.

This table does not need to be completed. The point is rather to use it as a reference for the levels at which a concrete problem can be detected. Filling it out can help make clear what changes a mentorship can

Levels of Challenges and Associated Skills

Where the problem is evident <i>Skills to be developed</i>	Personal Life	Work in a Group	Company or Institution
▶ ▼			
Intrapersonal skills; interpersonal or social skills	Reflection, role flexibility, degree of control, communication style, attitudes in groups, conflicts, responsibility, power, etc.	How is the person using these skills in teams? Moderation, leadership, behavior in teams, conflicts, situations requiring responsibility, etc.	How is the person able to integrate him- or herself into the company/institution? Leadership-culture, corporate values, procedures, etc.
Methodological and cultural skills	Analytical thinking, planning, describing objectives, work-life-balance, use of resources like money, time, space, etc.	What group skills does this person have already and which skills will he or she need? Process organization, control, project management, self-regulation, etc.	Which tools for integrating into the company/ institution does the person have already? Which skills are required? Organizational structure, process organization, decision-making, hr-development, etc.
Field knowledge	Common and special knowledge, education	Does this person have specific professional knowledge already?	Does this person have specific professional knowledge already?
Strategic skills	Goal-setting for life, values, orientation systems	What does a person need to define and organize work in accordance with strategic goals? Vision and long-term group orientation.	What does a person need to define and organize work in accordance with strategic goals? Vision and long-term group orientation for a company or institution.

realistically bring about and what requires additional reflection or training.³²

Dialectic Qualities

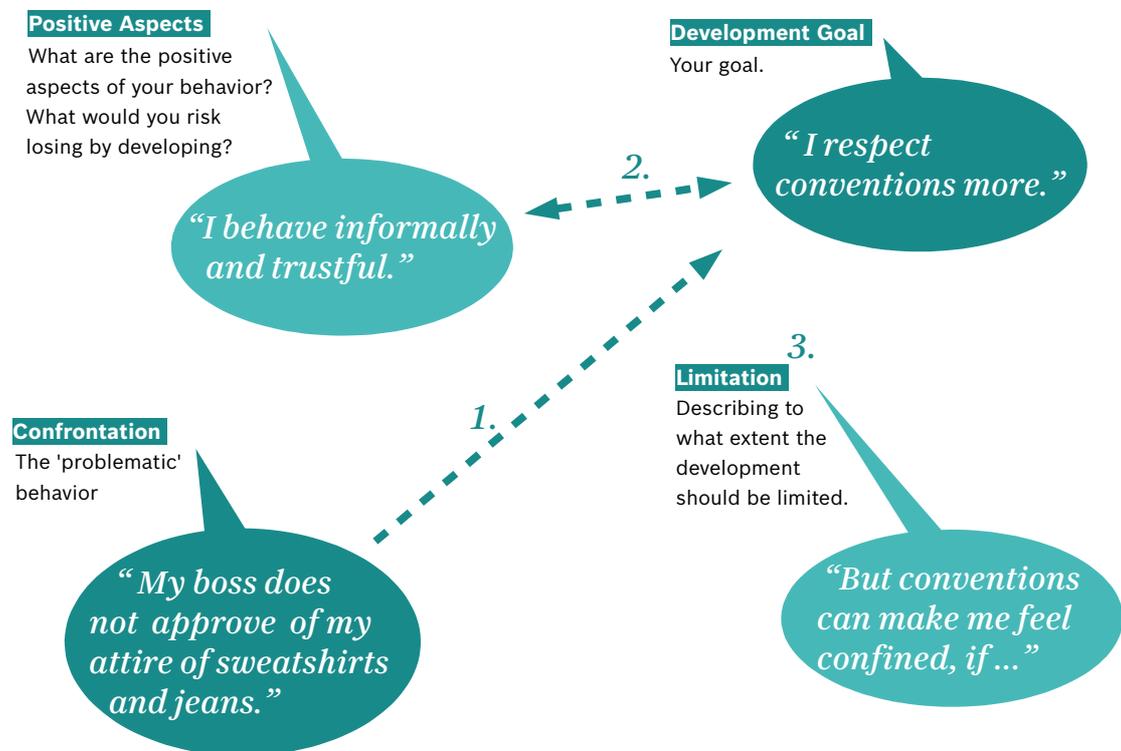
Ambiguity is a part our daily lives. But it can be disconcerting to mentees engaged in solution-oriented processes. We suggest using ambiguity constructively, which

means mobilizing counter-productive behavior as a resource for creating solutions. The idea is that every behavior has both positive and negative effects. Therefore, we have to acknowledge that a behavior that a mentee sees as negative also has another side. We ask ourselves: What sorts of things from the other side would you have to give up in order to develop in a different direction?

³² Marion Fischer-Epe, p.48

Exercise: Dialectic Qualities and Development

Positive Aspects	Development
Confrontation	Limitation



Source: after Fischer-Epe/Schulz v. Thun

First, problematic behaviors or issues should be documented. “My boss does not approve of my attire of sweatshirts and jeans.”

In the second step we contrast this desire with the developmental goal. “I respect conventions more.”

Now we appreciate the positive values associated with the problem (accepted value). “I behave informally, which makes people feel at ease and trust me.”

Fourth, the developmental goal needs to be limited. To which extent is a mentee able to accept the change required?

This model can also be used to analyze observed inconsistencies in order to develop concrete perspectives. When a mentee appreciates the logic behind certain demands, it is easier to come up with a solution. In team coaching, this model clearly outlines the conflict and makes it manageable for both parties. However, this method has limited use in hierarchies in which one person uses power to enforce his or her interpretation of a rule.

Alternatively, and perhaps more simply, we can create a table. In the first column, a mentee can write the negative aspects of the current behavior that make him want to change it.

The mentee fills the second column with the positive aspects of his or her current behavior. Ask: In what situations did it make perfect sense to behave in that way?

After that, the mentee can reflect on and balance the two. And decide to what extent changes should actually take place. ♦

“A mentor is a mirror that empowers the mentee to see what is going well, what is getting worse and how the perspectives look like.”



Development & Analysis

Where the problem is evident <i>Skills to be developed</i> ▼	Personal	Group	Company institution
Intrapersonal skills; interpersonal or social skills			
Methodological and cultural skills			
Field knowledge			
Strategic skills			

7 Performance & Intervention

The mentee’s main responsibility is performance. Sometimes mentees want mentors not only to provide support, but to actively direct them. For example, mentors can be asked to moderate meetings or team processes. They are asked to make suggestions or give advice. In such situations, mentors negotiate among a host of objectives – they want mentees to have new learning experiences, but also want to prevent catastrophes. This chapter discusses occasions that call for intervention and how they influence the mentoring process.

“My mentees aren’t reporting back to me. I don’t know what they’re up to.” This is a common comment when mentors evaluate their work. This illustrates the difficulty of striking a balance between intervening and relinquishing control. Intervention includes any of a mentor’s actions that transgress his or her formerly contracted duties. We understand the word “intervention” to mean stepping out of an observing position and gradually become involved. The mentor does some of the “work” for the mentee.

Some mentors argue in favor of a more proactive role. Intervention is one way to express a supportive attitude, and can sometimes be better than to just observing. It is inherently stimulating to mentors. Joining a project, even to a partial extent, means making a contribution to a solution. This can be especially satisfying for people who are of an active nature.

Opposing arguments in favor of friendly but passive mentoring roles emphasize the

mentee’s autonomy. Intervention will not necessarily contribute to a mentee’s intrinsic motivation. Challenges can be defeating and the mentee can develop a passive attitude toward the project. And mentors can also overestimate their capacities. But what if really serious problems rise? Most mentors become involved in the mentee’s work to some extent, more than a professional coach would usually do. There are two main types of interventions. An *authoritative intervention* makes use of position, experience, and knowledge. It might be informative, but can also be confrontational. A *facilitative intervention* is catalytic and supportive. It involves inspiration in the form of new ideas, motivation, or appreciation. Be aware about the very different approaches of both interventions.³³

Responsibility and Commitment

The frequency of contact and the level

³³ Peter Hawkins/Nick Smith, p. 219

on which tasks are executed during a mentorship can change. When a project team starts to build momentum, it is understandable for mentees to begin to pay more attention to the world surrounding the mentorship. Mentorship dynamics and team dynamics do not always complement one another.

Maybe now you can see your partner's personal tendencies more clearly than you could in the beginning. He or she deals with time management, long-term planning, and the execution of tasks differently than you do. This can result in misunderstandings.

Less precise communication creates the need for too much interpretation, and sometimes problems can arise. Experience with international mentoring projects shows: If you are not able to meet, it is more difficult to assess your mentee's situation.

Communication may decrease for various reasons. It is important to discover why.

- Challenges outside the mentoring relationship?
- Challenges within the mentoring relationship?
- Problems with the work-life balance?
- Psychosomatic problems?
- Do the mentorship's conditions need to be defined more precisely?
- Is the mentee facing problems other than the ones identified in the last meeting?
- Does the mentee still see the mentorship as a valuable relationship?

Types of Intervention

Information

It is helpful to prevent problems before they arise: "Your report will take some time. They want it to be finished at..."

Giving Instructions

If nothing else works, you might say, "Send the documentation tomorrow, or else they will cancel the budget line."

Translation

Every environment has its own system of logic. Mentors can translate these other systems of logic so that mentees can better understand other people and their behavior. For example, a mentor's experience helps assess how donors will react in a given situation..

Inspiration

Inspiration from mentors is powerful and facilitative when it stimulates thinking about different possibilities. How you would develop a certain argumentation in a report, what would you measure? Take care to distinguish inspiration from directive advice.

Reducing Complexity

Some problems a team is faced with are not meaningful challenges. If you can help a team avoid bureaucratic procedures, connect with the right people, or if you can give the advice about how to communicate with specific stakeholders, your mentee can focus on more meaningful challenges.

Stabilization of a Situation

This means helping a mentee to become clear-headed in a difficult situation. Maybe you can review what needs to be done immediately so that your mentee has time for reflection or developing a new strategy..

Appreciation

Empathy and positive feedback can help strengthen a mentee's self-awareness, his or her focus on solutions, and general confidence.

These questions illustrate how many different issues can result communication problems. The best way to deal with such situations is to avoid interpretation. Ask open questions and prevent using suggestive words like “responsibility,” “commitment” or even “duty.”³⁴

Autonomy of Mentors

When we talk about autonomy, we are referring not only to mentees, but also to mentors. Especially when they change from a facilitative to an active approach, they should consider what this means.

"Help us, advise us, work with us!" This kind of request from a mentee can very quickly start to ask too much of a mentor. And it is better for us mentors not to get involved in this kind of dynamic. In peer mentoring, we are observing that mentors can be tempted to take on this role – they want to help and maintain positive relationships with their mentees.

This contrasts with the mentors' inner satisfaction and contentment. If their new roles do not give them an internal sense of satisfaction, they have to have a way to change such an active role to a different approach.

Sometimes the demands placed on the mentors are too challenging, sometimes a mentor feels at an impasse because a mentee seems unappreciative, or it becomes clear that a particular problem is rooted in the mentee's personality and the mentor is not able to support him or her,

³⁴ Frank Edelkraut/Nele Graf, p. 85

etc. The list of such problematic situations could go on and on. In all of these situations there is a universal law: Mentorship is an agreement between two autonomous people. The mentor and the mentee are *both* free to decide what they are willing or able to give.

A mentoring program's institutional environment and third parties also come into play. For example, the mentor might be held responsible for the mentee's behavior. A mentor cannot submit a final report that he or she has not even written. Mentors can only assume the responsibilities that they are able to take on.

Intervention and Team Processes

Teams storm and perform, to use a phrase from team-dynamic models.

Mediation and moderation in these processes are obviously limited by a mentor's capacities. We can easily become involved in team conflicts and lose our neutral role. But mentors can persistently re-establish constructive and appreciative communication, structured by clear rules and principles. Then we aren't siding with one party - we aren't talking about which party is right and which is wrong. Rather, we help a team find a constructive way of talking to each other. We achieve this through our moderation and preparing for meetings. This allows the involved team members to concentrate on the conflict rather than its attendant symptoms, urgent need for action, or other concerns addressed in their regular team meetings.

We highly encourage the use of non-violent communication and constructive feedback. The following chapter will cover this in more detail.

However, like all interventions, the situation's specificity should be taken into account. Obviously the mentor is not responsible for a team's culture.

What happens if our ideals related to justice and humanity become implicated and we ourselves are drawn into the team conflict? We cannot change our mentees or their team members, but we can facilitate every individual's awareness of his or her many opportunities for action. There is always a positive solution – at the very least, he or she can withdraw and stay relaxed.

Limits

Mentors can also become conflicted or insecure. It is not uncommon for them to feel underappreciated to varying degrees, which can effectively damage the mentor-mentee relationship. People under pressure tend to set strict priorities, which runs counter to the respectful nature of mentorship. Sometimes mentors do not hear anything from their mentees for a long time, and then suddenly need to deal with intense demands from them. Mentors might feel that their mentees believe the mentorship should be purely beneficial to them and that the mentors complicate the mentees' project work.

Certainly mentors also rely on appreciation, forgiveness or kindness, especially if the mentorship does not involve

major differences in hierarchical levels. But as mentors, we should be a little more relaxed than the mentees. Be aware that their behavior does not reflect on us to a great extent. This kind of inner attitude might help us see more clearly how the mentee perceives pressure.

You might also find that you are unable to fulfill your role as a mentor the way you intended to at the beginning of the mentorship. Or your mentoring environment might be too demanding.

In any case, mentors have to remain in a supporting and independent position deliberately. In order to do this, they can make their limits explicit regarding their motivation, their capacities, and the “contract” between themselves and their mentees. When you say “no” to the things that bother you, you are forming the groundwork for constructive solutions in the future. You are free to determine what the solution looks like.

It is also helpful for mentors to have another person whom he or she can

“Be supportive with great feeling, but there is no need to roar. No need to be too involved - you're not the conductor!”

Factors that can affect a mentor's positive attitude

- | Underappreciation
- | Lack of information
- | Demands of his or her role
- | Demands of the mentoring program

consult. This could be a friend. In mentorship programs, it can be useful for the organization to have a point person who is responsible for mentoring, who works as a mentor-of-mentors or head of the program.◇

“I’ve developed a healthy attitude towards mentoring: I’m not actually responsible for a project’s success or ‘failure.’ And I’m not my mentee’s psychologist.”

Mid-term Assessment for Mentors

To what extent have the **mentee's goals** been achieved? What progress has been made?

Have **my goals** been achieved? To what extent? (percent or scale)

Have I been able to implement my **methodological concept**? Was it successful? To what extent? (% or scale)

What do I **appreciate** about my mentee? Is he or she aware of this?

What about the mentorship is fulfilling for me? What is **enjoyable**?

What could be **improved**?

To what extent am I satisfied with the **structure of the process** (pro-active nature, intensity, regularity)?

What **other questions** do I have for my mentee?

8 Personalities

The ways we behave are products of our experiences and our histories. When we meet other people, we should be aware that personalities are complex and can have strong influences on our relationships. Reflection allows us to understand more clearly why we behave the way we do. It also gives us a chance to broaden our personal repertoires of behavior. There is a huge amount of literature concerning personal psychology. This chapter does not attempt to provide an overview of it, but highlights basic approaches for using knowledge about personalities in order to better understand and build your relationship.

Personality indicators like the “Myer Briggs Type Indicator” (MBTI) analyze and categorize people’s personalities through a series of questions. It is based on the work of psychologist Carl Gustav Jung, Katharine Cook Briggs, and her daughter Isabel Briggs Myers. The “Big Five” (NEO Personality Inventory) is another popular example of such a test.

The use of inventories is quite common, especially in the field of personal development. The MBTI is still one of the most popular personality instruments in use. It measures answers in terms of four opposing qualities that characterize a person. Alona may be profiled as INFP, which stands for *introversion*, *intuition*, *feeling*, *perception*. She is an introverted intuitive team player who wants to involve everyone and prefers to take time making decisions rather than acting quickly.

Joana may be type ESTJ, which stands for *extraversion*, *sensing*, *thinking*,

judgment. When she feels sad, she calls her best friends and meets up with them. It is easy for her to find logical solutions to nearly every problematic situation. But when trying to find solutions in a team, she always becomes anxious and impatient.

These two types might not be a good pair for a mentoring relationship. But it might also make sense for them to work together because of the ways their personalities complement one another. Inventories like the MBTI can increase our awareness of certain aspects of our behavior. Like self-awareness and observation, they give us information about the importance of different attributes. Tests are based on experience with many people and make general statements that summarize statistical probabilities. Inventories are more useful for self-observation rather than exact description. They often lack

precision or are ambiguous.³⁵

Personality inventories are also used to profile applicants in businesses or participants in management trainings. But this is also where the problem of these tests' lack of scientific reliability should be considered.

In interpreting information from an inventory, you should also be aware that feelings, predictions, and behavior vary from situation to situation. Individuals perform differently in different contexts. Last but not least, one can ask whether the use of clinical psychology inventories suit your purposes in a general way.

With these ways of organizing our thoughts about people's personalities, we can also focus on people's behavior in teams. While understanding and influencing group dynamics is not the focus of mentoring, it is helpful to understand how we communicate in teams and how teamwork can be structured.

The four-player team model is an instrument that can help us understand a team. It focuses on the dynamics that result from having four different roles.³⁶

Kantor identified these roles as movers, followers, opponents, and bystanders. What is your preferred team constellation? What is your usual role? Do you play other roles in other teams? It is possible for a mover and an opponent to butt heads and prevent the team from making progress.

But the model also explains how the roles complement one another.

³⁵ Franc Coffield/David Moseley/Elaine Hall/
Kathryn Ecclestone

³⁶ David Kantor

Myer Briggs Type Indicator

(E) **Extraversion** <-----|-----> **Introversion** (I)

Do you prefer the outer world or the inner one? Do you feel energized by people around you or do you need space to yourself to recharge?

(S) **Sensing** <-----|-----> **Intuition** (N)

How you absorb information? Do you intuitively interpret its meaning or are you factual, concentrating on what you can observe with your senses?

(T) **Thinking** <-----|-----> **Feeling** (F)

When making decisions, do you prefer to use logic and patterns first or do you first take the specific people and circumstances into account?

(J) **Judging** <-----|-----> **Perceiving** (P)

Do you prefer to have things decided or do you prefer to stay open to new information and new options?

Source: The Myers & Briggs Foundation

Understanding the various functions of these roles and applying them to our situations can help us resolve conflicts and continue working productively.

- One can adopt a bystander's perspective: What are the consequences of the actions taking place? What is the observable problem?

Four-Player Model

Movers

They move a team along:

*“Without movers
there is no direction.”*

Followers

They support the initiative:

*“Without followers,
nothing gets completed.”*

Opponents

They provide critical feedback:

*“Without opponents,
nothing is corrected.”*

Bystanders

They often observe the team and its processes from the sidelines:

*“Without bystanders,
there is no perspective.”*

Source: The Kantor Institute

- In project teams, one can strive to motivate the supporters to express and articulate their thoughts. In this way, they are more visible to the movers and the opponents.
- Emphasis should be placed on communication, regulating decisions, and especially on ways of dealing with increasingly conflicting perspectives.
- One can also encourage open-mindedness by behaving open-mindedly.

Revised NEO Personality Inventory

Openness to experience

Aesthetics, feelings, actions, ideas, values

Conscientiousness

Competence, order, dutifulness, striving to achieve, self-discipline, deliberation

Extraversion

Warmth, gregariousness, assertiveness, activity, seeking excitement, positive emotion

Agreeableness

Trust, straightforwardness, altruism, compliance, modesty, tendermindedness

Neuroticism

Anxiety, hostility, depression, self-consciousness, impulsiveness, vulnerability to stress

Source: Costa, McCrae

Demonstrate authentic and appreciative communication by using it.

Reflecting on Cultural Patterns

As we travel outward from the inner circles of specific personalities to more abstract levels of interpersonal relations, cultural explanations become more and more relevant. Culture is a system of orientation: It defines who we are, regulates our behavior, and structures our perceptions and interpretations. Without having to think about it consciously, it tells us what is “normal” or how to act in a certain environment.

This takes place with various levels of abstraction. In a family there are certain

expectations placed on individuals as a son, for example, and others as a member of the mother's familial line. In school, there are more abstract expectations for acceptable ways to behave. On my sports team, I like to act wildly and energetically – in contrast to the expectations that cause me to act in a very reserved and quiet way in the office. When I go out into public, my behavior takes on a new importance as “representative of my city” or even my country – lots of different people show interest in me.

Cultural models are more abstract. They give explanations for the fact that French people greet friends in a different way than Icelandic people do. Or they explain corporate culture from its informal aspects to artifacts like physical design or dress code manuals. Youth culture, company culture, student culture, and sub-cultures influence the way we think, perceive, and behave. Personality models attempt to make profiles of our specific capacities and characteristics. Dynamic models like the four-player model or the motivational style model explain how a personality works in the context of a group. Culture can offer explanations of interpersonal and even imagined environments.

Seeing someone primarily through a cultural lens, as a representative of a particular culture, can lead to stereotypical perception of reality and can give rise to misinterpretation and consternation for our partner. Stereotypical attributions are interpretations of behavior and characteristics based on abstract

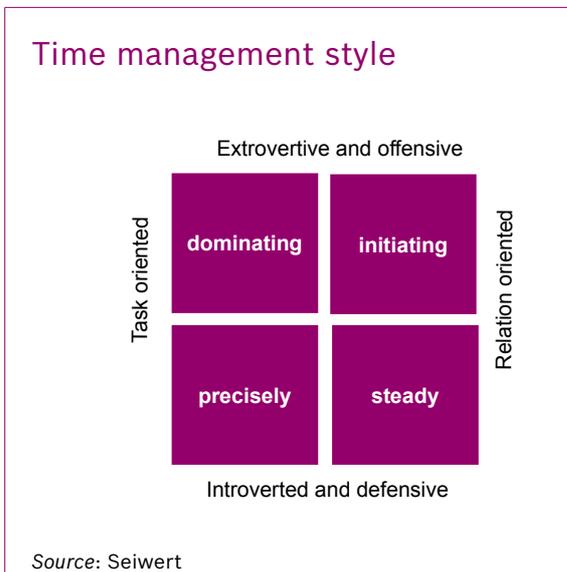
expectations. Even if you don't want to be irritating or devalue your counterpart, it's possible for your relationship to begin with a miscommunication.

Communication requires more than just observation, it requires interpretation. But is your mentee from Göteborg slightly more reserved than yourself, from Yerevan? What concrete behavior makes you assume that he is? You might be able to make generalizations to a certain level – but you cannot make conclusions from a single interaction. Generally, you should be very careful when making cultural assumptions. Culture is not homogenous. Society is ambiguous, chaotic, and differentiated, although it is also rational and structured. Often it is not very productive to define something as “typical.”

We observe one another through our cultural filters. Adopted from intercultural and transcultural literature, the following cultural dimensions can be useful in reflecting on our communication and behavior patterns. Gert Hofstede and Edward T. Hall in particular are inspiring with their specific, colorful categorizations.

Polychronic vs. Monochronic Time

Do I tend to work on many things at the same time? Do I need a schedule to plan when to work on one or the other? Do I naturally tend to be punctual or flexible? For what things do I allot plenty of time? Lothar Seiwert makes the argument that there are universal tools for time management. He combines various tools



and a personality model to find “your own type of time management behavior.”³⁷

The Notion and Function of Space

How much physical distance do I feel comfortable keeping between myself and others? Do I like touching other people? Do I like direct contact? Do I need a room to myself or am I content to share a room with other people? People differ in terms of how they use space. Imagine space as the framework in which we communicate.

Explicit vs. Implicit Communication

Do I say what I mean? Is my partner really saying what he or she wants? If I am hosting someone, I might ask, “Are you hungry?” There are two possible answers: “Oh yes, thank you very much. I’d really like

something to eat, I’m very hungry.” Hall describes this low-context communication: the main information “is vested in the explicit code.”³⁸

And there is the opposite: “No, thank you, it’s OK.” In this second case, my guest is explicitly saying that he or she is not hungry. Implicitly, however, this could be an expression of the expectation for a host to ask again, or it could even be an indirect way of expressing that yes, I should prepare something to eat. Here more knowledge about the intention or context of the person's answer is required: There is not very much information “in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message.” This is high context communication.

Individual vs. Collective Orientation

Am I comfortable working in a group? Do I like organizing projects with other people and trying to bring everyone together? Or do I place emphasis on the “individual” and the word “autonomy”?

Style of Power Distribution

Who shares and legitimates power? Under which circumstances can decisions be made? Does everyone have the same ability to influence decisions? What does it look like in practice? Does one person receive more validation than others? How do I react to these circumstances? Do I accept or reject them?

³⁷ Lothar Seiwert, p204

³⁸ Edward T. Hall, p. 91

Task vs. Relation

Am I focused on the outcome of my work and is this more important than the way to achieve it? Is finishing my work by certain dates important to me? Or is my primary concern choosing the people with whom I want to work and making sure that everyone enjoys his or her tasks? Is that why it's okay with me if schedules change as long as it leads to shared goals - is the path itself the goal?◇

9 Dialogic Communication

The quality of communication between mentee and mentor is essential to the mentorship. People have rich possibilities to express. This helps us to understand and interact intuitively without long back and forth questioning procedures or fatiguing affirmation. We understand and agree without many words. On the other hand communication is ambiguous. For dealing with it we need observation and reflection of our interpretations. Communicative skills help us to manage the mentoring process in a cooperative and accepted style.

Granting reciprocal support and trust is imperative for a fruitful mentorship. This is based on our capacities for acceptance and appreciative communication.

By examining “mirror neurons,” neurologists have discovered that our neurological systems respond to other human beings. “When I observe another person, I have an internal response involving what I would do myself.”³⁹ Observation leads to empathy, not as the *essence* of cognition, but rather as the *precondition* for cognitive neurological operations. People are not egoists; their behavior develops based on empathetic observational skills, or “relational competence”.⁴⁰

To improve these skills, both mentors and mentees have to use their experiences as occasions for training and reflection. Deliberate communication also helps us to interpret ambiguous situations. Therefore,

³⁹ Bauer p. 41

⁴⁰ Bauer: S. 46

we would like to introduce some tools to support this qualitatively improved understanding of one another.

Humanistic Principles

Neurological discoveries sometimes contradict the assumptions of rational choice in a fundamental way: Rationality is not the same as selfishness. If self-interest is the most important factor in satisfaction – why would we have created democracy, a system that requires a huge amount of procedural patience and altruism? Other societal models have shown us that economic growth and societal security can be established without transparency, openness, division of power, and pluralism. People in places lacking democracy and societal stability demonstrate that the rational and the ideal can be separated. The two are united by humanistic principles. There is a rational intention behind trying to prevent power from being abused and

trying to promote peaceful communication, because peace is connected with stability and stability with the possibility for growth. On the other hand, these perceptions reflect our image of humanity, which is the result of many long processes. Religions, eschatological theories, and other meta-theories have all shaped our contemporary vision of humanity and the universe. Appreciation, the ability to give and receive love and respect, and the recognition of individual freedom are parts of the core ideas in many of these.

This moral undertone can be found in the work of Carl Rogers, Marshal Rosenberg (“Nonviolent Communication”), Jacques Salomé (“Relational Hygiene”) or in the axioms of “Theme Centered Interaction” (Ruth Cohn) as a way to support people in the learning process.

With this foundation, the themed interactive model developed postulates and auxiliary rules that help facilitate learning processes with respect towards other people.

Nonviolent communication is a methodological approach to peaceful communication, how one can “remain human even under trying conditions.”⁴¹

Reviewing the model for nonviolent communication can help us communicate with our mentees, especially in terms of providing feedback. It makes distinctions between observations, emotions, and needs. Nonviolent communication stresses the importance of expressing each of these instead of repressing one of these dimensions as is common practice.

41 Rosenberg: p. 3

Humanistic Axioms of Theme Centered Interaction

*“The individual is a psychological unity. He is also part of the universe and is therefore both **autonomous and interdependent.**”*

*“All living entities and their growth and decline deserve to be respected. Respect for that which grows is the basis for all evaluating decisions. **The humane is valuable; the inhumane is a threat to what is valuable.**”*

*“Making decisions freely happens within provisory internal and external boundaries. It is possible to **extend these boundaries.**”*

A statement that reflects this could be: “I notice that you have not been able to keep our last two appointments. I feel irritated and disrespected. I need reliability in my time planning and preparation.” The other person should also have the chance to express his or her point of view.

Finding a constructive way to deal with irritations, feelings, and needs can make it easier to find solutions in the future. So constructive communication doesn't just mean focusing on a solution, but also being open to alternatives: "Do you think you could come on time in future? Or should we find another way setting up our meetings?"

What is the purpose of this extra effort? It respects the other person's observations, feelings, and needs. This form of expression allows the person with whom we are communicating to understand our point of view as much as possible. In this way, we have the opportunity to develop open and equal communication processes. The model can also provide a constructive way of finding mutually accepted solutions.

Feedback

Like mentees, mentors need feedback. It helps us see how our actions are perceived by another person. In everyday life, we often get feedback when it is too late, and there are even times when no one can provide it for us. A chairwoman of an organization with many members said, "I was more in touch with what was going on in several of our organization's groups when I was a member than I am now as a leader." It is often more difficult to receive honest feedback in certain roles than in others. Sometimes people in positions of responsibility lose the capacity to receive and give feedback. Feedback is a skill that has to be improved upon and is one of the most valuable products of mentorship.

When giving feedback, keep in mind that it should be *useful*: Only observations that facilitate the mentee changing are important. According to the model of nonviolent communication, feedback should clearly *separate feelings from observations*.

We should *address disturbances* very quickly. They interfere with optimal communication.

Last but not least, keep in mind the *position* from which you give and receive feedback. Are you speaking as a partner, as a representative of an institution, or as a manager?

No feedback is meaningful without the readiness and willingness to receive it. All described attitudes also apply when receiving feedback. Make sure to first clarify

Nonviolent Communication: Process Model

1. The concrete actions we are **observing** that are affecting our well-being
2. How we are **feeling** in relation to what we are observing
3. The **needs**, values, desires, etc. that are creating our feelings
4. The concrete **actions** we request in order to enrich our lives

Two parts of Nonviolent Communication

1. expressing honesty through the components
2. receiving empathically through the components

Source: Marshall B. Rosenberg

what part of your person is being address: the official, the friend, or another aspect of your personality.

Four Sides of a Message

Friedemann Schulz von Thun⁴² describes every act of communication as having four different aspects. Think of your digital camera. Inside, where the film used to be is a sensor with millions of pixels. How does it capture such colorful pictures? Each small square unit of four pixels has a filter, one for red, one for blue, and two green sensor elements. When combined, all the sensor elements make up the whole picture. Imagine if some filters failed to to their job - the result would be an incomplete or unbalanced picture.

Just like cameras, we have four filters that are each sensitized for a special aspect of communication– the four sides of any one message. Ideally, the aspects complement one another and form a clear single message without contradictions. In reality, the richness of our conscious and unconscious expressions is open to a wide field of interpretation.

According to von Thun's model, every statement has four statements within it. A classic example is the front-seat passenger who tells the driver:

“Hey, the traffic light is green.”

The driver hears different things depending on how he or she interprets this

42 Schulz von Thun

Consciousness, Clarity, Respect

Use **"I" statements**. Do not use "we" or "one" – represent yourself.

Make your **intentions clear**. When you ask a question, say why you asked and what the question means to you.

Be **honest and selective** in what you communicate. Don't lie, but you don't have to say everything. Choose what is helpful and useful for the other person.

Express your **personal reactions**. If you don't know what other people want to say, ask directly rather than guessing or assuming.

Talk **specifically** and resist using generalizations. When you say something about another person, focus on how their behavior strikes you and how it makes you feel.

Private discussions take priority. If they do not happen easily and frequently, the group process can be disrupted.

Four Sides Of a Message

Fact

Matter-of-fact statements like information or news.

Self-disclosure

The speaker, consciously or unconsciously, reveals his or her motives, values, or emotions.

Relationship

The nature of the speaker's relationship with the listener is either expressed or perceived.

Appeal

The goal, advice, instructions, and effects that the speaker seeks.

Source: Friedemann Schulz v. Thun

statement. When interpreting it in a *matter-of-fact* way, the driver will understand the “fact” that:

“The traffic lights turned green.”

As we all know from experience, this statement can also be heard as having a very strong *appeal*:

“Come on, drive!”

If you are feeling unsure about your *relationship* with your partner, this sentence might seem like saying:

“Hey, stupid, you should buy some new glasses.”

But maybe your partner isn’t that upset, he or she just wanted to share her needs and thus this statement primarily served as *self-disclosure*.

“I’m in a hurry.”

These interpretations can be double-sided: Just because you place value on avoiding misunderstandings does not necessarily mean that your partner is aware of this problem of potential incorrect interpretations.

Artificial Situations

Using the techniques, feedback or explanatory models described in this handbook is often seen by mentors and mentees as an artificial way of behaving. At worst, this can lead to forgetting about these tools when they are needed most, like

in situations involving conflict or stress. That is understandable, because our environments are often not able to incorporate reliable and authentic feedback. Just imagine how many messengers have been killed throughout the course of history!

Taking into account the fact that it might feel unnatural at first, mentors can create a space in which feedback and nonviolent communication are possible. Mentors act as role models. It will be easier for a mentee to be open to trustful communication when you, the mentor, admit that it is also unnatural for you to a certain extent, but that mentorship is a safe environment to try it out. This implies absolute discretion.

A large percentage of everyday communication is also not natural. Just look at all the allegedly factual discussions in the workplace that are actually personal arguments. We have to recognize that cognition, emotion, and empathy are three parts of the same thing.

Body Language

Communication is often reduced to mean the spoken or written word, and only includes the nonverbal in extreme situations. A team manager turns beet-red when he shouts at his players. A glance can relay so much without using a single word. Body language can help us to interpret.

Much of the literature on body language discusses it as a tool for success in business or for control. This is not our focus. We see it as a way to support our

spoken messages and to communicate coherently. Ideally, body language automatically emphasizes what we want to say – if we are being genuine, we will not gain a lot by improving our body language alone. Nevertheless, body language is not just important for lawyers, business battles, or selling products. The question is not “How can I get my point across?” It’s more important to ask, “How can we understand each other better?” As Joe Navarro points out, the ability to read body language is a “concerted observation.”⁴³

People naturally show empathy for one another. In Chapter 5, we introduced the questions that can verbally enhance this tendency. Pacing is a term taken from the ambivalent field of neuro-linguistic programming. It refers to establishing harmonious rapport by conscious assimilation or imitation (“mirroring”) of a partner’s body language. The specific use of words, intonation, and the rhythm of speech are important factors that can irritate or stabilize communication.

Habitus: Grammar of Sociability

Body language, spoken language, and cultural contexts are parts of a puzzle that make up each person’s unique charisma.

This important combination of behaviors and social skills is referred to as the “habitus.” Our habitus often determines whether other people are willing to communicate or work with us – something people refer to when they say, “The

43 Joe Navarro p.9

Aspects of Body Language

Elements of your body

Eyes, mouth, head, hairs, arms, shoulders, hands, legs, feet, smell, voice

Location

Interpersonal distance, position in the room, seated position, use of space

Interactions

Gestures, imitations

chemistry is right.” Pierre Bourdieu explains this chemistry in terms of societal structures. One is not born with these qualities. Instead they reflect a learned “social grammar.” Habitus reveals one’s status and position.⁴⁴ Such implicit learned and unconscious behavior has strong neuronal representation in the brain and is therefore very stable.

In a best case scenario, this works at a nonverbal level. There is a strong likelihood that two bird watchers will recognize each other at a big conference. They will share the same types of jokes, or make the same types of associations. Their style of clothing may be similar or they might not eat poultry at the buffet. In this way, similarities in habit can facilitate communication. But it is also sometimes the case that with we are reserved with many people without being able to say exactly why.

Consciousness about one’s habitus helps increase awareness about how others see us, how messages are interpreted, and why a mentee does not share your sense of

44 Pierre Bourdieu

E-Mail Communication

1. Feedback

If you have not been able to reply to an e-mail or will not be able to reply for several days, explain why.
"I'm sorry I didn't respond earlier, but I didn't have internet access."

Make it clear that you've received an e-mail because it's often not clear.
"I'm so glad to have heard from you. You've made a lot of concrete progress."

Express gratitude and approval.
"Thank you for your precise description."

Summarize the most important points/questions.
"I have responded to your organizational questions below, as well as your questions about the call for participants."

2. Answers

Answer specific content-questions in detail.
"Yes, we need receipts from the bus company."

Express your point of view: What should be kept in mind?
"There are other members of our network in Sofia. It might be nice to invite them to the presentation."

When problems occur, don't end on a negative note: give your mentee emotional confidence. Reveal your personality in your own way: humor, empathy, future prospects ...

3. Agreements

Organizational factors: *"I'll be back from vacation on August 5th. We could talk then."*

Responsibility: *"I will check to see if that's possible."*

Next steps: *"We can talk about it again in September."*

4. Final touches

Finish the e-mail in a friendly way and in the proper tone of voice. "Proper" can mean a lot of things depending on you and your attitude – but don't forget to finish!

humor. Try to imagine the whole image you're putting forth, how you appear to other people.

E-mails and Other Indirect Channels

Often you will be in touch with your mentee via e-mails, Skype, or over the phone. These virtual forms communication lack several channels of information: non-verbal information, gestures, tone of voice, etc. This is a disadvantage if you want to build confidence and trust, because you're mainly exchanging information on an "issue-level" – which can lead to misunderstandings.

Another disadvantage lies in one of the defining characteristics of e-mails and instant messenger systems – their speed. Sometimes you say something quickly and, after sleeping on it, you realize that you didn't mean what you said. Avoiding misunderstandings means deciding which channel will work the best. In our experience, text messages or other electronic messages are never advisable ways to discuss complex issues. It's better to deliberately decide what should be discussed in person or on the phone, what points can be described via e-mail, and what is of a more straightforward nature.

Generational differences can become apparent. People who grew up using the telephone and e-mail place emphasis on formalities like awareness of faults or the appropriate salutation. Now, in the era of instant communication, there is more

tolerance for the lack of them. But if you waste other people's time by writing redundantly or unconsciously, this obscures your professionalism and education.◇



“Instead of being habitual, automatic reactions, our words become conscious responses based firmly on an awareness of what we are perceiving, feeling, and wanting.”

Marshal B. Rosenberg

10 Reflection

The end of an important process step and the end of a mentorship give cause for reflection. In the second chapter we introduced reflective observation as a way to process this. The purpose of reflection is to make new knowledge available for future tasks. It focuses on questions about outcomes and about the future. Paying attention to future possibilities is also important in this phase. Questions and targeted methods help mentors encourage reflection. The relationship between mentor and mentee is still of utmost importance even during the final phase of mentorship.

After the performative demands a project presents and after such a phase of intense transformation, we need time to breathe deeply and observe what has happened. It is not uncommon for the subsequent phase to involve exhaustion or the need for relaxation. Therefore, the mentor's role is very important – mentees tend to forget the need to reflect and mostly concentrate pragmatically on their demands: reporting on the project's results, setting accounts, answering the last open questions.

While mentees tend to see the last phase in terms of outcome, mentors however, have to address important topics that are focused on past processes. Mentors' challenge is to create a space for inspiring rather than fatiguing exercise. Every act of reflection signifies the conclusion of certain actions. Reflection is needed to build a bridge that connects the past to the future. Within the mentoring

process, reflection can act as an assessment of intermediate results. What has been accomplished? What has begun? Have the management and planning been realistic? Milestones and interim analysis help us determine the answers to these questions.

Farewell and New Beginnings

Reflection also marks the process of saying goodbye when a mentorship program ends. By the end, some mentors and mentees have formed warm friendships, while some tandems remain professional relationships. In both cases, it is important to plan the end of the program deliberately. Some people don't like big, elaborate goodbyes. Be aware that after the mentorship program is over, the nature of your friendship will change. Your role is different: You are no longer a mentor, only a friend. The mentee's role has also changed,

and you both need to ask yourselves what will change and how you can help the new friendship grow.

Ceremonies or rituals ease this process and give cause to celebrate complicated and challenging moments in our lives. This can involve giving a gift or a special speech, having a meal together, or whatever seems appropriate. A deliberately chosen space will provide the right atmosphere.

Content

To prepare for a meeting whose purpose is to reflect on the mentorship as a whole, we need specific content. This can include documentation and reports. It can also be helpful to review the most important e-mails sent throughout the course of the mentorship. Review your personal notes and impressions in your protocols, the mid-term assessment, or your own notes. The checklist from Chapter 8, “Mentoring Schedule” can be helpful. It can serve as documentation of the whole mentoring process. If mentees have been using a journal, it can also be a very valuable resource.

We have created some questions that mentees can use as sources of inspiration to prepare for this meeting. They are very open-ended. They should be discussed with greater specificity in person.

Aspects of Reflection

Reflection entails much more than assessing a project’s completion, its

Preparatory Questions For Mentees

Key Scenes

Which events or phases within the process are more important than others? Why? What conclusions can you draw from them?

Goals

Compare your initial goals with the current situation. To what extent did you succeed?

Mentor & Mentee

Irritation, expectation, communication, appreciation. What do you want to share?

Future

Which perspectives have developed?

outcomes and achieved objectives. In fact, reflection on these might be much less important than reflecting on relationship dynamics among the involved people, their personal communication skills, or big picture questions. In institutions, a mentorship’s objectives also need to be considered. The checklist “Analyzing the Outcome” helps include these broader aspects in the process of reflecting.

Empowering mentees to consider their whole personalities and not just on the outcome of their work involves using methods for reflection that are open to non-verbal expression and take the whole person into account. These methods should take into consideration the mentee’s specific knowledge, interpersonal relations, skills, feelings, and personal and professional networks.

The diagram on the right can serve as a template for such an open and creative method. The way mentees use it depends on their preferred means of expression. We ask them to add their specific thoughts and associations to the picture. This method also serves as preparation for group reflection.

Another good approach uses the hand as a metaphor. The mentee traces the outline of his or her hand. The fingers represent different components of his or her work. Next, the mentee adds the personal notes. The pinky finger represents aspects that fell short of his or her expectations. The ring finger stands for aspects that were satisfying. The middle finger marks what was disappointing. The pointer finger represents points of inspiration and valuable tips. Finally, the thumb represents the positive aspects.

Sometimes it is not easy to identify the aspects that should be prioritized. Especially when time is limited and we are reflecting together as a group, we should find ways to organize the agenda effectively. This “decision pie” can help.

First, everyone should brainstorm all the aspects, topics, or tasks that are

Exercise: Dimensions

Concrete knowledge

What did I learn?
From whom?

People

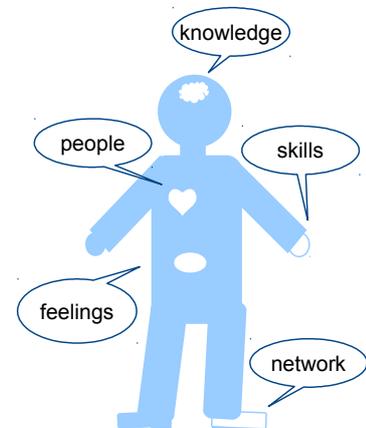
Which people became important? In which role?
What new friends have I gained?

Skills

Which concrete skills did I improve?

Feelings

What emotions was I feeling?
With what I came to this meeting?



Network & Contacts

Who enriched my personal network? Who might be important for my future prospects?

Exercise: Five Finger

Pinky finger

Aspects that fell short of expectations

Ring finger

Satisfying aspects

Middle finger

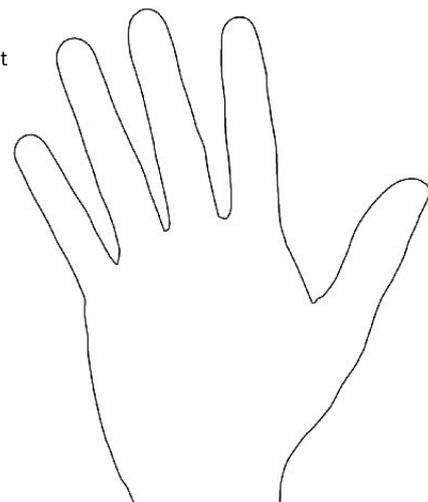
Disappointing aspects

Pointer finger

Valuable tips and inspiration

Thumb

Positive aspects



Exercise: Decision Pie

Collection

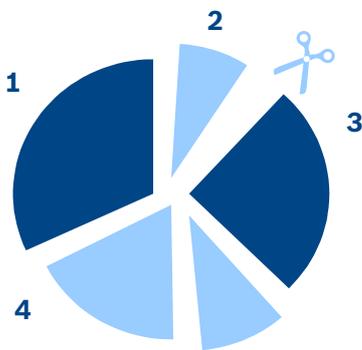
of all relevant aspects and numbering them

Cutting Slices

that symbolize the time you want to allot to these aspects

Comparison

with the evaluation of the other persons



important for him/her and assign them numbers. Next, they draw or cut out a circle. The circle represents the entire time allotted for the meeting. Then everyone divides their circles into slices, with the bigger portions representing the more complicated issues and the smaller ones the less important ones.

After everyone is finished, participants compare how they have chosen to divide their circles.

The decision pie can reveal which project goal is the most important to the group. It can also help compare which aspects were the most interesting or challenging aspects in your work together.

Using Scales to Examine Progress

This method illustrates the mentees' progress using five different scales. These scales provide a visual way of reflecting on progress, but are also useful in the mentorship's initial analysis phase and for setting developmental goals. Mentees get a sheet with five scales from one to ten. Zero represents almost no knowledge, skill, or experience, while ten represents excellent knowledge, skill, and experience.

First we ask about the mentee's overall professional progress:

"Where were you at the beginning? Where are you now? Mark these points with a cross."

Additional questions might be:

"What changes are you most proud of?"

"What about this change is important?"

The first scale is a "general scale." The following scales deal with the four most important specific aspects on which the mentee wants to reflect. The mentee gives each scale a title and repeats the process: first marking his or her starting point, followed by his or her point now. If there is enough time, all the scales can be discussed. When time is limited, we could prioritize: Which scales should we discuss? Which scale is most relevant to your future work?

Reflection should concentrate on solutions, not on problems. Therefore, we ask solution-oriented questions:

“What three things have you already accomplished that improved your position on one of these scales?”

“What are you doing differently now?”

“Which of your colleagues would notice this change? How would this person describe the change?”

“How did you manage to do this?”

“How did you succeed in your everyday life?”

These different scales can give mentees specific direction in how to make sure they continue to make progress. More than analysis, we should mainly emphasize development and encourage actions that move the mentee forward on the scale.

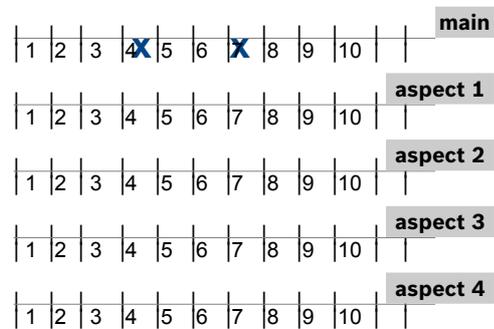
Sometimes it is difficult say exactly where a certain point is on such a scale. The scale can help us explore this ambiguity:

“What did you do differently in this situation compared to this one?”

The magic moment questions support more specific understanding of how things have changed. Like the miracle question or the little miracle questions introduced in Chapter 5, they can also work as the first steps toward solution-oriented thinking.

Maintenance questions reflect the fact that the mentee's future performance will be characterized by ups and downs. They gain self-confidence and improve their ability to implement successful new strategies.

Exercise: Multiscaling



1. Progress

The first scale is general: current state, state at the beginning, and the intended goal.

2. Partial Aspects

Defining the relevant partial aspects to reflect upon, naming the scales.

3. Making Marks

Marking the initial level and then the achieved level on the scales.

4. Approached

Focus on the approach

5. Prospectives and synthesis

Focus on prospectives and future development

This orientation toward the future helps mentees face new challenges. It reveals what is needed for progress to take place. These scales should ultimately reveal a complete and more general picture of the future. Potential final questions might be:

“What you are proud of?”

“What about this process was most surprising to you?”

“What increased your confidence in terms of future development?”

Maintenance

“When experiencing new ups and downs in the future - what could help you to find back to the already achieved level?”

“How can you maintain the level you have already achieved?”

Forwarding

“Imagine being one point farther along on the progress scale than you are now - how would other people notice?”

“What would you have to do to get one point higher?”

Magic Moments

“Where did you experience extraordinary moments that surpassed your general average?”

“Were there moments that you would rate higher than seven?”

Letter to Myself

You can end a reflective meeting with a technique to document the outcome of the mentorship for the future. Give your mentee a blank sheet of paper and a blank envelope. Ask your mentee to address the envelope to his or her home address. Then pose three questions: What have I learned from this mentorship? What specific information do I want to take home with me? What steps do I want to take in the future?

The mentee writes the answers down and, without discussing it, puts it in the envelope, and seals it. The mentor should allow some time to pass and should then send it to the mentee's address. ♦

Analysis of Outcome

	++	+	0	-	--
Local Impact: Did the project involve other people? Were they motivated for participation? To what extent did the project incorporate awareness of other people on the topic?					
Innovation Did the project offer something different – with new approaches? Did it stimulate new development or new discussion in the institutional network of the project or its immediate environment? Is the experience transferable?					
Participation Did the team members make active contributions? Were they taking responsibility for the project and for other members of the group?					
Peer learning in the team Was the project an adequate learning space for the team? Were the team members sharing experiences, knowledge and skills within the group? Were they helping each other? Were new abilities being developed through sharing experiences?					
Personal learning Did the mentee achieve the self defined goals? Have the young people challenged themselves according to their potential at the start of the project? Were these positive outcomes observable for them?					
Team How did the team develop? Is every team member satisfied? Did the team face challenges in a constructive way? How did they manage conflicts? Is the relation between them better than at the beginning, the same or worse?					
Budget How was the budget balanced? Looking back, was there a possibility for anticipating important changes? Was the original financial concept adequate and realistic?					
Feasibility Did the project accomplish according to the original plans? Were the processual changes in the concept adequate and realistic? Are the objectives set at the beginning being reached?					
Cooperation Did the involved partners develop a shared vision? Did they participate in ways they had planned to? Was the planning and implementation well coordinated?					
Evaluation Is the project team able to undertake self-evaluation – of the process, the cooperation and the outcome? Are they drawing conclusions from this analysis?					
Future Is a continuation intended? Are the future plans realistic and adequate? Do they incorporate what was learned in the project work?					



“An appropriate farewell helps us to prepare for a new beginning. Reflection inherently involves future perspectives.”

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