



SIES School of Learning and Leadership Development (SIESLLD)

TRAINING NOTE (004/2024-25)

on

MAKING MENTORING AN EFFECTIVE PROCESS

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Backdrop:

The ultimate purpose of education is to make the student a sensible citizen, equipped with global outlook, Indian ethos, and social sensitivity. For this transformational objective, classroom teaching alone might not be adequate. Mentoring as an additional initiative, through an "advisory service" out of the classroom, has often been found a useful technique to help the students achieve transformation in their lives. Considering its relevance and usefulness, the concept of mentoring has gained immense importance across the academic institutions' world over.

What Mentoring Is:

Mentoring is classically defined as an "advisory service" provided by the Mentor (the teacher) to the Mentee (the student) whereby the later i.e., the Mentee explores his / her hidden potential to groom and develop as a full-fledged value-based individual. Thus, the Mentor helps or enables the Mentee to realize his / her unexplored potential. Mentor, therefore, does not show "the way" but helps the Mentee to find the "right way". Thus, mentoring has been found to be effective in playing a "transformational role" in the life of a Mentee. A good Mentor helps the Mentees to achieve success in personal and professional life through proper guidance (but not direction) but more particularly, through the self-developmental initiatives of the Mentees.

Mentoring thus, is different from the roles played by a "counselor" or "coach". While counseling or coaching is, by and large, a transaction (cause) specific, mentoring is not exclusive to a definite purpose and its sole objective is "wholesome development of the Mentee", both in professional as well as personal life. Further, mentoring is much more long-term in approach compared to counseling or coaching. In nutshell, mentoring is much broader in its approach and usefulness compared to any of the similar and often interchangeable terms like counseling or coaching.

Success of Mentoring:

Mentoring can succeed only when the following conditions are met:

1. Willing and competent Mentors
2. Structured process of mentoring
3. Enthusiastic learners (Mentees)

For success of mentoring, every academic institution needs to ensure that proper eco-system, as above, is created. Otherwise, mentoring might lose its relevance and turn into another exercise with little or no value.

Qualities of a Mentor:

As stated earlier, success of mentoring largely depends on competence of the Mentors (besides the willingness component). The generic qualities of a good Mentor include:

1. Role model in personal and professional life
2. Competent to bring up alternative perspectives / approaches to a problem / issue / direction in life
3. Ability to guide
4. Broad mindedness
5. Optimistic and enthusiastic personality
6. Empathetic
7. Good listening skills
8. Does not believe in value judgment and remains completely unbiased in approach to dealing with students
9. Willing to spend time with students outside the classroom

Above are the minimum behavioral pattern expected from a Mentor. Hence, training of Mentors becomes an essential part of mentoring process to acquaint them with some of the qualities of a good Mentor and help them to imbibe these.

Mentoring Process:

Every academic institution must have a defined process before commencement of its mentoring initiative. Some of the important steps in this regard include:

1. Identification of willing Mentors
2. Training of selected Mentors that should include the mock mentoring sessions besides, theoretical aspects

3. Creating position of “Mentoring Champion” who will be the focal point for all mentoring activities in the institute
4. Running an awareness session on mentoring and its usefulness for the new students as a part of the induction program
5. Careful allotment of students to identified faculty for mentoring
6. Creating a slot in the academic schedule for regular meetings between Mentors and Mentees on a regular basis (preferably once a week)
7. Maintenance of “Mentoring Diary” by the Mentors
8. Periodic review to assess efficacy of mentoring
9. Half yearly feedback from Mentees to assess the usefulness of mentoring
10. Creating new directions in mentoring processes, if need be, based on feedback.

Notes:

1. To the extent possible, mentoring should be made optional both for Mentors as well as Mentees.
2. Mentoring is a must at the initial stage of entry of students (1st year students).
3. The number of students allotted to a faculty for the purpose of mentoring should be restricted to say, max 8 to 10, if feasible.
4. While “group mentoring” might take place in the time prescribed in the academic schedule, faculty mentors should be willing to mentor students on “one-to-one basis” at any point in time either physically or through online mode.
5. To the extent possible, the class teacher should not be assigned mentoring responsibility of the same students as mentoring by “direct reporting authority” might not be a good option.
6. Mentors should hand over cases of any specific student(s) requiring special help in any issue like anxiety, parental problems, stress of examination, etc. to the concerned class teacher or counselor.
7. All communication between the Mentors and Mentees must be kept totally confidential.

Records to be Maintained:

For the purpose of self-audit of the progress of mentoring and also to meet the requirements of the external regulatory / accreditation agencies, records of the following procedures need to be kept:

1. Process of identification of Mentors including Mentoring Champion
 2. Training of Mentors
 3. Allotment of Mentees
 4. Awareness program for students on “Mentoring” as part of induction program
 5. Mentors’ Diary (to be kept with Mentors only): a specimen copy given at annexure
 6. Minutes of Meetings of the Mentors (review process)
 7. Feedback from Mentees
 8. Faculty meeting records for having taken any corrective action
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Annexure
Mentor's Diary (Specimen)

Name of the Mentor:

Names of the Mentee(s):

Date of meeting:

Issues discussed:

Observations of / guidance by the Mentor:

Additional comments by the Mentor, if any (from a specific perspective)