

Effective School Leadership: The Institution of the Mentoring and Coaching



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ABSTRACT: This article describes the institution of the mentor which facilitates contact and support from the peer and thus helps to reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness. It was also emphasized that the mentor provides professional and emotional support and thus helps reduce feelings of anxiety and frustration. It boosts self-confidence and self-esteem, as it provides rich opportunities for reflection on the new role and awareness of the strengths and weaknesses that need strengthening and improvement. Reference was also made to the role of coach. The training as mentioned concerns a method that belongs to the same category of practical methods as the institution of the mentor. The in-school mentoring process as referred to in this article includes goal-oriented learning practices between two individuals that lead to behavior change so mentor and coach training programs can offer valuable services at relatively low cost to the state and quite high benefit for education.

KEYWORDS: Mentor, coach, education, school, educational administration, specific professional values, solutions and directions

INTRODUCTION

The growing international trend for professionalization of school principals is increasingly leading to the perception of a change in their professional profile. That is, from bureaucratic executives to become leaders of organizations, people and societies. This change sets as a priority to build their professionalism on the basis no longer of abstract scientific knowledge but of professional ability. The school leader must be able to deliver results, improve teaching and learning processes, communicate and collaborate effectively with the school's human resources, and meet the demands of states, societies and individuals. In general, the school principal must become synonymous with success, which makes it necessary to redefine the profession. Thus, in parallel with the scientific knowledge for the educational administration, a body of scientific knowledge for the school leadership begins to be formed, which is based on a series of researches, describes models and analyzes behaviors and professional practices. In many countries of the world, certification and licensing procedures are established, professional associations are established, codes of professional ethics are established, specific professional values are promoted and schemes of continuous professional development are created (see Kalogiannis, 2015; Fasoulis, 2006).

In order to achieve effective school leadership, a rich mix of methods of continuous professional development is offered (Huber, 2004; Darling-Hammond and LaPointe, 2007) which includes: traditional methods of theoretical lectures, collaborative, communicative and procedurally oriented methods that focus in cohort structures, in group and plenary discussions of participants, interactive role-playing and problem-solving simulation methods, practical methods of coaching, mentoring, field apprenticeships, problem solving (problem based learning, case studies, action research and projects). These methods link theory with practice and activate thinking, and modern methods of online learning. Of these professional development methods, two have begun to gain ground due to their high efficiency but also their low cost; these methods are the institution of the mentor and the coach.

THE INSTITUTION OF THE MENTOR (MENTORING)

To understand the term "mentor" we need to refer to Homer's *Odyssey*. In particular, the Mentor was an adviser to Odysseus and, during the latter's absence in the Trojan War adventure, he took care of Odysseus' son, Telemachus, whom he took under his protection. In the relevant literature we find a plethora of definitions that seem to coincide in terms of the conceptual approach of the term despite the different national contexts. In the United Kingdom the mentor is a more experienced person, willing to share his knowledge with a less experienced person in a relationship of mutual trust (Bush and Middlewood, 2005). In America, the term mentor refers to "an experienced professional who serves as a wise guide to a younger protégé" (Daresh, 1995). In Singapore, "the mentor is an older person who undertakes to guide the development of a younger person and to contribute to his personal empowerment and career" (Chong et al., 1989). Bassett (2001), in order to distinguish the mentor from coaching, states that the institution of the mentor has more to do with the development of career and life and can not function successfully between a mentor and the its director or evaluator".

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The institution of the mentor is governed by the assumption that "the role of leader is a solitary endeavor and that by having students the opportunity to relate to peers in their personal and professional concerns, they can reduce feelings of isolation" (Daresh, 1995). Usually, the mentor-learner relationship has an open time horizon, less emphasis on goals (Wallis and McLoughlin, 2009) and is based on mutual commitment to work collaboratively to achieve a personalized career development plan (Daresh, 2001). The main task of the mentor is to provide career planning advice and guidelines in relation to the professional development of the learner but also to provide useful knowledge about the organization's policy (Wallis and McLoughlin, 2009). It is also oriented towards the functions of psychosocial development through counseling and the creation of a friendly relationship between mentor-learner (Kram, 1985).

The mentor according to the British School Management Task Force (1991) must have high professional credibility and be a good professional. It is also very important to be accompanied by the reputation that has the potential to contribute to the development of human resources. In order to be able to successfully meet the needs of his role, a minimum period of three years of experience in the position of director is required, but also not far from his first experience as a manager. Good interpersonal skills are still needed, which should be constantly strengthened. Because the manager is called upon to carry out his work in a multicultural environment, he must, on the one hand, show sensitivity and tolerance and, on the other hand, be able to give alternative solutions to complex problems. This practically means that he will be able to participate fully in the mentoring process, which, in turn, requires constant collaboration with peers. The latter are called upon to provide advice in order to advance the personal professional development of the mentors.

The skills, based on West-Burnham and Smith (1993), that are particularly useful in the mentoring process are vision for the future, listening ability, providing feedback, dealing with negative intentions or behaviors, information, empowerment, and finding solutions. Grover (1994) argues that a mentor to be successful must have seven qualities and in particular be knowledgeable, experienced, supportive, reliable, flexible, accessible and creditworthy.

The institution of the mentor has been extensively researched and commented on extensively. A summary of the literature gives us the roles played by the mentor (Daresh and Playko, 1989; Bolam et al., 1995; Bush and Coleman, 1995; Southworth, 1995). Specifically, the mentor provides stimuli, responds confidentially to the new manager's needs and offers support without being critical through the provision of emotional support and professional-personal assistance. Communicates and is open to dialogue, listens and observes in a sensitive and confidential relationship. It is a resonator that enables the protégé to find solutions and directions. He knows the art of listening without judging, while he can guide with effective leadership and by providing opportunities for implementation of leadership actions. He is the one who introduces the protégé to the culture and processes of the organization, imparts knowledge to him, helps him to develop leadership skills and motivates him to achieve the goals. He is a model with his attitude and behavior. Evaluates formally and informally. It protects and is the refuge in which the protected person can act without fear of failure or loss of self-confidence. It promotes through its influence and connections the professional career of the apprentice, supervises him and provides him with feedback. Finally, it evaluates achievements and personal goals, helps to modify them if necessary, and provides ongoing support.

For the institution of mentoring to succeed, a stable relationship of trust must be established between the two parties; otherwise the value of the relationship will be lost for both and may even become detrimental (Chong et al., 1989). In a relationship that is distinguished for mutual benefits, both the career development and the psychological development of both individuals are enhanced through the rich experiences and motivations offered. The benefits that result are multiple and are addressed to both the mentor and the protected as well as the education system. The literature organizes the pros and cons of mentoring in these three areas (Bolam et al., 1995; Bush and Coleman, 1995; Southworth, 1995; Hobson, 2003; Grow, 2005; Chong et al., 1989).

As for the protected, the institution of the mentor facilitates contact and support from the peer and thus helps to reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness. Provides professional and emotional support and thus helps reduce feelings of anxiety and frustration. It boosts self-confidence and self-esteem, as it provides rich opportunities for reflection on the new role and awareness of the strengths and weaknesses that need strengthening and improvement. Accelerates the pace of learning, contributes to professional development, improves personal, communication and political skills, encourages new ideas and creativity of the newcomer and takes risks from him. Improves technical knowledge and problem analysis, helps in the transition to the new role and in the development of the new professional identity and at the same time offers gains in knowledge and skills. Finally, it provides a sufficient number of strategies and tactics, cultivates friendly relations and creates useful support networks.

For the mentors, the institution is a tonic and invigorating process, as the young person conveys his positive attitude and enthusiasm. The mentoring process also improves job satisfaction and boosts self-esteem, while challenging the mentor's assumptions about the questions asked by the client. Provides the opportunity for reflection, review of professional practices and the creation of new perspectives and new organizational perceptions. It strengthens the mentor's ability as a manager, as through it he strengthens his skills and is informed. It facilitates the testing of new ideas, plans and strategies, while offering opportunities for mutual learning, while enhancing the sense of professionalism. Increases professional results and gives opportunities for promotion. Finally, it brings benefits through networking not only with apprentices but also with peers.

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The benefits for the education system come primarily from the fact that the institution of the mentor is an efficient form of professional support and development. The networking that develops benefits mentors and apprentices and provides opportunities for both contact with other members of education and learning new practices and research findings. The mentor-client relationship reinforces organizational norms and cultures and ensures that knowledge and skills are passed on to new colleagues. Improves the overall performance of the working group, enhances the learning capacity of schools, creates know-how in the development of assessment and staff development and consequently upgrades the prestige of the school. In other words, it contributes to the sustainability of quality school leadership. Finally, it contributes to the consolidation of a culture of mutual support and development between the wider community of principals and the schools they serve.

However, the literature presents a number of disadvantages and limitations (Bush and Coleman, 1995; Southworth, 1995; Hobson, 2003; Grow, 2005; Chong et al., 1989; Daresh and Playko, 1992; Walker et al., 1993). Initially, mentor-protected assignment is often problematic and dangerous. That is why the matching must be done on the basis of the voluntary principle, that is, there must be consent from both sides. In particular, inappropriate mentors may be selected, problems may arise between the mentor and the protégé due to excessive expectations and excessive dependence of the protégé or due to excessive attachment of the mentor, to the point that he is reluctant to let the protégé become independent. Other times the training philosophies and approaches adopted by both sides for personnel management do not match. Many times, mentors are not properly trained. On the other hand, young people's desire for specific advice instead of support can lead to tensions. In addition, through the mentoring process a great influence on a person is allowed. At the same time, team leadership and the development of other leaders are being undermined. Sometimes, the privacy of the relationship can be violated. At other times, the assumptions and perceptions of experienced managers may be outdated; they may provide guidance based on traditional role expectations, but which do not meet modern requirements and rapid change. The institution of the mentor can tacitly support assumptions about the paramount importance of managers. The literature also mentions that mentors may become critical, overprotective, attempt psychotherapy, or encourage passive addiction. There are also accusations of favoritism but also the appearance of feelings of jealousy and dissatisfaction from colleagues. Another serious problem that can arise is the commitment of time to the detriment of the school administration. Sometimes there is not enough time to develop the relationship properly, while carefully designed internships lead to deprivation of critical leadership resources from schools that need them. Many times, the institution of mentor can become an expensive learning tool, because it requires high costs both in money for the salaries of apprentices and program managers and in the time of mentors and senior management teams. Finally, sufficient apprenticeship time is not always calculated for each apprentice.

The institution of mentor is used extensively for leadership preparation and development in several countries, including Australia, England and Wales, Hong Kong, Singapore and the USA (Bush and Middlewood, 2005; Bush and Jackson, 2002). In America, the institution is a fundamental element of the pre-service development programs of the school leadership offered by many universities, while as early as 1995, twenty states had introduced mandatory mentoring programs for novice principals (Daresh, 1995). The programs, despite the ambiguity of the purposes and definitions of mentoring, seem to benefit both mentors and participants. In England, the institution of the mentor is an integral part of the introductory training programs for school leaders, following the recommendations of the School Leadership Task Force (Bush and Jackson, 2002).

In several studies the institution of the mentor receives positive responses regarding its usefulness in the professional development of candidates and current principals, while internships in different schools generally cover the shortcomings of the curricula that unilaterally emphasize the simple transfer of knowledge through traditional teaching methods (see Leithwood et al., 1994). In the survey of Bolam et al. (1993) with a sample of 238 new managers and 303 mentors who participated in the Headteacher Mentoring Pilot Scheme, 66% of new managers and 73% of mentors gave positive responses ranging from "successful" to "very successful" for the institution. In an international survey of the same (Bolam et al., 2000) with the distribution of questionnaires to 700 managers from five countries, Hungary, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain and Wales, 2/3 said that their informal support local managers was helpful, while 48% in all countries answered that mentors provide helpful support. The same answer was given by 80% of respondents who participated in a mentoring program in New York (Grover, 1994).

COACHING

One method that belongs to the same category of practical methods as the institution of the mentor and is constantly gaining ground in recent years in school leadership development programs is that of coaching. The International Coach Federation (2008) defines coaching "as a lasting partnership designed to help clients produce satisfactory results in their personal and professional lives." According to the Association, coaches help people improve their performance and upgrade their quality of life. This suggests that coaching focuses more on developing specific skills and competencies on the job and provides feedback on performance (Green et al., 1991). Popper and Lipshitz (1992) add that it also emphasizes psycho-social aspects, through which the development of skills and abilities on project execution can become more productive. The coaching process involves practical, goal-oriented forms of learning between two individuals that lead to behavioral change (Wallis and McLoughlin, 2009). Provides ongoing, secure, and

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confidential support that aims to consolidate significant personal, professional, and institutional development through a process that evolves over time (Bloom et al., 2005).

West and Milan (2001) distinguish between two types of coaching, coaching for growth and coaching for skills and performance. The first presupposes the development of a supportive relationship and dialogue, which create the conditions for thoughtful learning. On the other hand, coaching for skills and performance has three dimensions:

Professionalism: maintaining neutrality and clear standards of conduct, ensuring confidentiality, commitment to continuous personal and professional development.

Purpose: to help the person adapt appropriately and creatively to the challenges.

Relationship: is a collaboration between two people with the goal of developing self-awareness. Power is equal.

Coaching as a method aims at the socialization of the potential or current school principal and is considered by most scholars as broader than mentoring. In particular, it tends to be considered a form or aspect of mentoring, but with a narrower focus (Hopkins-Thomson, 2000). Bassett (2001) argues that coaching emphasizes the development of skills and helps to activate the individual to improve his performance in the chosen field, which is why it is usually used in sports. Clutterbuck (1992) is also one of those who consider mentoring to be broader than coaching, which he classifies as a basic mentoring skill. Coaching, according to Clutterbuck (1998), turns into mentoring when the discussion between coach and co-worker enters into more personal issues.

The coaching process is influenced by factors that have to do with the degree of experience and know-how of coaches and coaches, their personal characteristics (Hobson, 2003), the degree of commitment of the coach, the time available in the coaching process, the place of coaching within broader school leadership development strategies (Simkins et al., 2006), with careful coaching-coaching matching and integrating coaching into a broader learning process (Bush et al., 2007).

Durkan and Oates (1994; see also Davies, 1996) report that the coaching process goes through five stages: identifying the process in terms of the skills to be developed or the experience to be gained, delegating power to decision-making, the training of individuals in the task they are coaching, the continuous evaluation by the coach and the sufficient time for reflection.

The trained coach is expected to have a set of interpersonal skills, such as: recognition, validation, clarification, focus, challenge, hierarchy, refinement and empowerment (Wallis and McLoughlin, 2009). A good coach is also expected, (ibid): a) to provide honest, realistic and constructive feedback, b) to be a good listener and c) to suggest and encourage useful action steps. The benefits of coaching for the prospective school leader, some of which work in both directions, are (Hanbury, 2009; Wise and Jacobo, 2010): The development of the coach. It is done in three ways: through coaching strategies, through strategies for achieving goals and through self-care on the path to renewal. The formation of a positive working relationship with the coach that gives the coach the opportunity to think realistically, ethically and professionally about his career. The focus is on the personal concerns that come from each person's unique experiences. Enhancing self-confidence by exploring concepts that the coach may be reluctant to explore. The positive and creative challenge of ideas and assumptions. Finding a solution to a problem through his own action supported by the coach. The change of perspective through the investigation of the essence of the issues. Coaches add value to the personal and professional development of the coach.

The benefits of coaching extend to the education system, as do those who work with the leader, who begins to use the coaching skills he has learned. Individuals and groups with whom the leader works also benefit as they experience the work he or she is beginning to accomplish. Finally, the whole organization benefits, as the actions of the leaders and their teams bring substantial results, while coaching contributes to problem solving and culture change (Wise and Jacobo, 2010). Research has shown that coaching is valuable for leadership development (Rajan, 1996; Hanbury, 2009), while other research shows that it leads to increased effectiveness of school practices (Robertson, 2008; Reiss, 2006).

Coaching has become increasingly popular, in recent years, in England both as an important part of continuous professional development and as a means of leadership sharing and succession planning (Creasy and Paterson, 2005). The National College of School Leadership offers coaching as a method of development in many leadership programs (Tolhurst, 2006), and has included it in the development of National Professional Qualification for Headship graduates.

It is worth noting that both the institution of mentoring and coaching are based on theories of vocational learning, which emphasize that professionals increase learning opportunities through close collaboration with their experienced colleagues. The theories that support coaching and the institution of the mentor are primarily the theory of sociocultural learning, theories of organizational learning and the cognitive psychology of skills. The basic principle of sociocultural learning is that human activities and human learning in general are embedded in the context of social interaction and with the help of others (Knapp, 2008) and that cognitive processes are developed within collaborative problem-solving environments (Mastergeorge, 2001).). The leader of this school, Vygotsky (1978) believed that learning occurs through engagement with others. According to this theory, trainees (protected and coached) construct meanings and habits of the mind for the culture of their work environment through social interactions (Wertsch, 1996).

Organizational learning theories state that organizations have "organizational memory", that is, meanings and information that have been transformed into practices and inform action (Argyris and Schön, 1978). On the other hand, cognitive psychology of skills states that real-life skills are acquired through some form of coaching and through feedback (Sloboda, 1986). Based on the

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above theories, the coach and the coach can construct meanings together through situations they encounter and plan a course of action. In order for the coach-coach relationship to work, the coach must, on the one hand, understand the coach's Upcoming Development Zone in order to build on it the appropriate closest meanings and, on the other hand, be sensitive to the cultural environment in the country. (Mastergeorge, 2001). In this way he will be able to help the coach to build a vision that will make it common throughout the school community.

CONCLUSION

In an era of intense international ferment for the profession of school principal, where specific trends are promoted, developments are launched and situations begin to consolidate, the Greek education system does not seem to want to recognize the central position of the school leader in Greek education. As a result, it is indifferent to the development of introductory training schemes and continuing vocational training for aspiring and incumbent school principals. The unfortunate thing is that at the level of policy planning there does not even seem to be the intention to produce policies specifically for the Greek school leadership. It could be argued that the current political leadership of education is comfortable with the executive role of the directors so far, when in fact many of them are friendly or close to specific parties and political ideologies, follow political lines and generally constitute the custodian of central policies. On the other hand, the financial crisis has made any discussion about planning, organizing and offering mass-scale training programs prohibitive. At this juncture, then, the mentor and coach training schemes can offer valuable services at a relatively low cost to the state and a fairly high benefit to education.

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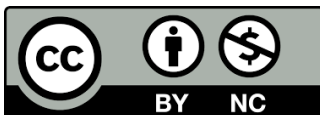
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