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# HELPING IN CONTEXT

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## **DHM1130Written Report**



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## Introduction

This report will analyse and describe how a mentor would approach a challenging situation in assisting a young 17 year old student who has disengaged in their academic education. The backdrop to the helping conversation was a 17 year old student was deciding to quit a motor vehicle apprenticeship as he felt the theory modules were challenging. The mentee had failed all but one of his GCSES (the subject he passed was practical development). As a result of his grades, he felt that his academic skills were weak and not worth the effort of further study.

The practical development teacher at his school encouraged him to apply for an apprenticeship as this would help him gain qualifications whilst completing a hands on project. The student felt his practical skills were greater than his academic ones and had a keen interest in cars.

The assessment for the apprenticeship was in two parts- Practical 65% and theory 35%.

This was a hypothetical concern, which was to carry out the helping conversation with another student. Informing a fellow student of the scenario, the decision was taken to carry out the task as soon as possible. This was due to the burden of other assessments.

The key presenting issues for the scenario, the mentee's girlfriend was aware he wanted to quit the course, she had advised him in against doing so as she knew he had a keen interest and desire in cars. The girlfriend's sibling had been mentored and progressed successfully. "It cannot, therefore, be assumed that formal schemes of mentoring are necessarily more effective or valued than informal ones" (Fullerton, 1996, p24).

## Main body

### Identifying needs

The mentoring approach seemed appropriate for the challenging situation that confronted the mentee. McCann (2013) states mentors should be good communicators, knowledgeable, supportive, empathetic, reflective and responsive for helping overcome the barriers faced by the mentee. This is to build rapport and know background information of the mentee. Asking the client questions to gain background information and identifying specific support needs ensured the aims and objectives were achieved. "Mentoring, like coaching is a process. But whereas coaching is an enabling and helping process, mentoring is essentially a supportive process" (Parsloe, 2001, p37).

Client needs were identified by listening and making notes, asking questions about daily routines, background of relationships and attitudes towards education:

"Listening, questioning and feedback are the most important skills to develop, and each of these are treated separately" (Parsloe, 2001, p51). This would help build rapport and identify development needs. Further development was in bullet points

with sub headings. This method was used to encourage and motivate the mentee to achieve his aims by constructive development and changing routines. "One broad aim of this meeting should be a discussion of what both parties hope to achieve from mentoring relationship and a sharing of expectations of one another" (Forster, 1994, p5).

The mentee's risk of disengagement was reduced as improvement points was bullet point form. Furthermore, the bullet points were divided into sub headings as the client would use a staging process for improvement. "In planning the first meeting, the mentor needs to be concerned both with timing and the process of setting the agenda every bit as much as the detailed contents for the meeting" (Forster, 1994, p5).

Three achievement points were agreed by both parties. The mentee's gender, age and attitude towards learning the process was taken into consideration when identifying goals: "Research suggests that for most developmental relationships, gender matching or mismatching may not matter, but for some proportion, it does- especially because of sexual tensions" (Crosby, 1999, p74). Attitudes, age and genders needs to be considered when trying to help mentees achieve their goals. The attitudes of young males differ to females, males may be offended to participate in activities done predominately by females.

Verification of the bullet points and the sub headings were shown to the mentee. To ensure targets were manageable agreement and alterations were made. Parsloe (1995) writes Stretching, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-framed (SMART) targets should be set to achieve goals with reasonable commitment. This would help working towards the outcomes a stage at a time with reasonable progression. The mentee approved the targets set and inspiration in achieving results showed through their attitude.

## Approaches to helping

Mentoring, coaching and counselling have similarities in relation to responsibilities, confidentiality, skills and regulations that overlap protocols. However; there is a difference between the three in meaning and approach.

Mentoring program is primarily individual focused and precisely helps an individual by facilitating in order to achieve an objective or outcome: "A mentor is usually more senior or experienced than the learner" (Megginson, 1995, p14). The mentor usually has experiences and skills to guide and assist the mentee to achieve these outcomes. However; the mentee has the option of taking the advice or partial advice of the mentor in order of relevance to achieving their outcomes. The relationship between the mentor and mentee is generally a mutual one and not authoritative like coaching. The mentor shares knowledge, gives advice and guidance to help encourage the mentee to discover and manage a way to achieve the ultimate goals. The mentor uses a relaxed teacher's approach to help the mentee achieve the wanted outcomes." The mentoring relationship is also intrinsically focused, with feedback geared toward deepened understandings and sensitive practices reflected

within the learning process that includes uses of constructive criticism in writing and communicating” (Fletcher, 2012, p10).

Counselling is a more delicate version of mentoring: “Counselling is a process that helps the individual resolve those personal issues which impede performance or the development of new skills and attitudes” (Sloman, 1999, p150). Counselling is usually assigned to individuals or groups who have had life changing experiences, drug and alcohol misuse, psychological distress and emotional distress. Referral to counselling is usually to allow such people with the low levels of confidence or purpose to develop confidence, release distress and talk about problems in a confidential, formal and professional environment. The counselling adviser uses approaches to ensure that the sessions are person centred. Counsellors are required to have exceptional listening skills in order to allow the individuals to progress and achieve a natural level of confidence or function.

Coaching is more related to a ‘hands on’ skills observation or teaching. Coaches help the trainee reach their goals by pushing them to the limit. The trainee usually has a desire he/she would like to achieve. Coaches encourage the trainee to improve performances which usually related to sports. Coaches are use an authoritative approach to encourage and ensure the trainee meets the targets. The influence of position determined the coach’s role on the trainee. The coach may necessarily not have the experience in participation in the area of they are coaching. The trainee is forced through performance techniques to improve his/her performances. Coaching is a short-term relationship as a trainee improves their performances the coaching process is mutually terminated. “It is usually a short-term relationship which can be used to help embed change, raise performance, raise impact and assist in skill development” (Rhodes, 2004, p25).

The approach used in relation to the client’s needs was the humanistic approach. This approach was used as being appropriate to provide advice and guidance by encouraging the client to improve their attitude towards learning by supporting, planning and setting achievable targets. Having experiences and completing mentoring courses previously suggested that this approach was more suitable than counselling. “Experience and best practice suggest that the role provides support, advice and guidance in a relationship which is confidential, open and non-judgemental and where the mentor listens and asks questions which promote the mentee to reflect on their own development” (Morton, 2003, p14).

Overcoming the client’s needs were evident in the humanistic approach. As the mentor had experiences and skills to encourage the mentee to achieve their goals through the guidance of planning, adapting and promoting learning by discussing, agreeing and recording bullet points. The mentee required an action plan in order to have a direction and motive to achieve his goals. Asking questions and discussing background information assisting in recording data and setting aims.” Each measurement purpose requires a different set of timings and different types of question” (Clutterbuck, 2002, p83).

The personal preference of an approach is coaching. Previous experiences has further developed knowledge and skills. As coaching requires to observe and instruct

practical skills I feel there is a greater understanding by both the coach and the trainee. The coach is in control and is able to observe variations in performances with the ability to instruct accordingly. The trainee has little self-teaching and is dependent on the coach for development and improved performances.

## Skills

The skills demonstrated to ensure the mentoring session was effective and productive the mentor exploited the skills of active listening. This was important as this showed the mentee that his problems are being taken seriously. This was an important skills as this encouraged the mentee to share his problems with the mentor openly. As part of active listening, the body language was very positive with constantly nodding their head and gesturing the mentee to continue. The mentee will continually praised for share information with the mentor. Eye contact, sitting up straight and asking questions encourage the mentee to open up and share confidential information. "The list of skills includes the need for listening and sensitivity by both participants, together with the use of reflection and evidence in order to improve professional practice and promote ownership of the learning" (Fletcher, 2012, p301).

Core conditioning was employed in the mentoring session as the mentor considered suspending judgements by not using the stereotypical approach for a young adolescent. As the mentor was also once in adolescent with attitudes involving challenging behaviour and educational disengagement it was vastly important not to connect person attitude with that of the client. "When we think of individual differences, we typically refer to personality traits, values, beliefs, interests, intelligence, ability, personal motivation, learning styles and self-concept, race, religion, and gender, to name a few, therefore, the best coaching-mentoring interventions should be designed to identify and accommodate these personal differences and individual needs"(Parsloe, 2009. P93).

Using a positive regard by offering the client a cup of tea helped in building rapport and creating a relaxed environment. Assuring the client that confidentiality was only for mentoring purposes and would not be disclosed to anyone helped maintain trust between the mentor and the mentee.

The key elements of empathy were shown by paying attention to what the client had to say and understanding the client's emotions. Communication skills were demonstrated by understanding and accepting the client whilst encouraging improvements, with the intentions of achieving the ultimate goal. "Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I will learn" (Benjamin Franklin quoted by Sharma, 2014).

The mentee came challenges and barriers that they wanted to overcome. As the mentor had to use techniques and find ways to overcome these barriers, being open-minded and ready to accept the challenges the mentee faced was a primary factor.

The mentor had to use a range of thinking processes and decisions before replying or commenting to the mentee.

As a mentee required assistance to achieve an outcome and honest and trustworthy opinion from the mentor was an absolute must. Building rapport and gaining trust is a foundation of mentoring relationship for both parties.

Questioning the mentee, gave the mentor an understanding and developed knowledge and background information about the mentee. Not only did the mentor develop knowledge but also built rapport with the mentee as this helped the mentee feel comfortable and relaxed. Questions gave the mentor the mind-set to approach challenges from different angles by encouraging the mentee to achieve their goals. Questioning the mentee developed the mentors' ability to value and accept thoughts and decisions made by the mentee. "Coaches and mentors need to exercise care in selecting the best type of question to use in different situations" (Wary, 2000, p151).

Reflecting the session gave the mentee the generic understanding of what targets need to be met for the next session. These targets were broken down into sub-headings to encourage the mentee to carry on and follow the scheme as planned. The mentee's attitude was also appreciated and awareness by the mentor's acknowledgement of the attitude encouraged and persuaded the mentee to reflect daily and challenge their barriers. "If coaches and mentors want to encourage learners to develop their performance, they also have to help them to develop self-awareness, a sense of responsibility for future action and a commitment to persevere with the action" (Wary, 2000, p151).

Using the skills effectively were evident as the mentee was given constructive criticism and improvement targets were set to a maximum of three bullet points. The bullet points are then broken down into sub-headings and changes to timetabling, socialising and reading would help the mentee embed the changes into daily life. Repeating the activity, I would ask the mentee to enlighten me on a scenario they have planned and wish to carry out. This would have tested my skills to a greater degree. As prior knowledge of the scenario would have been unknown. This mentoring session was developed by the mentor and was practised in the student common room. As this was a hypothetical situation, a real-life situation would have been more appropriate. As the mentee would have been actively seeking advice and information on how to challenge the problems that lay ahead.

### [Worker diversity/differences](#)

The client had similarities and differences to the mentor, this helped the mentor with observing, critical thinking and responding to challenges the mentee faced. Life experiences and similar attitudes towards learning and the challenges faced by the mentee, assisted the mentor to construct and advise on specific aims in order to achieve the objectives.

The differences gave the mentor the challenges of thinking, constructing and advising accordingly in his opinion. The travelling aspects to and from the college and socialising with friends after the lessons were challenging for the mentor to

understand. How these difficulties surrounding a young adolescent to travel in order to achieve academic studies.

The socialising aspects were taken into account to support the client's in order to achieve the ultimate goals. As the client was reluctant to socialise with individuals on his course as commuting was a primary concern, techniques were used to help achieve similarities, interests and hobbies with individuals on the same course. These techniques included going to the library, reading on the bus whilst commuting and sharing information with other pupils on the course. Discouraging socialising with friends who had failed their GCSEs, techniques were used to help the mentee occupy his time in order to reduce amount of time spent with friends who were not in academic education. One of the techniques used to occupy the mentee's time was sleep timing, the mentee stated that his friends were out till early hours of the morning and that the reduced or disturbed his sleep pattern as it socialise with them. By encouraging early sleep times help encourage and improve the mentee sleeping and the time you spent with such people.

## Ethics

Ethical dilemmas that arose in the mentoring session were challenged and assurance was given to the client that the client's information would not be accessible by anyone except the mentor. Discussions, barriers and objects would not be discussed with the mentee's girlfriend and the information file would be destroyed after the completed program.

The codes of ethics were trust, responsibility and respect to ensure the client felt safe and comfortable in sharing his experiences. The importance of the codes of ethics ensured the session was productive and objects were set in order to achieve the ultimate goal.

The relevance of the codes of ethics were demonstrated in building rapport and motivating the mentee. The guidelines of the codes of ethics ensured a direction for success and a guidance for the mentor.

## Conclusion

Summarising the key points and understanding 'helping in people contexts' was experiences, skills needed, approaches, understanding and confidentiality when helping people. As individuals we all need help at some point in life, this may be through a coaching session to improve our activities/hobbies or a mentoring session to help advise, guide and understand challenges we face in life. Unfortunately the world we live in could be cruel and experiences of such bad situations may result in traumatic stress, abuse or zero motivation purposes for anything. Such unfortunate people would be referred to a counsellor. Regardless of being a mentor, coach or councillor and underpinning of approaches must be considered. These approaches would include confidentiality, listening skills, honesty, being open-minded, asking questions to develop knowledge and understanding whilst developing rapport. As important as the above points are, an individual who is considering a job role in helping people in context must have the qualities and understanding of self-reflection

and how to use techniques to encourage and motivate people by using self-awareness.

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