

SPECIAL PAPER

A Mentoring Guide for Nursing Faculty in Higher Education

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Abstract

Aim: The purpose of this article is to discuss and describe a mentoring model for faculty in higher education, nursing. The authors describe the development of the mentoring guide for the purpose of orienting, training, mentoring, and retaining junior level faculty as nurse educators in higher education. Lack of mentoring guides exists for the purpose of retention of nurse educators in institutions.

Results: Essential core elements regarding mentoring were described and discussed to support the retention of faculty in nursing; and were formulated as a guide to assist with fostering the retention of nurse educators in nursing education.

Conclusions: A mentoring guide was developed with a focus on retention of faculty in higher education. Future junior level faculty and nursing institutions would benefit from a mentoring guide that would facilitate orientation and retention of nursing faculty in higher education.

Key Words: Higher Education, Nursing, Mentoring

Mentoring Guide for Junior-Level Nursing Faculty

Mentoring has taken new heights in academia from engagement, motivation, priorities of the professoriate, and entitlement. Higher education faces more and more demands while experiences cut backs and economically adjustments. Higher education, particularly nursing has to continue to educate students while dealing with lack of faculty. Schools of nursing are often asked to identify challenges it's faced with respect to the cut backs of federal dollars and budget cuts. The purpose of this paper is to discuss and describe a mentoring guide for nursing faculty in higher education.

A mentor is one who is wiser and more experienced who facilitates, supports, guides, and encourages an individual in their learning process to maximize their learning potential in theory and practice (Casey & Clark, 2011). Mentorship is the wiser and more experienced individual partnering with and assisting the novice learner to reach maximal potential (Sullivan & Decker, 2009). The mentee and mentor should be properly matched based on personality, goals, and expectations. Both the mentee and mentor should establish goals and expectations; each should be clear and specific. The mentee should state the learning style preferred. The experience belongs to the student

and the facilitator helps the student get the most out of the experience by providing appropriate resources and support for learning” (Muir, 2007). Students who are mentored experience greater levels of satisfaction while enrolled in nursing (Giordana & Wedin, 2010). The retention and graduation rates are higher for minority students who are mentored which results in increase revenue (Payton, Howe, Timmons, & Richardson, 2013). Mentors should provide academic and professional support. In addition, feedback is necessary for growth and direction. Although, mentoring can be beneficial, some experiences may have negative effects and barriers.

The development began by the faculty making contact with a senior level nursing education expert and asking them to serve as the student’s mentor and guide them through a mentored project related to mentoring. The relationship already existed with the mentor and the mentee from previous professional student-teacher encounters, so this assisted the mentee with an establishment of a guide. As part of the guide, we obtain operational definitions regarding mentoring concepts such as the mentor, mentee, relationship, purpose, and contract. After defining the background, purpose of the mentoring, mentor, mentee, and the relationship, the mentee was charged to develop the mentoring guide based on evidence and with a purpose. The following term and definitions were used to develop the mentoring guide.

Mentor

Characteristics of a good mentor are confidence, good listener, maturity, motivator, effective communicator, advisor, committed, knowledgeable, resourceful, and positive attitude (Arnold-Rogers, Arnett, & Harris, 2008; Haider, 2007; Strong, 2000). The mentor must be enthusiastic about teaching learning, and mentoring new faculty. It is essential that the mentor exemplifies professionalism in terms of the professoriate and the profession of nursing. The mentor must have extensive background knowledge in nursing practice and nursing education. The mentor must be a part of the university and the school of nursing vision and led by example. Mentors must exemplify evidence of the scholarship in teaching, research and service. As a mentor to junior level faculty it is critical that

the mentor has the status of a tenured faculty; one who knows the rules and regulations of the university and department and is familiar with tenure and promotion procedures. Strong attributes must be evident for a mentor to be effective which are accessible, approachable, and supportive, intuitive and empathic.

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The Mentor must have the ability to answer questions, and interpret situations. As the mentor provide direct help to the mentee, it is critical that the mentee feels understood, accepted, and capable of moving toward functioning and growing. It is equally important that there is shared responsibility toward maintaining a healthy work environment with similar schedules and meeting times. It is important for the mentor to provide feedback to mentee regarding faculty role, lectures, presentations, or graduate work. The mentor should guide the mentee in the development of a scholarly portfolio that reflects teaching, research, and service.

For the scholarship of teaching, it is essential for the mentor to assist the mentee in preparation of lectures by acting as a guide. The mentor acts as a role model by inviting the mentee to his/her teaching in the classroom. The mentor acts as part of evaluation process by allowing the mentee evaluate him/her on the teaching he/she has completed. The mentor also allows the mentee to participate in a debriefing and reflection on teaching.

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The mentoring guide for junior-level nursing faculty consists of mentee, a new faculty or *protégé* willing to be mentored while receiving support and guidance from a mentor. The mentor mutually agrees to a supportive system designed to provide resources to undergird orientation to the unit, college, and university. The relationship of the mentor-protégé relationship is one that is respectful and receptive to a shared guided experience that is nurtured. It may be important to have frequent meetings for a designated period of time. To undergird the teaching role, it is critical for the mentee’s first teaching assignment is to

assist the mentor in preparation of a lecture in the classroom. Teaching is an essential part of the new faculty's role and the mentee's next assignment should allow for attending and participating in the lecture by observation and evaluation of the mentor's teaching. After observing the mentor in teaching within the classroom the mentee prepares for his/her own lecture with the guidance of the mentor. After much necessary preparing with the mentor, the mentee will conduct a lecture with students and in the presence of the mentor. The mentee and mentor debriefs on the classroom teaching and guidance is offered to help facilitate the next classroom teaching. The mentee is allowed to review and accept the evaluation of the mentor. This process may be repeated between mentee and mentor until the mentee and the mentor feels confident that the mentee can conduct lectures with independence. The mentee must be aware that faculty should have ongoing peer evaluation and that all lectures require frequent updates. In terms of research, the mentee is given an assignment to utilize research. Research utilization is broad in topic. As it relates to the priorities of the professorate, research utilization may include any of the following: 1) Research in classroom/lab; 2) Research in community service; 3) Research in publication; 4) Research in presentation. The mentee will a research scholarly activity with the mentor. The mentee will engage in service activities with the mentor. Service may be defined as service to the University, College, Department, and Community. The mentee will engage in scholarly service activities with the mentor. The mentee will develop a scholarly portfolio related to Teaching, Research, and Service.

The Mentor-Protégé Relationship

The functions of the mentor-protégé relationship are specific for the mentor to help the mentee build connections in multiple communities including with department, interdisciplinary teams, external departments, faculty senate, college and community connections. The mentor is a seasoned faculty cultivates a relationship that is situated in common interests and mutual respect. Characterized by the investment of time, effort, and caring; the identification of mutual goals, and regular, ongoing dialogue to ensure the

accomplishment of those goals. Mentor shares his/her wisdom, knowledge, and expertise

The mentor nurtures leadership and the mentee accepts the nurturing role of the mentor. Both the mentor and mentee enter into the relationship as a professional, nurturing, and engaging. According to Davis-Dick (2013) and Blakeney (2012), a holistic mentoring relationship must be caring and positive for best results and that mentoring involves commitment and dedication. The expectations are to establish a healthful work environment with collaborative peer and co-mentoring. Ongoing commitment to the practice of mentoring requires support from administrators and the entire faculty

Barriers to Successful Mentoring

For successful orientation and retention of junior faculty in higher education, mentoring is a must have. Unfortunately, some pressing issues of successful mentoring are often that the experienced senior faculty is unsure of how to mentor and lack of a guide exists to ensuring successful mentorship. It may also be that the senior faculty may have a lack of interest to mentor and need an incentive; may feel they do not have the patience, energy, or time to mentor because of being overworked, having overload, or having a lack of faculty. Some mentors may feel they are not good role models, don't have enough experience, or wisdom to mentor. Faculty have expressed they do not want to baby-sit, counsel, or problem solve for other nursing faculty coming on. It is essential that for successful mentoring to take place, the senior faculty as well as junior faculty must understand the importance of an ongoing nurturing environment; an environment that allows for freedom of respectful expression and openness to each other. It is clear those faculty members do not have a clear picture of mentorship and the role of mentoring. Faculty feel they answer enough questions from the students and they don't want to answer additional questions. Most universities, colleges, and schools would like to have already trained, experienced faculty, but unfortunately there are not enough experienced nursing faculty due to faculty retiring, burn-out, turn overs, or poor salary. In addition, they may simply not know how to mentor. The lack of mentorship from senior faculty may cause the junior faculty to be

unsatisfied and have a lack of motivation. When the junior faculty feel a lack of mentorship, they seek employment and run to other organizations, which leads back to the problem, an increase in the lack of faculty and increase in the faculty turnover. Kosoko-Lasaki et al (2006) described mentoring as a process that could last months, to years, or over a career. Moreover, it is essential that mentoring benefits both the mentee and mentor when there are signed agreements by both and that the new junior faculty meets with the director and the mentor over a specified time of the mentoring. Rockquomore (2011) asserted that two major errors exist in mentoring minority faculty which are denial of differential experiences and taking differences to an extreme. Minority faculty have a unique background and different experiences from other ethnic and racial groups in higher education. The second error in mentoring minority faculty is that often times taking differential experiences to the extreme with the belief that only unrepresented faculty can only mentor underrepresented faculty. Open-mindedness is the key here with allowing the mentee and the mentor to agree to work together because of their unique similarities and work ethics.

A workplace that fosters growth and retention of faculty is not only necessary it's primary to attracting new faculty to join the college or university. A tour of the campus may be needed to showcase the diverse cultural at the university and within the department. It may be helpful to allow for a meet and greet of senior faculty and other newer faculty to break the ice and socialize. Newer faculty have to feel as though they are a part of a group and gain camaraderie. Also, by displaying the history of the school including published readings outlining historical and prominent persons who helped establish the school, buildings, and artifacts will allow newer faculty an opportunity to decide if this could be a permanent institution to plant their feet and grow. Therefore, creating the right environment is crucial to retention of minority faculty (Sethna, 2004; Abriam-Yago, 2002; Aguirre, 2012; Mkandawire, et. al, 2010;

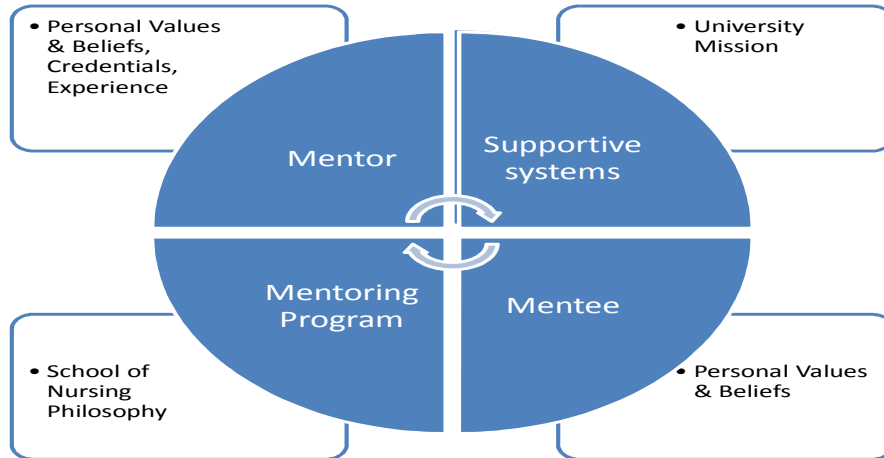
Hassouneh & Lutz, 2013; & Moreno et al, 2006).

Mentoring Guide Diagram

The Mentoring Guide consists of four core elements/concepts: 1) mentor; 2) mentoring program; 3) mentee; and 4) supportive systems (see Figure 1). For the mentoring guide to have faculty buy-in it should be undergirded by the school of nursing philosophy and adopted by the faculty. The philosophy of the school is compilation of faculty values and beliefs regarding nursing, patient, health, and environment. The mentee is a willing participant in a mentoring program, one who accepts responsibility and mentorship of a mentor. The mentee brings a wealth of knowledge and skills to the department of nursing. At the core of the model are four major paradigms these are 1) mentor; 2) mentee; 3) mentoring program; and 4) supportive systems. Within each individual paradigm are intricate aspects for successful mentoring of a faculty. For the success of the person being mentored, the mentee's personal values, beliefs, credentials, and experiences must be taken into account prior to meshing them with a mentor or hiring them. For a successful fit of mentee to the institution and institution to the mentee, the chief nursing administrator must consider the attributes that the mentee brings to the institution. The second intricate aspect is the mentor who also has special and unique experiences not only in practice, but particularly in higher education. For a successful mentoring, or mentorship, the mentor must not only be willing to mentor successfully but also be very capable of doing so. The mentor should be afforded the opportunity to have a decrease teaching load and/or fewer responsibilities due to extant of mentoring and orienting roles. The third intricate aspect is the supportive systems, for example, the environment that to be conducive to support the essentials of the relationship including. The four essential aspects is the mentoring program must be updated periodically and must be active and ongoing. It must be welcoming and inspiring to current and new employees. It must also mesh with the university mission, philosophy.

Figure 1. Mentoring Guide for Nursing Faculty

Aguirre, A. (2012). Women and minority faculty in the academic workplace: Recruitment, retention, and



There is a significant high need to keep junior faculty in higher education by using senior faculty. The outcome of successful mentorship is that the learning process is reciprocal. The authors described the development of the mentoring guide for the purpose of orienting, training, mentoring, and retaining junior level faculty as nurse educators in higher education. Lack of mentoring guides exists for the purpose of retention of nurse educators in institutions. Authors were inspired to develop a mentoring model with a focus on retention in nursing education. The thought that a mentoring model would assist with retention of faculty in higher education would benefit from a mentoring model designed to assist them and the institution with guiding, orienting, and mentoring junior level minority faculty in their role, the *Mentoring Guide for Junior-Level Nursing Faculty* was developed.

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