

Mentorship Theory: Development And Explication

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Abstract

Various relationship problems pose a threat to the sustainability of mentorship, among which are attitude, a lack of clearly defined goals and roles, a lack of mentorship theory, and specific frameworks to guide the practices of mentor and mentee in the relationship. This paper discusses elements from several theories, models, and approaches relevant to mentorship in a profession. It provides a Mentorship Theory (MT) that clarifies the what, why, and how of both the mentor and mentee for productive, authentic, and sustainable mentorship experiences in any profession. The MT has four elements, namely: the lens; mentor roles and activities; mentee roles and activities; and components of the mentorship relationship. The MT explicates six aspects, which include: the fundamental attitude of mentor and mentee; the mentoring strategies; the learning strategies of the mentee; the discipline process; the instructional setting; and the mentoring and learning strategies and activities. The MT goes a long way in describing and explaining the what, why, and how of all the activities of both the mentor and mentee in a mentorship process.

Keywords: Mentorship, Mentor, Mentee, Theory

Introduction

Mentorship is one of the relevant tools in human resource development in all professions. It is a professional, voluntary relationship between a mentor (a more experienced person) and the mentee (a less experienced person). Mentorship in most professions, such as institutions of higher education, has recently gained international recognition due to its relevance to human capital development and sustenance in all sectors (Argente-Linares et al., 2016). Mentorship entails supporting and encouraging young, willing individuals to manage their own learning to maximize their potential, develop their skills, improve their performance, and become the person they want to be in the education sector (University of Reading, 2021). Mentorship is a form of mentoring aimed at helping the mentee's confidence and transitioning to further professional development. Mentorship can help to minimize one's isolation (Gardner, 2010), encourage social support for both mentors and mentees to cope with and overcome occupation challenges (Byers et al., 2014), and reduce power differentials for mutual learning among young workers. Cooper and Miller (1998) opined that mentorship benefits vary according to the stakeholders of the mentorship ecosystem, namely the mentor, mentee, and organization. The mentor benefits through exposure to new ideas, educational methods, technologies, and perspectives through conversations with the protégé; gaining a sense of accomplishment in helping someone else professionally; and being able to pass a legacy of information and history to the next generation of employees, whereas the mentee gains new ideas, technical expertise,

interpersonal, and managerial skills; increases performance as a result of being encouraged to reach for higher goals and take educated risks; being self-confident in decision-making within the organization; and gains insight on the culture of the organization that could never be achieved without personal time and experience invested in the relationship. The organization is the ultimate winner in the mentorship process since it ushers in improved employee interaction, which contributes to higher job performance, the development of employee partnerships and allies, and breeds a positive environment that provides a clear understanding of expectations for new employees.

Despite the numerous benefits of mentorship in many professions and organizations, both mentors and mentees are often faced with several challenges, ranging from the mentor's inability to assess the mentee's background knowledge, skills, and values in the profession to identifying the mentee's motivation, dealing with the mentee's inexperience in the profession, addressing the mentee's misconceptions about the profession, and setting reasonable and feasible goals for professional development or projects in the profession. Hagler (2018) noted that mentoring is bedeviled by challenges such as behavioural problems, lack of self-esteem, and academic engagement; prolonged waste of time, lack of interest, geographic relocation, and change of contact information; stress; highly subjective self-judgment and self-perception; and a lack of observational techniques to reduce bias and possible drop-out. According to Mentoring University (2019), challenges of mentorship among youths include meeting on time, expending too much time and energy, having unrealistic expectations, being overly dependent on the mentor or mentee, unfair manipulation on the part of the mentor or mentee, resentment or jealousy from others, and having ineffective mentoring pairs. Barrett et al. (2017) discovered empirically that mentees are resistant to criticism, whereas mentors lack time and energy commitment due to an excessive workload.

In any case, challenges are inevitable in any relationship involving two or more people, but most arise in mentoring, particularly in higher education, due to the lack of a specific theory that supports the expected attitudes of both parties and specifies procedures to convey the what, why, and how of the mentorship process and how the mentee's learning outcomes and feedback will be assessed. Studies (Eby & Allen, 2008; Eby et al., 2013; Mijares et al., 2013) show that there is limited research into the experience of mentors in using scaffolding and other models during Apparently, more than ten years of researchers' experience show that while scaffolding, brainstorming, and the Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978) are very effective in any professional mentorship, they are used by most mentors without a clear understanding of what, why, and how their application and combination make for effective mentorship. Eller et al. (2014) identified four phases of the mentoring relationship, which include preparation, negotiation, enabling growth, and closure; Vygotsky (1978) found two parts of a learner's developmental level: the actual developmental level and the potential developmental level; Wgu (2020) discovered in transformative learning theory that mentees occupy a learning environment, how they learn, and what they need; Vygotsky (2016) compiled three meta-analyses of the mentee; Snilstveit et al. (2015) produced perhaps the most comprehensive overview of what works in mentorship, but none of these studies specifically described what, why, and how all mentor and mentee activities in a mentorship can be coordinated and how mentee learning outcomes can be formatively or summatively checked for active participation and sustainability.

Therefore, this study has structurally and systematically developed and explicated a Mentorship Theory (MT) that reveals the role players in mentorship, answers what, why, and how in mentorship, identifies the aspects of the profession to be taught to mentees, and outlines appropriate teaching activities and assessment strategies to stimulate relevant learning for the mentee. This theory will be useful and appropriate for all classes of mentors and mentees, inside and outside of higher education, as it identifies three levels of cognitive representation: knowledge gained through the actions of the mentor and mentee (inactivity), visual summarization of images (icons or images), and use of words and other symbols to describe the experiences and activities of both the mentor and mentee (languages) for comprehensive understanding, learning, and application.

Research Questions

The MT sought to bring nuances to the following questions:

- a) What are the key foundational attitudes of both mentor and mentee for effective mentorship?
- b) What are the mentoring strategies of the mentor for effective mentorship?
- c) What are the learning strategies of the mentee for effective mentorship?
- d) What are the elements of the discipline process for effective mentorship?
- e) What is the instructional setting for effective mentorship?
- f) What are the mentoring-learning activities of the mentor and mentee for effective mentorship?

Theory Development Strategy

There are five categories of theory development strategies. They are theory-practice-theory-strategy, practice-theory-strategy, research-theory-strategy, theory-research-theory-strategy, and practice-theory-research-theory-strategy (Meleis, 2011). This study adopted the theory-practice-theory strategy because the theorists (we) began to theorize from an existing theory as mother theories by deduction, applied the theories in mentoring practices, and modified the theories based on the evidence from the practices (induction) (Eun-Ok, 2018). The theorists have been involved in research, teaching, and community service since 2012, using different approaches, models, and theories such as Vygotsky's theory (1978), the Socratic approach, Bruner's three levels of cognitive representation (Bruner et al., 1966), and transformative learning theories (Wgu, 2020). The experiences allowed the theorists to modify, develop, and explicate the Mentorship Theory (MT).

Development Theories and Models

The Mentorship Theory (MT) was developed by combining elements of multiple theories, models, approaches, and practical experiences of the theorists. The literature from which the MT was developed includes the Eight Key Components of Effective Mentoring Relationships (Eller et al., 2014) and the Competency-Based Approach (Sullivan, 1995).

The key components of effective mentoring relationships

In any relationship, there must be some behavioural principles to guide the parties involved. According to Eller et al. (2014), there are eight key components of effective mentoring

relationships. They are open communication and accessibility, goals and challenges, passion and inspiration, caring personal relationships, mutual respect and trust, exchange of knowledge, independence and collaboration, and role modelling, as shown in Figure 1.

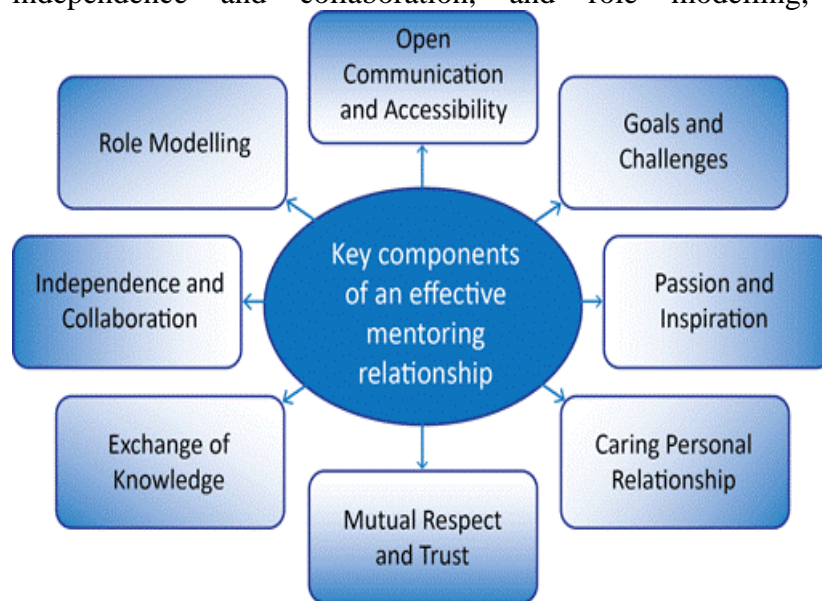


Figure 1: The key components of effective mentoring relationships (adapted from Eller et al., 2014, p. 817)

Eller et al. (2014) affirmed that mentors are required to convey their passion for inspiring critical thinking, creativity, and confidence. A mentor should stimulate the mentee's imagination and potential career expectations. The passion and inspiration of mentees must be sustained until professional tasks or processes are completed.

Mentors and mentees should have a caring personal relationship that must be based on "mutual friendship and a supportive relationship, caring, and nurturing." Both parties should care for and understand each other and have a relationship outside the academic setting. Both should spend quality time with and take a personal interest in mentees outside of the professional setting.

Mentors and mentees should have mutual respect for each other's ideas and points of view in the profession, irrespective of the experience gap that exists between the parties involved. Mentors should believe in the mentee and trust their ability, as well as the mentor's ability to act impartially.

The currency of a mentoring relationship is the knowledge exchange between the mentor and the mentee to enable the latter to improve on knowledge, skills, and quality professional output. The mentor should ensure that the mentees are immersed in the field, have a real-world connection, and apply classroom theory to real-world experiences.

The mentor should provide the mentee with opportunities to increase their sense of responsibility and think independently and abstractly. Mentors should identify the mentees as colleagues for collaboration, co-authorship, and interactions within the larger community. The mentee should recognize the values of independence and interdependence to gain insight into professional development.

Mentors should use role modelling as part of their mentoring to ensure mentees understand the importance of mentoring in and outside the classroom. In role modelling, the mentor leads by

example through the demonstration of professional skills, models interactions with others, and shares struggles, past and present.

For an effective mentorship relationship, mentees must be readily available to their mentors, be open to being mentored, be motivated to do tasks, be receptive to feedback, and possess a high level of inquisitiveness. In the view of Wong and Premkumar (2007), mentees should be able to set learning priorities and be self-directed. In Mentorship Theory (MT), the eight key components of an effective mentoring relationship form the foundation upon which the attitudes of mentors and mentees are anchored for effective and sustainable mentorship.

Vygotsky's Theory of Zone of Proximal Development

According to Vygotsky's (1978) Theory of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), there are two parts to a learner's developmental level: the "actual developmental level" and the "potential developmental level," that is, the level of knowledge already attained and the level of knowledge that can be attained by a learner. In this theory, the two parts of a mentee's developmental level are the level of knowledge possessed by the mentee and the level of knowledge that can be attained by the mentee in a profession. The zone of proximal development represents the areas between what the mentees cannot do by themselves in a profession and what they can attain with the support of a more knowledgeable person, here referred to as the "mentor," for eventual independence subsequently. In other words, the "actual developmental level" represents the level of knowledge, values, and skills possessed by the mentees in a profession, whereas the "potential developmental level" depicts the possible level of knowledge, values, and skills that can be attained by the mentees in a profession through the mentorship. The zone of proximal development is defined as "the distance between the mentees' actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving (that is, what they can do without assistance) and the mentees' level of potential development as determined by problem solving under the mentor's guidance (that is, what they can do with the mentor's assistance) and finally what they can do without the mentor's assistance."

Mentorship Theory is aimed at developing mentees from problems they cannot solve to those they can solve with the help of the mentor, and then without help from the mentor as seen in Figure 2. It is a perfect method of individualizing instruction for mentors in the profession. Once the mentee gains desired knowledge, skills, or attitudes, the actual developmental level has been expanded and shifted (Yelland & Master, 2005). This trend makes MT the perfect method of individualized instruction for mentors in the profession.

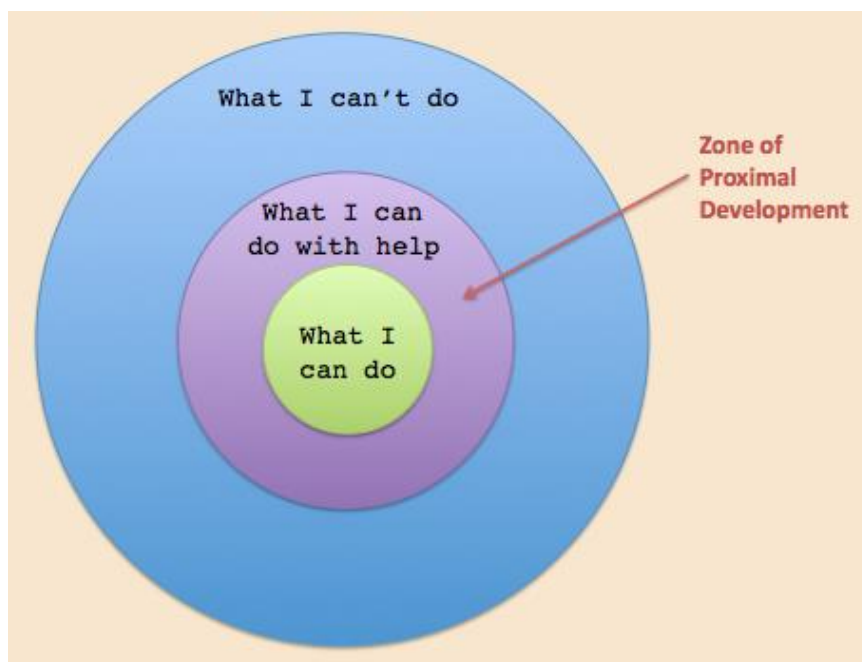


Figure 2: Theory of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978)

Larkin (2002) emphasized that as the mentee moves towards mastery of any aspect of the profession, the assistance or support must be gradually decreased (fading) to shift the responsibility from the mentor to the mentee.

Transformative Learning Theory

The Transformative Learning Theory is a Humanistic Theory, posited by Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, and James F. T. Bugental in the early 1900s, which states that students are the authorities on how they learn and that all their needs should be met for them to learn well (Wgu, 2020). In this relationship, the mentees are the initiators and authorities of how they learn; therefore, mentors should provide them with an enabling environment for their active participation to facilitate their effective learning. This is why the major activities in professional development should be carried out by the mentee with little scaffolding or support from the mentor to enable the former to understand the profession, do the profession, and become the profession. One person can take a horse to the stream, but twenty people cannot force it to drink. Mentorship can only occur if the mentee is ready and willing to be mentored by the mentor.

Theory of Planned Behaviour

The theory of Planned Behaviour was developed by social psychologists to explore pro-environmental behaviour and the understanding of a variety of behaviours including mentorship and profession (Ajzen, 1991; Godin & Kok, 1996). According to the theory, mentees' change in professional competence is best predicted by the mentees' intention to learn the profession through mentoring, called behavioural intention (BI). In turn, behavioural intention is a function of the other three predictor variables: attitude toward the behaviour (AB), subjective norm (SN), and perceived behavioural control (PBC).

The TPB presumes that the best prediction of behaviour is obtained by finding out from the individuals if they intend to behave in a particular manner (Ajzen, 2015). An intention will not manifest itself in behaviour if it is impracticable to perform the behaviour or if there are

obstacles in the way. Ajzen defined behavioural intention as the opinion of oneself about the behaviour (attitude), the opinion of others about the behaviour (subjective norm), and the perceived behavioural control (self-efficacy towards the behaviour) when explaining the three predictor variables or determinants. If a positive relationship between intention and actual behaviour is confirmed, it can be a proxy for actual behaviour in the absence of a true measurement (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000). In mentorship theory, attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control will predict the intention of the mentee, which in turn predicts their performance in a profession (Stern, 2000).

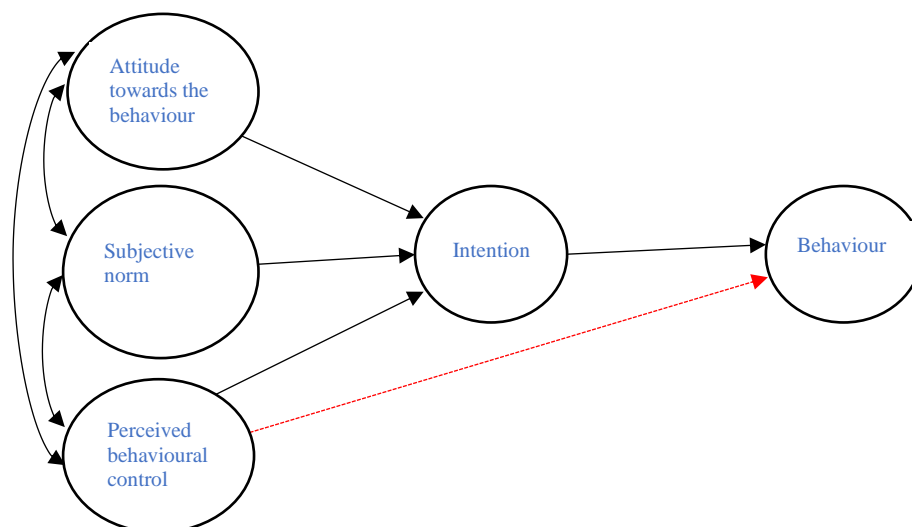


Figure 3: Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1988)

The theory of Planned Behaviour depicts that the attitude of the mentee in learning the profession through mentoring, their belief in producing the desired result in the profession under a mentor, and the mentor's feedback are expected to mould the intention of the mentee in the profession, which could be used to predict their learning or performance (Ajzen, 2012; Sheppard et al., 1988) in the profession for possible improvement and sustainability. In the context of professional mentorship, the eight key components of mentoring (Eller et al., 2014) described the mentees' attitude toward the behaviour (AB), the mentor's subjective norm (SN), and the perceived mentee's behavioural control (PBC).

Bruner's Theory of Instruction

Bruner's theory of instruction (1961) states that the purpose of education is not to impart knowledge but instead to facilitate a child's thinking and problem-solving skills, which can then be transferred to a range of situations. The aim of professional mentorship is not to impart knowledge about the profession process to the mentee but rather to stimulate the mentee's thinking and problem-solving skills that can be transferred to other types of professions and profession processes. According to the author, there is no one-size-fits-all learning sequence for all students, and the best option in any given situation is determined by several criteria, including (i) prior learning; (ii) developmental stage; (iii) material nature; and (iv) individual differences. The elements that can influence a mentee's willingness to learn include the nature of learning, personal characteristics such as the mentor-mentee connection, the degree to which a mentor develops an autonomous skill, and the degree to which they are confident in their

ability to operate on their own. These elements are influenced through scaffolding, where the mentees gradually develop skills from what they cannot do to what they can do with the help of the mentor, and finally to what they can do confidently on their own. According to Brunner (1996), instructions should include the following:

- the events that effectively install a learning propensity in an individual;
- the methods in which a body of knowledge should be organized in order for the learner to understand it as quickly as possible; and
- the most effective order in which to provide learning elements

In the mentoring process, the nature and timing of incentives and punishments are needed to effectively install a learning propensity in a mentee. Instruction should define the experiences that will most successfully implant a learning disposition in the mentee. The mentee's learning will be most successful when the professional activity is organized in a sequential order, from simple to complex, and from known to unknown. The theory guided the researcher in identifying and selecting relevant learning conditions, methods, and techniques that mentors could use to simplify content areas and sequence competencies of instruction during teaching and learning situations in mentorship.

Teaching for Understanding Framework (TfU)

The Teaching for Understanding (TfU) framework proposed by David Perkins in 1988 states that the essence of learning and teaching is understanding. The framework is based on four key areas: generative topics, understanding goals, performances of understanding, and ongoing assessment (ibid.). It is also based on the assumptions of constructivism, a philosophical and psychological view of learning that argues that knowledge and understanding cannot be learned through rote learning (Perkins, 2006b). Instead, mentees must build their knowledge and understanding of any profession process through experiences provided by the world, situations, environments, and, most importantly, their mentors. Constructivism emphasizes active participation by the learners, and knowledge and understanding are socially constructed (Philips, 1995). Therefore, mentees must actively participate in the carrying out of any of the profession processes that the mentor exposes them to be able to: construct their own knowledge to understand a task in the profession that is central and interesting to both mentor and mentee (generative topics); identify several specific understanding goals for the profession (understanding goals); treat understanding as a performance rather than a mental state (performances of understanding); and assess mentees' performances through continuous monitoring and evaluation of their progression in the mentorship (Perkins & Blythe, 1994; Wiske, 1998a). Besides, Wiske and Franz (2005) added that learning is a reflective learning community, which can support dialogue and reflection based on shared goals and a common language. Immersing mentees in collaborative communities would expose them to diverse perspectives, thus promoting respect, reciprocity, and collaboration among members.

Competence Based Approach

Competency-Based Approach (CBA) states that the unit of progression in learning is the mastery of specific knowledge, values, and skills, and is learner- or participant-centered (Sullivan et al., 1995). A competence-based approach enables students not just to acquire subject knowledge but to understand, use, and apply it within the context of their wider learning and lives. It also offers students a more holistic and coherent way of learning, which allows them to make connections and apply knowledge across different subject areas. In MT, it is the onus of the mentor to identify competencies (knowledge, skills, and values) and arrange them

in a hierarchy of difficulty for the mentees' easy understanding, real-world performance, and outcomes in the profession. The ability of the mentee to master a skill or competency at their own pace, regardless of environment, determines their progress in the profession process. This will enable the mentees to understand the what, why, and how of the professional process and to use and apply the competence within the context of the profession and long-term learning.

Bloom's taxonomy

Bloom's taxonomy, which was created by Benjamin Bloom in 1956, is a set of three hierarchical models used for the classification of educational learning objectives and outcomes into levels of complexity and specificity (Bloom et al., 1956). The three taxonomies classified learning objectives into cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. That is, knowledge-based goals, affective (values, attitudes, and interests) goals, and psychomotor (skills-based) goals. The cognitive domain is focused on intellectual skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, and creating a knowledge base. The affective domain entails the attitudes, values, interests, and appreciation of learners. The psychomotor domain encompasses the ability of learners to physically accomplish tasks and perform movements and skills (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). The learning objective in mentorship should target cognitive (what), affective (why), and/or psychomotor (how) domains for specific demonstration by the mentor, mastery by the mentee and evaluation by both parties.

In the MT, the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains are represented by the what, why, and how of the processes in the profession, respectively. At the cognitive level, the mentor assesses and equips the mentee with ground knowledge to help him/her answer the question of "what" the profession entails. The learning objective is to enable the mentee to understand the meaning (what) of each profession's concept or process. The mentor imparts such knowledge to the mentee through scaffolding by doing what the mentee cannot do (I do) for understanding, imitation, and practice.

At the effective level, the mentor assesses and equips the mentee with values and a positive attitude towards the profession processes to enable the mentee to answer the question "why" of any of the profession processes. The learning goal is for the mentee to comprehend the values (why) of each profession concept or process. The mentor imparts such values to the mentee by scaffolding him by explaining what the mentee cannot feel (I do) for understanding, imitation, and practice.

At the psychomotor level, the mentor assesses and equips the mentee with skills in the desired processes or tasks of the profession to enable the mentee to answer the question "How" of any of the profession's processes. The learning goal is for the mentee to comprehend the skills (how) of each profession's process. The mentor imparts such skills to the mentee through demonstration of what the mentee cannot do (I do) for understanding, imitation, and practice. Following a successful scaffolding of the mentees on what, why, or how of a profession process that they cannot do, the mentor fades (reduces) his/her involvement by allowing the mentor to carry out most (50-75%) of the actions with assistance in answering the question of what, why, or how of any of the profession processes (we do). During mentorship, if a professional activity is performed unsatisfactorily without help, the activity is repeated with the help of the mentor until the mentee masters it. Mastery of such what, why, or how of a profession process enables the mentor to allow the mentee to practice what, why, or how of a profession process without assistance (you do) in order to provide feedback on what and to what extent the mentee has understood and can do and be in the profession without assistance for development and sustainability.

Gradual Release of Responsibility Model

The Gradual Release of Responsibility Model (GRRM) also known as "I do," "We do," and "You do," is a teaching strategy that includes demonstration, prompting, and practice. GRRM is a varied approach to content, process, and product over the course of a unit (Fisher & Frey, 2008). At the beginning of a lesson or when new material is being introduced, the teacher has a prominent role in the delivery of the content. This is the "I do" phase. As the student acquires the new information and skills, the responsibility for learning shifts from teacher-directed instruction to student processing activities. In the "We do" phase of learning, the teacher continues to model, question, prompt, and cue students, but as students move into the "You do" phase, they rely more on themselves and less on the teacher to complete the learning task (Levy, 2007).

In the MT, "I do" is the first step where the mentor models and scaffolds the appropriate way of performing the skills included in the new concept being taught to the mentees in a profession, while all mentees just listen, watch, and take note of the process being modelled (McCoy, 2011). "We do" is the second step, where the mentor partners with the mentees and works through some examples together (as partners with the mentor or as class mentees). This provides the mentor with the opportunity to prevent those learners who think they know the correct way of doing what is being taught ahead of time or to correct what the mentees may not get right at the first instance of their practice. The third step is "You do," where the mentees demonstrate their initial level of understanding of the new concept taught or being taught through independent practice. This provides the mentor with feedback on the extent to which the objective of the concept being taught in the profession has been achieved. Every mentorship should have three centre phases: the mentor-centre phase, the mentor-mentee-centre phase and the mentee-centre phases for point of emphases and evaluation.

Social Learning Theory

The Social learning theory, proposed by Albert Bandura (1977), emphasizes the importance of observing, modelling, and imitating the behaviours, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others. Bandura's social learning theory proposes that learning can also occur simply by observing the actions of others. This theory considers how both environmental and cognitive factors interact to influence human learning and behaviour (McLeod, 2016). Albert Bandura (1977) agreed with the behaviourist learning theories of classical conditioning and operant conditioning but added two important ideas: mediating processes occur between stimuli and responses, and behaviour is learned from the environment through the process of observational learning. Cherry (2021) described observational learning as the process of learning by watching others, retaining the information, and then later replicating the learning. Bandura proposed four mediational processes in observational learning as follows:

Attention: The individual needs to pay attention to the behaviour and its consequences and form a mental representation of the behaviour. For behaviour to be imitated, it must grab one's attention. While the mentor scaffolds the mentee on any professional behaviour that the mentee cannot perform, they must pay attention to the behaviour of the mentor to be able to understand what it is, why it is performed, and how it is performed.

Retention: How well the behaviour is remembered. The behaviour may be noticed, but it is not always remembered, which obviously prevents imitation. As a result, it is critical that the observer form a memory of the behaviour to be performed later. The mentor can assess how well the mentees are able to understand and remember any behaviour in the profession process if they are able to reproduce or perform the profession activity with the help of the mentor. The

mentor reduces his or her support through a process known as "fading" to determine what the mentee can accomplish with his or her assistance in the career process.

Reproduction: This is the ability to perform the behaviour that the model has just demonstrated. As a form of feedback to the mentor, the mentees reproduce or perform the profession activity that the mentor just demonstrated without assistance from anyone, including the mentor or colleagues.

Motivation: This is the will to perform the behaviour. The observer will consider the rewards and punishments that result from behaviour. If the perceived rewards outweigh the perceived costs (if there are any), then the behaviour will be more likely to be imitated by the observer. If the vicarious reinforcement is not seen as important enough to the observer, then they will not imitate the behaviour. The will to perform the professional behaviour by the mentees and become adapted to it depends on the reinforcement from the mentor, the extent to which they can perform it without help, and the benefits accrued. However, positive (or negative) reinforcement would have little impact if the reinforcement offered externally did not match the mentee's needs (McLeod, 2016). In every mentorship, there must be social interaction between the mentor and mentee on the professional operations for attention, retention, reproduction and motivation.

Seven Determinants of MT

Determinants are indispensable elements of the theory that fix or condition the outcome of any mentorship. So, the functionality or outcome of mentorship is influenced by the following.

1. presence of a mentor (someone with knowledge and skills) and the mentee (learner);
2. behaviour/attitude of the mentor and the mentee in the mentoring relationship;
3. mentor's expertise (mastery) in the what, why, and how of all profession-related activities;
4. supportive activities (scaffolding) that the mentor provides to aid the mentee in learning the profession;
5. the sequence in which the mentor presents the knowledge, values, and skills to the mentee in the profession process and
6. social interactions (brainstorming) that allow the mentor and mentee to work on their knowledge, values, and skills in the profession.
7. mentees' active participation in the learning process

Nine Assumptions of the Mentorship Theory

These are the beliefs upon which the MT is built. The MT assumes that:

1. Mentorship involves a knowledgeable mentor and a less knowledgeable mentee engaging in a professional relationship.
2. Both mentor and mentee must be aware, willing, and ready to engage in a professional hierarchical relationship.
3. The purpose of mentorship is to stimulate the mentee's thinking, problem-solving skills, and professional development through scaffolding (breaking tasks into manageable units).

4. Brainstorming is the central tool for teaching and evaluating, ultimately predicting the mentee's interest and understanding of the what, why, and how of the profession process.
5. The mentee learns efficiently if the mentor simplifies the professional process by explaining the process (what), its relevance (why), and the procedure of the process (how) for observation, imitation, and practice.
6. The professional process constitutes specialised knowledge, a code of conduct, principles, and technological innovations.
7. The interaction between the mentor and mentee should be within the professional lens to avoid deviation or distraction.
8. The scaffolding must be gradually faded by the mentor until the mentee can complete the professional task independently.
9. Mentorship is said to have occurred if the mentee is able to perform a professional task that he or she could not perform independently before.

Propositions of the Mentorship Theory (MT)

These are declarative statements that explain relationships between the concepts in mentorship. The Mentorship Theory (MT) states that:

1. The goal of every mentorship is to transform the mentee from the "actual developmental level" (competence possessed) to the "potential developmental level" (competence that can be attained).
2. The objective of mentorship is to stimulate the mentee's thinking and problem-solving skills for understanding, achievement, and sustenance in a profession.
3. Mentorship must be founded on open communication and accessibility, goals and challenges, passion and inspiration, a caring personal relationship, mutual respect and trust, the exchange of knowledge, independence and collaboration, and role modelling for entry, productivity and sustainability.
4. The mentor must create an enabling environment for the mentee to actively participate in professional activities to understand, achieve (practice), and become an expert.
5. The attitudes, subjective norms (others' opinions, like the mentor's), and perceived behavioural control (self-efficacy) predict the intention of the mentee in mentorship, which in turn predicts performance in a profession.
6. The mentee's learning is efficient when the professional activities are organised in a sequential order, from simple to complex, and from known to unknown.
7. The mentee must build knowledge in a profession through experiences provided by the mentor, situations and environments.
8. The mentor must identify competencies (knowledge, skills, and values) in a hierarchy of difficulty for the mentees' efficient understanding, real-world practice, and outcomes in the profession.

9. The mentee must actively participate in profession processes to construct knowledge, practise, and assess progress through continuous monitoring and evaluation.
10. The learning objectives in mentorship must target cognitive (what), affective (why), and/or psychomotor (how) domains for specific demonstration by the mentor, mastery by the mentee, and evaluation by both parties.
11. Every mentorship should have three centre phases: the mentor-centre phase, the mentor-mentee-centre phase, and the mentee-centre phases for point of emphases and evaluation.
12. Every mentorship must have social interaction, brainstorming, and scaffolding as teaching and evaluation tools for attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation in the professional process.

Unique Traits of the Mentorship Theory (MT)

The Mentorship Theory (MT) in Figure 3 is unique because it was developed from a synthesis of activities, theories, models, and approaches to simplify the mechanism of mentorship with directions on the key attitudes of the parties, what each party should do, what constitutes the profession process, the instructional setting, and the mentoring-learning activities in effective mentorship. It depicts a mentoring, scaffolding, and brainstorming environment, including the behaviour/actions of mentors and mentees, activities in the profession process that are filtered through the profession lens, and evaluative measures and actions of mentors and mentees. MT describes how mentees acquire information, ideas, skills, values, a way of thinking, and means of expressing themselves in any profession. The unique traits of the MT are that it:

1. is built from several theories, including Vygotsky's (1978), the Socratic approach, Transformative Learning Theories;
2. creates a congenial mentoring environment in a profession;
3. is based on the eight key components of mentoring relationship to create effective interaction between the mentor and the mentee.
4. involves the use of appropriate teaching and evaluation strategies like scaffolding and brainstorming;
5. guides the mentor and mentee's activities through the lens of their profession.
6. covers the three domains of professional learning, namely cognitive, affective, and psychomotor;
7. guides the mentoring and learning progression of the mentor and the mentee from what the mentee cannot do to what the mentee can do without help in a profession, and
8. measures the mentee's competence as a unit of progression with mastery of specific knowledge, values, and skills in the profession process.
9. measures the mentee's mastery of specific knowledge, values, and skills as a unit of progression in the profession process.

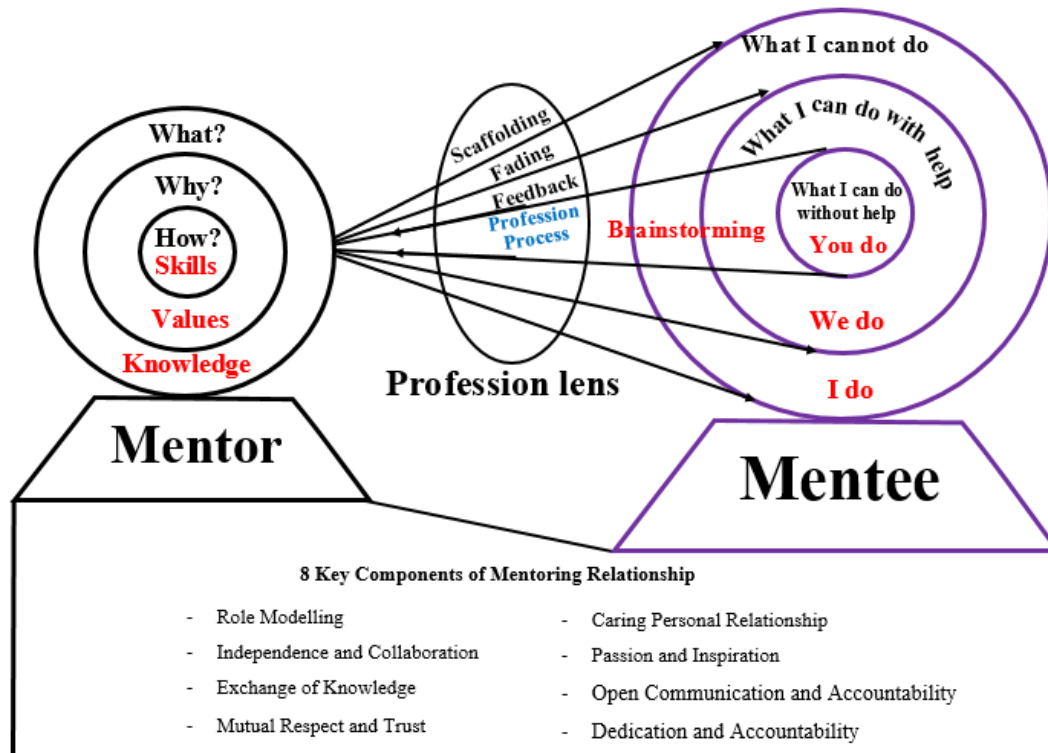


Figure 3: Mentorship Theory

Explication of MT

The Mentorship Theory consists of six parts: the fundamental attitude of mentor and mentee; the mentor; the mentee; the profession process; the instructional setting; and mentoring and learning strategies and activities.

The Fundamental Attitude

In Mentorship Theory (MT), the eight key components of an effective mentoring relationship identified by Eller et al. (2014) in Figure 3 form the foundation upon which the attitudes of the mentors and the mentees are anchored for effective and sustainable mentorship. Both the mentor and the mentee are to abide by open communication and accessibility, goals and challenges, passion and inspiration, a caring personal relationship, mutual respect and trust, the exchange of knowledge, independence and collaboration, and role modelling, which are the 8 key components of an effective mentoring relationship for productive and sustainable mentoring and learning. Besides, the three determinants that are responsible for the mentee's behavioural intention in mentorship are the mentees' opinion about their competence in the profession (attitude), the opinion of the mentor about the mentee's competence in the profession (subjective norm), and the mentees' ability to improve their competence in the profession (self-efficacy); that is, their belief that they can improve their competence in the profession under mentorship (Ajzen, 1988). The mentee's attitude toward mentoring, their belief in producing the desired result in the profession under a mentor, and the mentor's feedback are expected to shape the mentee's intention in the profession and could be used to predict their learning or performance in a mentorship (Ajzen, 2012).

The Mentor

A mentor is a person who is more knowledgeable or has a higher level of knowledge than the mentee and can provide instruction during the learning process. Mincemoyer and Thomson (1998) defined a mentor as an influential, established, knowledgeable member of an organization who supports and commits to the upward mobility of a protégé's or mentee's professional career. In this relationship, the mentor aims at developing and sustaining the knowledge, values, and skills of the mentee in the profession-building process. While observing all 8 key components of the mentoring relationship, the mentor is guided by the "tripod questions": what, why, and how of all the profession process, which covers the three taxonomies of learning objectives and outcomes: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains (Bloom et al., 1956). To ensure that the mentee will be able to answer the questions on each of the profession processes, the mentor employs some mentoring strategies and techniques, such as scaffolding, brainstorming, and the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model (GRRM), also known as "I do," "we do," and "you do," to engage the mentee in the profession activities for effective learning, development, and sustenance in a professional scholarship.

The Mentee

A mentee is a person who has less experience, is less knowledgeable, or has a lower level of knowledge than the mentor and can receive instruction during the mentoring process. The two parts of a mentee's developmental level are the level of knowledge possessed by the mentee and the level of knowledge that can be attained by the mentee in a profession (Vygotsky, 1978). The goal of the mentee in a mentorship relationship is to gain and sustain knowledge, values, and skills in the profession. While observing all eight key components of the mentoring relationship, the mentee follows the mentor's instructions to progress from what they cannot do to what they can do independently within the sphere of the profession process. For effective mentorship, the mentee must be willing and ready to observe, model, and imitate the behaviours, attitudes, and emotional reactions of the mentor in the mentoring process. Most of the activities in mentorship are performed by the mentee, as represented by the bigger circle in the MT diagram. The mentee pays attention to the instruction and demonstration of the mentor to remember, retain, reproduce, and be motivated to understand, do, and become competent in professional processes and activities. The mentee actively participates in professional learning activities to build their knowledge and understanding of any profession process through experiences provided by the world, situations, environment, and, most importantly, mentors (Perkins, 1998).

The Profession Process

Process refers to a series of activities done in stages to achieve a particular goal in profession mentoring. The activities of both mentor and mentee are expected to be aligned with the elements of the profession process as enclosed by the profession lens in the MT diagram. The mentor focuses all of his or her instruction and learning activities within the key elements of the profession process, such as the mentee's awareness of specialized knowledge and behaviour (profession affective goals), adherence to the profession code of conduct, keeping up-to-date with profession technologies and innovations, problem-solving and critical thinking skills in the profession. The mentee ensures that he or she acquires the relevant competence of what, why, and how each element of the profession process works to enable him or her to understand, do, and become a profession scholar for sustainable quality assurance in the profession. The Mentorship Theory is aimed at developing mentees from a problem they cannot solve without

help to a problem they can solve without the mentor's help during the profession process (Vygotsky, 1978).

Instructional Setting

The instructional setting is the environmental climate in which the mentorship takes place for effective mentoring and learning by the mentor and mentee, respectively. The purpose of mentorship is not only to impart knowledge about the profession process to the mentee but also to stimulate the mentee's thinking and problem-solving skills that can be transferred to other types of professions and profession processes. The instructional setting in mentorship is aimed at knowledge-based goals, affective goals (values, attitudes, and interests), and psychomotor skill-based goals for a balanced educational objective and sustainable quality assurance in the profession. The mentee is the initiator and authority of how he or she learns; therefore, mentors should provide them with the entire enabling environment for their active participation to facilitate their effective learning (Wgu, 2020). The mastery of specific knowledge, values, and skills in the elements of the profession process is the unit of learning progression in mentorship.

The Mentoring and Learning Strategies

The mentoring and learning strategies involve brainstorming, scaffolding, demonstration by the mentor, and observation, remembering, reproduction, and motivation by the mentee. Brainstorming is a group creativity technique in which efforts are made to find a solution to a specific problem by compiling a list of ideas contributed by members spontaneously (Parker & Begnaud, 2004). In this case, the mentor and the mentee always meet face-to-face or online to discuss, generate new ideas, and find solutions around a specific domain of interest in the profession process while removing inhibitions. Both can think more freely without criticism and suggest as many spontaneous new ideas as possible. The mentor employs brainstorming as a teaching and evaluation (formative and summative) tool to comprehend the mentee's level of competence and mastery of any profession process in order to either scaffold by demonstration or fade responsibility for the mentee's increased participation and feedback.

Scaffolding is the support given by a mentor during a learning process tailored to the needs of the mentee with the intention of helping them achieve their learning goals in the profession (Piper, 2005). In MT, scaffolding is a mentorship strategy in which a mentor offers a particular kind of support to a mentee as they learn and develop a new concept, skill, or value in a profession process. In this strategy, a mentor may share new information about the profession process (what), explain the rationale for such operations in the profession process (why), and/or demonstrate skills in solving a problem in the profession process (how). The mentor then gradually allows the mentee to reason and practice any of the scaffolder profession processes independently.

The mentor also applies the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model (I do; we do; you do) as a mentoring strategy. That is, where the mentor shows how an element or activity of a profession is done, then the mentee practices the learning experience together with the mentor, and finally, the mentee works independently for mastery (Grand Canyon University, 2020). This enables the mentor to determine the mentee's learning ability and progression from what the mentee cannot do to what he or she can do without help in the learning process.

MT learning strategies emphasize the importance of observing, modelling, and imitating the behaviour, attitude, and emotional reactions of the mentor in the profession process (Bandura, 1977). For effective mentorship, the mentee must be willing and ready to observe, model, and imitate the behaviour, attitude, and emotional reactions of the mentor in the profession process.

MT uses a hierarchical arrangement of competencies to simplify mentorship for easy instruction by the mentor and understanding, mastery, and application by the mentee in the profession process.

Conclusion

Mentorship has become increasingly important among professions due to an alarming decline in quality professions. This situation is exacerbated by the lack of relevant mentorship theories to guide the attitude and activities of the mentor and the mentee. In MT, the foundational attitudes for both mentor and mentee include open communication and accessibility to each other, passion, and inspiration for the profession, mutual respect and trust between mentor and mentee, and independence and collaboration with other professionals. The onus of the mentor is to provide an enabling environment for the mentee to facilitate learning and measurement of the unit of progression of the mentee in the mastery of specific knowledge, values, and skills in mentorship. It is the active participation of the mentor and the mentee in scaffolding and brainstorming within the profession process that stimulates effective mentorship. It is necessary for the mentee to observe, understand, and practice the profession processes for effective and sustainable learning in mentorship. In MT, the mentee observes the process (I do) while the mentor scaffolds the process (I do); while the mentor fades responsibility, the mentee practices responsibility (we do); and while the mentor allows independent practice of responsibilities, the mentee reproduces responsibilities independently for mastery, feedback, and motivation (you do).

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