



HOME STUDY



Certificate in Mentoring

ITOL

INSTITUTE OF TRAINING &
OCCUPATIONAL LEARNING

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INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAMME

The Home Study approach

This method of learning allows you, the learner, the maximum flexibility and the freedom to choose how much to study, in what detail, when and how long to take.

The learning material in this workbook intersperses text with a range of exercises (often referred to as Activities) designed to help reinforce learning on the principle of 'what I do I understand'. We also include Workplace Activities, designed specifically to help you relate your learning to your work (see below).

At the end of each Part we include Self Checks. They are there with the object of testing whether you have really mastered the topic in question. In addition, at the end of each Part you will find a Progress Check, which is effectively a re-statement of the specific objectives addressed in that Part, in a format that will enable you to assess yourself against each particular objective, and make notes about possible evidence collection, further development, etc.

Everyone's circumstances are different, and everyone learns at a different rate, so there is no limit on how long you take to work through the material.

Using the *Programme* to develop yourself at work

A further feature of this Qualification is that it aims to increase your skills in the workplace. Thus while many of the Activities are designed to help you think more generally about the issues raised in the Module, others encourage you to relate those issues to your work, for example:

- by obtaining information about how things are done in your workplace;
- by carrying out particular projects;
- by talking to your manager and other colleagues.

These are called Workplace Activities and they should help you to improve your job performance generally by getting you to think about what you do in relation to what you are learning.

What if I'm not currently employed in training?

As we stated initially, the aim of this Qualification is to help you function more effectively as a trainer whether you work full-time in training or whether your training activities are just a small part of your job. But it may be that you are currently employed in a totally different field, or are not employed at all, and are looking to use this Qualification to help you get into training. In which case, you can do one of two things:

- you can ignore the Workplace Activities and concentrate on acquiring the basic knowledge given by the text and by the other Activities, etc.;
- you can apply the Workplace Activities to other situations, such as experience you have gained in previous jobs, in your leisure activities, or through voluntary work.

INTRODUCTION TO THE MODULE

A straw poll asking managers how they picked up their management skills will often reveal the answer: 'From a previous boss of mine who taught me a great deal about the real world we work in'. The system of on-the-job learning has existed for every many years – giving that system a label and, hence, some kind of separate legitimacy of its own, however, is relatively new. Such is the background of mentoring.

In this Qualification we will be examining mentoring not only from the point of view of the trainer but also from the differing perspectives of the mentor, the learner and the line manager. These are all roles that the trainer may be called upon to play.

We will also pay particular attention to the competences required to act as a mentor. If you are not currently acting as a mentor for someone, we strongly suggest that you look at the sub-skills involved in each competence in some detail. Then, when you begin to feel comfortable with each competence, go out and find someone for whom you can act as mentor.

You will then be able to practice the skills examined in order to help that person to develop:

- in his or her current role;
- in his or her future roles; and
- in his or her chosen career.

In developing these skills in yourself, you will be able to apply them to the many other circumstances in which you are likely to find yourself as a training specialist. Like all skills development work, you can only really say that you have mastered the skills when you have been able to apply them. This is why we suggest finding a person to help and then working through the material with real opportunities for practice.

In this Home Study Certificate we will:

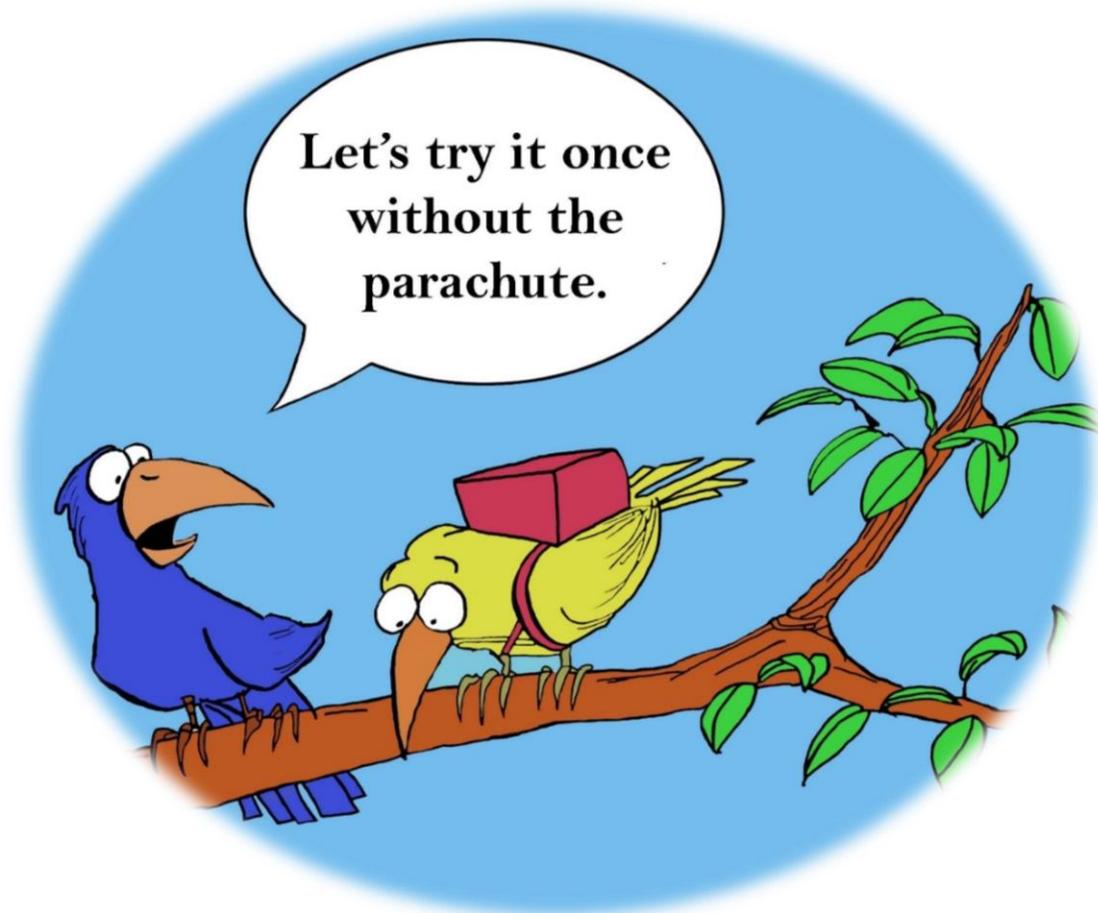
- look at mentoring as a system in order to recognise what it is, its uses and its prerequisites;
- describe the process of mentoring from the point of view of all the parties involved;
- examine the sub-skills required by a mentor – what these skills are, and how to develop them as both trainers and mentors;
- identify what can go wrong in a mentoring system.

Objectives

At the end of this Qualification you should be able to:

- explain the role of the mentor within development programmes;
- identify the players involved in a mentoring system, their relationships, their responsibilities and the benefits they receive;
- identify learning needs and give feedback to learners on their individual needs;
- provide guidance to learners on different learning opportunities which are available within their development programme and/or organisations;

- use coaching and counselling skills with different learners to help them set and review learning objectives;
- set and manage learning opportunities and projects for learners which allow for the monitoring of progress;
- help individual learners to gain access to internal people and systems which can assist them in acquiring and applying learning in the workplace;
- state some of the possible problems arising in mentoring and how to overcome them.



PART 1
WHAT IS MENTORING?

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- Introduction
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- 1.2 Benefits to the protégé
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INTRODUCTION

'Mentoring' has been described in different ways by different people over the years. When asked at a workshop what mentoring entailed, mentors themselves suggested:

- coaching
- guiding
- passing on experience
- sponsoring
- acting as 'godparent'
- training
- 'wising up'
- the 'wise owl'
- steering
- counselling
- 'keeping an eye on'
- advising
- protecting
- 'looking after them'
- helping
- being a 'sounding board'
- motivating
- role model

As we shall see later, mentoring involves all of these activities, as well as others not mentioned above.

The dictionary definition of a mentor is an 'experienced and trusted advisor or guide'. The word comes from Greek mythology – Mentor was the name of the person who was trusted by Odysseus to be the tutor of his household. The use of mentoring as a developmental tool is not new. It has been used for many years in, for example, apprenticeship training, when master craftsmen took responsibility for nurturing the youngsters under their control. Such relationships were not limited to craftsmen's guilds: managers have always 'kept an eye on' high flyers, supervisors have taken new recruits 'under their wing', people have secured positions through the 'old boy/girl network'.

So, the concept of the mentor is not new: it has received a new impetus in the last few decades, as organisations have realised that this form of on-the-job training is too important to be left to informal relationships, that there is too much risk of apparent (if not real) nepotism, and that the experience of capable managers and supervisors should be tapped.

Part 1 of this Module introduces the concept of mentoring and looks at the benefits of mentoring for:

- the protégés;
- line managers;
- training managers;
- the organisation as a whole;
- mentors themselves.

When you have completed this Part of the Module, you should be better able to:

- define mentoring by describing the activities involved;
- explain some of the uses of mentoring;
- state the benefits to be gained by all parties in a mentoring system.

1.1 MENTORING OVERVIEW

In mentoring systems, especially formal ones, a senior manager is identified as the mentor of an employee who would benefit from developing for the future. We will call this person the 'protégé'. The mentor can be the protégé's line manager, although many organisations feel that there are additional benefits to be gained from the separation of the roles of line manager and mentor.

Mentoring is often used to help develop junior members of staff: trainees, apprentices, graduate entrants, etc. However, it is not confined to these levels and can be used for well-established managers who are felt to be capable of developing into more senior roles.

A number of different people can be involved in mentoring, as shown by the network of inter-relationships below.

Mentoring relationships operate within an organisational context. They can be created either as a stand-alone management development system, where senior managers take responsibility for more junior protégés. They can also form part of the support system for other management development programmes: a common example would be for learners who are undertaking a programme of open learning to be allocated a mentor to help and support them throughout the programme.

1.2 BENEFITS TO THE PROTÉGÉ

Each of the players involved, together with the organisation as a whole, can benefit from a mentoring system.

ACTIVITY 1

We all know how training can benefit learners: by speeding up the learning process, instilling confidence in their ability to carry out the task properly, preventing them doing harm to themselves and other people (physical, emotional and career-wise).

If you are already acting as someone's mentor, or if you were to be setting up such a relationship with someone, how did/would you go about 'selling' the idea to them? Note down three major benefits of mentoring that you could 'sell' to the protégé.

The person on the receiving end of a mentoring relationship can benefit in a variety of different ways. These include:

- **career enhancement** in terms of both advice and sponsorship. Advice can come in both professional and technical areas, and also in the timing of job moves and notification of opportunities. Advancement can come from recognition and visibility by senior people as a result of the mentor's ability to 'mention people in dispatches'.

- **speedier and easier induction** into the formal and informal world of organisations. This is especially important, for example, with graduate trainees who are recruited for their knowledge and potential but many of whom are acknowledged to need ‘some of the smooth edges roughened up’;
- **ready access** to senior managers, which can undoubtedly aid the protégé’s self-confidence. Think back to the early stages in your own career: do you remember how you felt the first time you had to go into a meeting with the chief executive? Protégés will gain in confidence if they are used to speaking often and informally with the senior managers who are acting as their mentors. This will stand them in good stead when dealing with all such managers.
- an acceptable form of **training in organisational politics**. The term ‘acceptable’ is used deliberately here. Few organisations admit to being political, yet some argue that ‘all managers, at all levels in all organisations are political’. How much assistance do we as trainers give to our managers in equipping them for this part of their role? Frequently, up-and-coming managers learn about the ‘realpolitik’ of organisations through their mentors;
- having a successful manager as a mentor, which offers the protégé a **role model** who can be observed closely as well as from a distance. In such ways, protégés can often develop the skills of managing more quickly and effectively than by attending any number of management development programmes. This does of course depend greatly on the design and delivery of our programmes – as trainers, we would not want to replace all of our training programmes with mentoring systems!

1.3 BENEFITS TO THE MENTOR

Having looked at the benefits to the protégé, what is in it for the mentor?

There is no doubt that acting as a mentor is not easy: it takes time, effort, commitment and sheer hard work for it to be successful. However, those who have performed this role seem to indicate that there are a number of tangible and intangible benefits to them.

ACTIVITY 2

Do you have a mentor from within your organisation? If not, then, having identified all the above benefits for the protégé, you may well wish to consider finding a mentor for yourself. Once you have selected your man or woman, how would you go about persuading him or her to agree to the idea? In other words, how do *they* benefit from it? Try to suggest at least three ways.

You may have thought of the satisfaction mentors feel of the success of their protégés, or the recognition of their advisory skills by higher management, or career development.

Here are some comments made by mentors which illustrate the ways in which they thought they had benefited.



'Knowing that you have had some small or large part to play in developing someone's potential is in itself immensely satisfying. As trainers, we all recognise that. Mentoring seems to offer an additional challenge, stimulation and a great deal of pride when it succeeds.'

Training Manager, electronics company

'Seeing someone come in at the ground floor and watching their progress gave me an insight into future potential team members. This can be of great benefit in succession planning, no matter how well the formal system operates.'

Sales Manager, software company

'Performing as a mentor actually gave me development opportunities – I could use such skills as coaching, counselling and motivating; any successful mentoring situation only arises by the mentor spending a considerable time in these activities.'

Human Resource Manager, pharmaceutical company

'I think that my own career took off as a result of the mentoring I did. I received increased recognition from my boss and other managers as a spin-off of my protégé's success.'

Finance Manager, brewery

'I'm getting on in years, and don't really want to progress any further. By helping my protégé, I think that I stored up an amount of goodwill from him, since he will probably outstrip me in the future. In the meantime, at least I've got him available as an ally in another part of the organisation should I ever need one.'

Project Manager, engineering company

1.4 BENEFITS TO THE LINE MANAGER

Some line managers feel that the introduction of an additional party into the development process for a member of their staff is cumbersome, unnecessary and a dilution of their managerial role. So what are the benefits to them? Here is one line manager who saw mentoring in a positive light:



'It was like having a third party, an extra person to take a look at rising stars in my patch. I got a second opinion to corroborate or change my views.'

'I got a good deal of information, let alone the protégé. Information about other people, other departments, other programmes or other ideas. Some of these other ideas were of value to *me*.

'I've always worked hard on developing my staff, but, with a bigger team lately, it was useful to have somebody else involved in the development of the protégé. It certainly helped to ease my workload a bit, for which I was grateful.'

'It was also very useful for my senior manager to see one of my people on the way up. I'm not saying that I took all the credit – far from it. But I was able to "bask in the reflected glory" of the protégé – after all, I had been responsible for their development long before the mentor came on the scene.'

Production Manager, manufacturing company

Clearly, if the mentor is also the line manager, then these benefits will not accrue – perhaps yet another reason why so many organisations separate the two roles.

1.5 BENEFITS TO THE TRAINING MANAGER

Although a relatively new term, 'mentoring' is (as we have already seen) an old tool which training managers have long been able to use. Mentoring helps training managers by:

- ensuring that on-the-job training takes place, and takes place automatically;
- providing a low-cost development system – especially useful in times of tight budgets and financial constraints;
- helping to secure commitment to training and development activities at all levels in the organisation;
- developing the skills of the mentor as well as the protégé – one system provides for a double-hit;
- devolving training to line management, thus helping to refute the attitude that 'training is about training courses run by the training department'.

1.6 BENEFITS TO THE ORGANISATION

Mentoring, as with all training and development activities, does not exist for its own sake, but for the benefit of the organisation as a whole, to help improve its effectiveness and/or efficiency. Specific benefits of mentoring to the organisation can include:

- enhanced levels of competence of both mentors and protégés;
- closer working relationships across departments or sections, at different levels and between specific individuals. This is of particular value in organisations which are moving towards more flexible or organic cultures;
- increased levels of motivation for all parties.

There can be very tangible benefits as outcomes (for example, lower costs, increased sales, improved quality), especially when projects are used as learning vehicles.

SELF CHECK 1

Before moving on, check your understanding of what you have learned by answering the following question. You will find solutions to Self Checks at the end of this workbook.

Draft a memo which you, as training manager, could send to the management team of your organisation. Explain what mentoring is and why it should be introduced as part of, say, the development programme for new graduates or business and technician trainees. Ensure that you sell the benefits of the system to management. Use a separate piece of paper.

We have begun in this Part to look at what mentoring is and what it can achieve for all parties involved in such a system. In the rest of this Qualification we will look in some detail at:

- what is involved in such systems;
- what activities take place;
- what the requirements are of the people involved.

PROGRESS CHECK

Having completed this Part of the Qualification, spend a few moments thinking about how confident you feel about each of the items listed in the box below. You may find it helpful to make a note of points you want to discuss with your tutor, mentor or line manager, or of any good ideas you have had about how to apply at work what you have just learned. If you are collecting evidence for assessment, make a note of possible evidence you have thought of as a result of your study so far.

Progress check

I am now able to:

define mentoring by describing the activities involved;

explain some of the uses of mentoring;

state the benefits to be gained for all parties in a mentoring system.

Notes and reminders

PART SUMMARY

Mentoring is not a new development process – it has been used successfully for a very long time.

Mentoring involves at least two parties – mentor and protégé – but may also require the involvement of the line manager (where the roles of mentor and line manager are separated) and the trainer. Mentoring can be used for a range of jobs: from junior trainees or apprentices through to reasonably well-established managers.

Mentoring benefits a range of people:

- the protégé is helped to integrate into the organisation and the real world of work, and with career development advice;
- the mentor enjoys enhanced skills and a great deal of personal satisfaction;
- the line manager has the benefit of another person to help in the development of staff;
- by devolving training to line management, the trainer is helped to gain the commitment of the organisation to systematic, on-the-job training;
- the organisation gains staff who are more highly motivated and more skilled, as well as any tangible outcomes from the process.

