

The role of mentoring in the CPD programmes of professional associations

ANDREW FRIEDMAN and MARY PHILLIPS
University of Bristol, UK

This paper seeks to position the current role of mentoring within the continuing professional development (CPD) programmes of UK professional associations and to examine its potential for developing reflective practice. Following a review of mentoring and CPD in terms of their relationship to the ethos of lifelong learning, it indicates the extent to which mentoring has been embraced by professional associations. Here, reference is made to a wider research project that set out to map the CPD policies and programmes of UK professional associations by analysing the documentation of over 100 associations. The paper puts forward the idea that mentoring could form an important support for reflective practice, particularly where participation in CPD is compulsory. In conclusion, it argues that the wider introduction of mentoring could help forge new relationships between professionals and their clients, and overcome some of the tensions inherent within CPD itself.

Introduction

Mentoring has become one of those new 'buzzwords' of management practice as organizations turn to it as a way of supporting staff development. But is this enthusiasm shared by professional associations? These associations should be taking a long-term approach to the development of their members, and have an opportunity to build enduring and constant relationships with them in which impartial and objective career and personal development planning can be facilitated. Mentoring would seem to be an ideal way of fostering those relationships. This article, therefore, considers the role of mentoring in the policies and programmes of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) developed by professional associations in the UK. The research not only goes some way to quantifying the use of mentoring in CPD programmes, but also explores the relationship between mentoring and the focus of those policies. In particular, it is demonstrated that the philosophy behind 'voluntary' CPD policies is to a great extent shared by current approaches to mentoring within a common 'lifelong learning' approach. However, it is argued here that the incorporation of mentoring into obligatory and compulsory CPD programmes would help practitioners participate in those programmes in a more effective way and help to resolve some of the tensions inherent with CPD.

Andrew Friedman is Head of Department and *Mary Phillips* is a researcher in the Management Research Centre at the University of Bristol. They have researched and written on the policies, programmes and practice of continuing professional development initiated by UK professional associations as well as other issues relating to management and professionalism.

The mentoring role

Mentoring is notoriously difficult to define. It has been described as 'off-line help by one person to another in making significant transitions in knowledge, work or thinking' (Megginson and Clutterbuck 1995: 5). Fisher (1994: 2) describes mentoring as both a certain relationship between individuals and as a system of communication that facilitates a learning process and argues that it is thus a term which embodies ambiguity. Nankivell and Shoolbred (1996: 2) also point to the slippery nature of the term and its lack of a fixed definition. They argue that mentoring is a label used to describe a range of 'staff support strategies for continuous development'.

Moreover, the boundaries between mentoring and other forms of support are blurred. Although coaching and counselling have been identified as skills that mentors should possess (Kram 1983, Claughton and Lloyd 1995), there is considerable agreement that important differences can be discerned between the roles of mentor, coach and counsellor. Starceвич (1999) argues that mentoring is characterized by deep, personal interest in an individual's long-term development while a coach is job-focused and performance orientated. Neither are mentors counsellors, although they may need to use counselling skills such as listening in order to perform their role effectively (Nankivell and Schoolbred 1996). Claughton and Lloyd (1995) report that the role of mentor should also be separate from that of manager or assessor although some managers may perform mentoring functions such as providing access to staff development or training, or providing useful contacts with colleagues or outside parties.

Despite the difficulties in defining mentoring and distinguishing it from the other means of informal management training or staff support, its core functions appear to be more easily discerned. Kram argues that mentoring relationships fulfil two distinct functions: they have the 'potential to enhance career development and psychosocial development of both individuals' (Kram 1983: 613–614). Career enhancement functions include sponsorship, coaching, protection, exposure and visibility and challenging work assignments, and are regarded as helpful for mentees in 'learning the ropes of organizational life and in preparing for advancement opportunities'. Other research has also indicated that mentoring can help forge the types of organizational relationships critical to career progression (Barker *et al.* 1999: 297). Kanter (1977: 614) has identified the importance of having a champion or mentor who could facilitate access to 'organizational knowledge'. The psychosocial functions identified by Kram included: role modelling, acceptance and confirmation, counselling and friendship, and were seen as important for 'developing a sense of competence, confidence and effectiveness in the managerial role'. Although career enhancement and psychosocial functions are identified separately, it is also important to stress that they are interrelated and work together.

Megginson and Clutterbuck (1995), however, have pointed out that Kram's delineation of the core functions of mentoring apply specifically to a US experience. In Britain, they argue, there is a far greater emphasis on mentoring being a form of support for learning where the learner has an opportunity to reflect on their career goals, make choices and pursue options for themselves

rather than through possible sponsorship opportunities offered by a mentor. The sharing of knowledge is an important part of British mentoring relationships but seemingly does not appear on the US agenda.

This focus on learning has also been developed by others. Corrall (1993) placed learning at the centre of a definition of mentoring as: 'A focus on a one-to-one relationship between mentor and learner which ensures individual attention and support for the learner'. Similarly, a project carried out by Leeds Metropolitan University (1995: 7) defined a mentor as 'a person who consciously helps another person learn'. Cohen (1995: 3-4) notes that mentors 'can actively help other adults to develop their own unique personal, education and career potential' and, in particular, effective mentors 'interact with adult learners for the purpose of enhancing their intellectual and affective (emotional) development'. Starcevich and Friend (2000: 5) also emphasize interaction, arguing that mentoring should be a two-way, power-free relationship, involving a partnership approach that allows the mentee to discover his or her own direction. English (1999: 196) also stresses this partnership approach to mentoring in which the mentee should not be regarded as an empty vessel to be filled with knowledge or a 'learner in deficit'.

A view of mentoring as a relationship that fosters learning is dominant in the CPD programmes studied here—indeed the British Dietetic Association refers to the partners as 'mentor' and 'learner'—although mentoring is also cast as a helpful tool for career advancement, for induction into the structure and politics of an organization and for personal development.

As most of the literature in this field is based on investigation carried out by mentoring advocates who are often acting in a semi-consultancy capacity, there is little questioning of the value of mentoring. Moreover, most research has been conducted on a case study basis and it is difficult to assess the representativity of the cases selected. Writers hint at potential problems by stressing that mentors and mentees should be properly matched, sufficiently supported by appropriate training and given appropriate expectations of their roles (Megginson and Clutterbuck, 1995) but it is implied that where mentoring fails, it is because the scheme has not been implemented properly rather than any inherent problem with mentoring itself. However, mentoring has been characterized as a tool which primarily enhances and benefits the organization rather than the individual (White 1990). This view of mentoring regards it in a negative light as an effective means of inculcating the values of a particular organization and fostering loyalty to that organization rather than developing personal empowerment and a more questioning attitude. Conversely, Clutterbuck (1994) claims that mentoring relationships that arise informally rather than as part of an organizational scheme favour confident and assertive individuals who would probably succeed anyway and disadvantages those who fail to make appropriate connections with those in positions of influence and authority. A related criticism levelled at mentoring is that it is an extension of the 'old boy' network and can perpetuate organizational structures, stereotypes and prejudices, particularly with regard to minority groups (Harris 1993, Ragins 1997). Although there are these criticisms, current evidence would, on balance, suggest that mentoring is a worthwhile activity for both individuals and organizations.

Mentoring, lifelong learning and the learning society

Both in its stress on the individual and its recognition that adults should be actively involved as planners and participants in their own learning, mentoring is connected to the theories and practices that have become attached to the concept of lifelong learning and the learning society. This concept has become highly contested. Indeed, Young (1998: 141) has argued that 'the different meanings given to it [the learning society] not only reflect different interests, but imply different visions of the future and different visions for getting there'. Coffield (2000: 7) has discerned 'at least ten contrasting ways in which the term is being used' and describes the literature surrounding the learning society as confused and conflictual. Two contrasting views of lifelong learning and the learning society are described below.

To some, particularly earlier theorists in this field, the main tenets are that education should: involve learners as actors in their own learning; foster the capacity of people to be active learners, rather than passive recipients; lead to democratization of society; and improve the quality of life (Crompton 1979: 101–104). This concept of lifelong learning has a long history. Dewey (1916, p. 51) suggested that: 'The inclination to learn from life itself and to make the condition of life such that all will learn in the process of living is the finest product of schooling'. He believed that education is the major foundation of a rich life and that these foundations can be made at any stage in life and then built upon.

In the UK, Dewey has been less influential than in the USA, but in the UK there has been a strong tradition of worker education and general self-improvement and group learning from the 19th century. Many of the new professions of the 19th century arose out of societies for group learning or 'learned societies'. This particular model of lifelong education was adopted as an ideal by UNESCO, influenced by writers such as Lengrand (1975). The Faure Report (1972: xxxiii) suggested that education prepares people for a society which does not yet exist but which may do so within their lifetime. As such it is essential for the development of human beings. The report stated that:

If all that has to be learned must be continually re-invented and renewed, then teaching becomes education and, more and more, learning. If learning involves all of one's life, in the sense of both time-span and diversity, and all of society, including its social and economic as well as its educational resources, then we must go even further than the necessary overhaul of our 'education systems' until we reach the stage of a learning society.

However, the view that lifelong learning is a means to improve the social condition through the improvement of individuals (Lengrand 1979, Suchodolski 1979) has been challenged by those who argue that it is a strategy adopted by both individuals and organizations conditioned by late modernity. The concept of lifelong learning emphasizes individual development and individual responsibility and this stress on individualization has been seen as one of the key processes of the 'risk society'. Beck has identified the 'risk society' as one typified by increased risk and uncertainty, which in turn requires an increased reflexivity on the part of the population. Within the context of this type of society, 'individualization' is defined as the 'disembedding and re-embedding of ways of life by new ones in

which individuals must produce, stage and cobble together their biographies themselves' (Beck 1994: 13). Thus, individuals become responsible for formulating their own identities and life courses which itself leads to an expansion of risk situations. Lifelong learning is an important part of this process as it shifts the focus from education in institutional structures to individual participation and learning. There has been a change in emphasis from provision to learners and learning, from inputs to outputs. A greater emphasis is placed on individual self-reliance to cope with change, and on individual responsibility for employability and individual skill development (Edwards *et al.*, 1998). Hake (1999), following Giddens (1999: 81), remarks upon the 'structural necessity' of reflexivity or the 'all-prevailing institutionalisation of reflexivity'; the application of knowledge in all aspects of social life that is characteristic not only of the risk society, but an essential condition of survival.

Mentoring could therefore be viewed as a response to the challenges of the risk society. Megginson and Clutterbuck's outline of the factors which they believe 'converge to make mentoring a method of the times' demonstrate how it fits into the same conceptual framework (1995: 22–28). Organizations themselves provide fewer learning opportunities due to reduced capacity in personnel and training departments and increased pressure on line managers. At the same time, organizations style themselves as 'learning companies', which in practice means that individuals must take responsibility for their own learning and have to be less dependent on their employing organization to provide development. In addition, organizational structures have become flattened and unstable so that career patterns are no longer predictable. The emphasis here is on individualism and uncertainty. Edwards (1998b: 382–384) has argued that destandardization, risk and individualization are associated with increased flexibility on the part of organizations that need to become reflexive, learning organizations. If such transformations are to be successful, then employees have to have 'networks of communication within which to channel information and views; the opportunities to learn associated with facilitating flexibility and change; and ways of participating in decisions about these processes'. Mentoring provides one route to fulfilling these requirements and, moreover, is a means of encouraging individuals to continually improve themselves at minimal cost to the organization.

Continuing professional development

The term Continuing Professional Development also covers a range of possibilities, but, put most simply, it is a framework of learning and development activities, which are seen as contributing to a professional's continued effectiveness. CPD is also allied with the concept of lifelong learning in that learning should continue beyond formal education or initial training, that it should be an active process and that learning can occur in a variety of situations as well as in formal structures. Reflection on learning experiences and on practice is regarded as an important element of the CPD process.

CPD currently encompasses a range of approaches that can be categorized as three distinct policy types. Compulsory policies insist that individuals must participate in that professional association's CPD programme in order to remain members. Sanctions are usually applied in cases of non-compliance.¹ Obligatory

policies explicitly refer to participation in CPD as a professional obligation although there is no compulsion. Voluntary policies stress the benefits to the individual member and perhaps also other stakeholders such as the profession, employer, clients and society but there is no obligation or compulsion on the member to undertake CPD. There are also 'mixed' policies, where the approach differs according to the level of membership and can be a combination of the three policy types outlined above.

Despite this diversity in approach, it is possible to discern emerging common trends behind the development of most programmes and policies. An outcomes/outputs-based approach is becoming increasingly favoured over one of inputs, often characterized as a 'tick-box' approach. As the name implies, the inputs framework conceives of CPD in terms of completing a certain number of learning hours or gaining learning points, often through structured, formal training. The tick-box recording of this process is regarded as evidence of the maintenance and updating of professional skills. In contrast, the outputs approach is based on the argument that merely taking courses is no guarantee that relevant learning has taken place. Rather, it is the outcome of the learning experience that is important and is what makes CPD effective. Research undertaken by the Professional Associations Research Network (PARN) at the University of Bristol has demonstrated that even where CPD policies demand a certain amount of structured and formal learning, they often also emphasize the need for participants to reflect on the outcomes of that learning (Friedman *et al.* 1999, 2000). In line with the growing emphasis on outputs, this research has also uncovered a trend towards voluntary CPD policies that allow members flexibility in determining their own learning needs. By making schemes flexible and voluntary, the emphasis and onus of CPD shifts to individual participants rather than being imposed by a professional association.

However, the emphasis on flexibility and the need for participants, even in many compulsory schemes, to identify their own learning needs has led to CPD being freighted with a range of expectations. These can be illustrated by the definition of CPD most commonly adopted by professional associations, and first developed by the Construction Industry Council in 1986:

CPD is the systematic maintenance, improvement and broadening of knowledge and skill and the development of personal qualities necessary for the execution of professional and technical duties throughout the practitioner's working life.

CPD therefore applies not only to the maintenance of qualifications, but to the expansion of expertise. CPD thus works to increase organizational effectiveness and to guarantee certain levels of technical ability. At the same time, CPD is expected to cover 'the development of personal qualities', hence the emphasis on 'personal professional development' that is often found in CPD literature. In this way, there are resonances between CPD and mentoring; both are potentially all-encompassing concepts that have two distinct functions that coalesce around learning: career/professional development and psychosocial, personal development. However, the rhetoric of CPD is also designed to provide an assurance that professionals are competent and capable of doing their jobs. In practice, this often turns out to be an empty promise as most schemes do not

provide adequate mechanisms for gathering evidence of same. Even the records demanded by most compulsory schemes are little more than a recording of events and activities undertaken without any demonstration of how these experiences might have changed or improved actual practice. Moreover, recent research indicates that many professionals are unclear about the rationale behind CPD, are unsure what activities to undertake and feel unable or unwilling to plan or reflect on their professional development. They do not regard CPD records as providing any assurance that they remain competent and capable of performing their professional roles (Friedman *et al.* 2001).

But how are the resonances between CPD and mentoring played out in practice? Is mentoring more likely to form part of a voluntary or a compulsory CPD scheme? Should mentoring be more widely embraced by professional associations and could it help to resolve some of the tensions inherent within CPD?

Research

Methodology

The focus on mentoring and CPD developed in this paper forms part of a larger research project into the CPD policies and programmes of UK professional associations. This project aimed to map out the building blocks on which CPD is based, to discern trends in CPD and to point out areas of interesting practice. Following an initial postal questionnaire to 450 professional associations, 101 associations who were identified as having CPD policies and programmes formed the final sample for further analysis. Copies of their CPD documentation were obtained, supplemented by telephone interviews where information was unclear.

In addition, a 'web-in' on mentoring was held in order to provide qualitative information. A web-in is an Internet focus group discussion designed to stimulate discussion through a combination of face-to-face and online discussion on a website discussion forum. The discussions generated not only informed the research project, but were also designed to draw together CPD professionals who had reported a sense of isolation in their organizations and to build a mutually supportive community. The face-to-face participants discuss an issue prior to putting items on-line. This enables them to crystallize their ideas and facilitates the teasing out of tacit perceptions and understanding. Ideas are then transferred to the discussion forum where the virtual participants respond and add new comments of their own. The discussion forum is left open for a month so that any visitor can add their own thoughts. Potential participants were drawn from contacts identified during this and previous research and were invited to participate.² The initial group was comprised of CPD professionals but the Internet discussion forum was also accessed by a group interested primarily in mentoring. Individuals who were known to be professional mentoring consultants were contacted and asked for contributions to the discussion as it was felt that they would have much to offer CPD officers who were setting up, or considering setting up, mentoring schemes at their professional associations. This was one of a series of Internet focus group discussions on different aspects of CPD and received a total of 134 contributions.

Results

The literature on CPD policies and programmes received from the sample of 101 professional associations was analysed to determine whether professional associations were aware of the potential benefits of mentoring in a professional development context. This awareness could range from a formal mentoring scheme developed as part of an overall CPD programme to a simple reference to mentoring as a possible CPD activity. Considering the level of interest in mentoring shown in the PARN website discussion group and the links between mentoring, lifelong learning and the ethos of CPD, it is surprising that under half (40%) of the professional associations in this sample make any reference to mentoring in their guidelines as seen in Figure 1. A closer examination of mentoring references was made. Have professional associations organized or provided a mentoring scheme? Or are they more likely to suggest it as an activity for CPD that their members should organize themselves? In Figure 2, the sample is made up of the 40 associations that refer to mentoring in their guidelines. It is apparent that mentoring is referred to in guidelines mainly as a possible CPD activity in itself, or as supporting the identification of learning goals and outcomes (43% or 17 of the associations). Indeed, most of those associations who include mentoring as an activity regard the role of acting as a mentor rather than the experience of being mentored as ‘counting’ for CPD purposes. Very few associations actually provide or organize mentoring for members (13% or five of the 40 associations).

There does seem to be a clear link between voluntary CPD and an awareness of mentoring. Associations who have developed voluntary CPD policies are significantly more likely to mention mentoring than associations with an obligatory or compulsory policy (this was significant at the 5% level) as can be seen in figure 3. The mixed category here is primarily made up of associations that combine voluntary and compulsory policies for different levels of membership. A total of 55% of associations with a mixed policy refer to mentoring. Of the five associations who provide or organize mentoring for their members, only one has a compulsory CPD programme, two are purely voluntary programmes and two have voluntary programmes for some levels of membership.

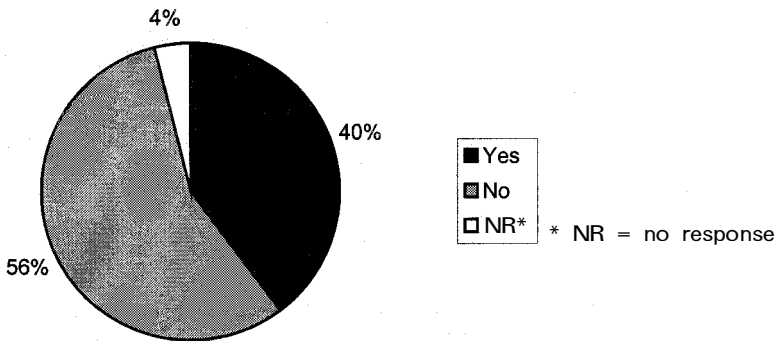


Figure 1. Professional associations who refer to mentoring in their guidelines.

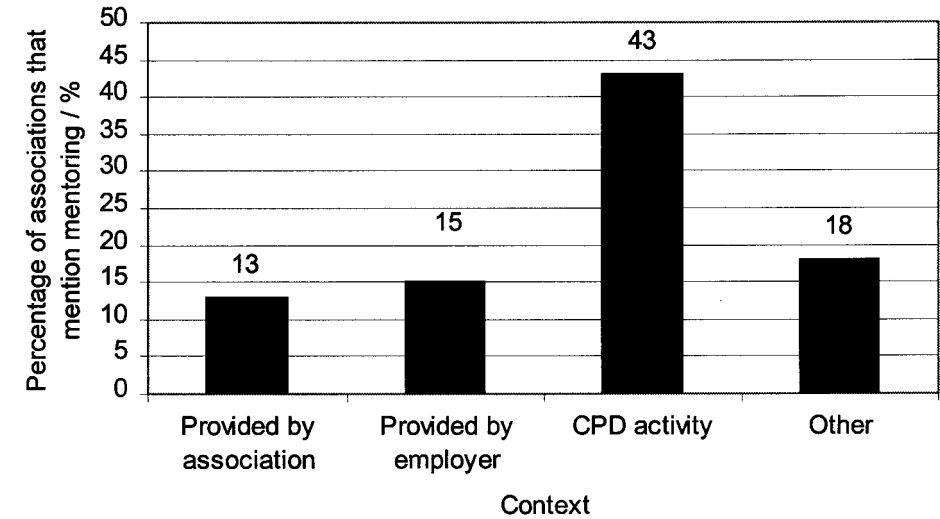


Figure 2. Context of reference to mentoring.

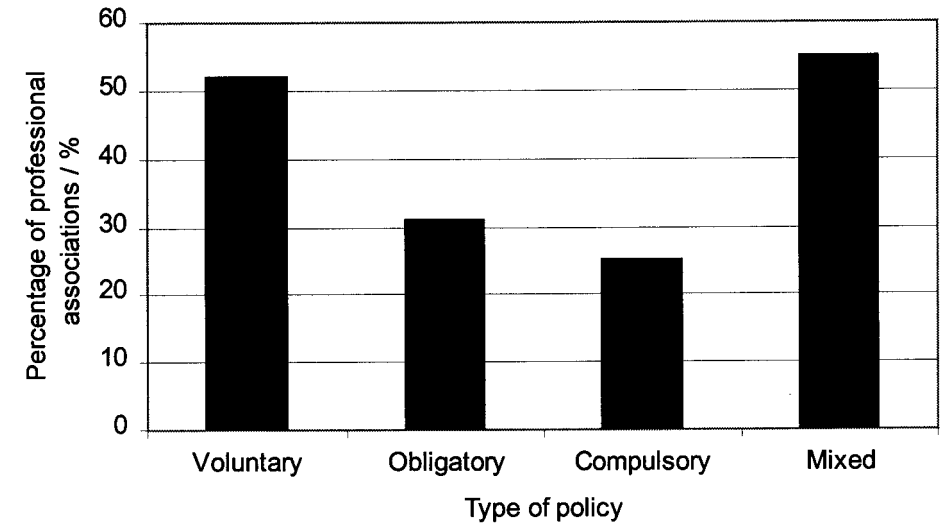


Figure 3. Type of policy and mentoring.

Common philosophies—personal vs. organizational

The link between the ethos behind voluntary programmes and that of mentoring can be illuminated by reference to associations’ considerations of the goals of CPD. Most professional associations (75% of our sample) provide a discrete section within their published guidelines outlining the aims and benefits of CPD. The main aims cited in the documentation could be categorized under benefits accruing mainly to the individual and those which also have significant impact on

external stakeholders. The former include career improvement, increased security, job satisfaction and empowerment, while the latter include the maintenance or development of skills and knowledge, and increased job performance.

When the aims of CPD are examined in terms of the association’s policy type, the link between voluntary CPD and mentoring as a means of professional development becomes more clear. Figure 4 shows the percentage reporting each different aim or benefit from among those with pure voluntary, obligatory or compulsory policy types. It would be misleading to claim that there is a clear-cut division between the aims of compulsory, obligatory or voluntary CPD policies. However, although there are areas that many CPD programmes try to address regardless of policy type, such as improvement or development of skills, voluntary programmes are more likely to address positive individual or personal aspects of development. Compulsory programmes seem to emphasize the need to protect the individual from potentially threatening external forces that might impinge on job security or professional status. For example, none of the compulsory policies listed job satisfaction as part of the aims of CPD, whereas 20% of voluntary policies did so. Again, no compulsory policy listed empowerment as an outcome of participation compared to 20% of voluntary policies. Conversely, 42% of compulsory policies and 29% of obligatory policies listed maintaining or raising standards as an aim, while only 15% of voluntary policies did so. Compulsory policies stress that the maintenance of standards is not only a desirable end in itself, but that it is important that a wider audience perceives that standards are being maintained in order to foster trust in professionals.

Thus, the main focus of compulsory CPD is to ensure maintenance of competence. It is not about empowerment or job satisfaction and not as

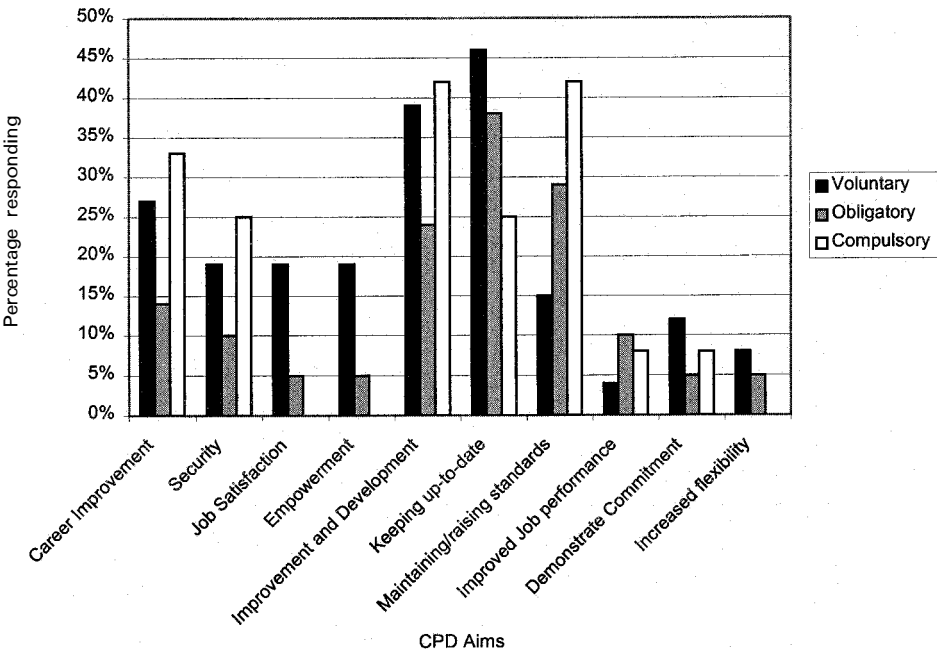


Figure 4. CPD aims by policy type.

concerned with development in a personal sense. The psychosocial aims of mentoring outlined by Kram are irrelevant in terms of compulsory CPD policies. This focus is apparent in the approach taken to mentoring by the compulsory CPD programme developed by the College of Occupational Therapists. Mentors perform a central function in the planning stage of CPD where they must approve and sign off any CPD plan devised by a member. For the purposes of this scheme, a mentor can also be a manager, whose evaluation of the mentee's CPD forms an integral part of his or her annual performance appraisal. Here, mentoring and CPD have been formalized and incorporated into organizational frameworks to ensure organizational effectiveness and the maintenance of competence, but there is no reference to the fulfilment of psychosocial requirements.

Conversely, the CPD scheme developed by the Institution of Electrical Engineers (IEE) illustrates how an emphasis on individual choice and responsibility is echoed by a focus on the individual through mentoring. The scheme is essentially voluntary although its wording implies that true professionals are obliged to maintain professional competence. It is up to the individual to identify, fulfil and apply their own learning needs. The range of subjects relevant to CPD is described as 'unlimited—anything that adds to your personal store of relevant skills, knowledge and experience'. Equally, the means of undertaking CPD is also extremely broad from formal courses of study to 'at work—where simply by day-to-day activities, you acquire relevant knowledge and skills by on-the-job learning and company provision'. The documentation specifically mentions that a mentor may be of assistance in identifying learning needs.

The IEE also provides a separate guidance document entitled *Mentoring: An IEE Guide to Best Practice*. The mentor/mentee relationship is comprehensively defined in that document as follows:

The relationship between the mentor and the person seeking guidance should be personal and confidential, quite distinct from the relationship between superior and subordinate. The mentor should challenge and support, but should neither tell the engineer what to do nor provide assessments to others. A good mentor will want to ensure that the engineer gains confidence and independence as a result of mentoring and is enabled to take full and effective responsibility for his or her own development over the next career stage. Long-term dependence on one influential person is not helpful.

The IEE definition of mentoring clearly stresses the personal aspects of the mentoring relationship and explicitly states that mentoring should not be part of any system of measurement or assessment. The role of a mentor is to empower the individual to direct their own career course and, it is strongly implied, to develop into a more 'rounded' individual. When the IEE lists potential problems with mentoring relationships, the personal as opposed to the organizational aspects of mentoring again come to the fore:

- mentors lacking the time for building a trusting relationship;
- mentors being over-protective or confining the growth of the mentee;
- mentors being unable to give suitable advice;

- mentors becoming emotionally involved in an inappropriate way with the mentee;
- mentors disclosing confidential matters to third-parties;
- mentors being involved in the line management of mentees, causing conflicts between concerns for task completion and training or development needs.

A trusting relationship, growth and inappropriate emotional involvement (which implies that certain forms of emotional involvement are appropriate) are all highlighted as important issues. Moreover, the imperative to develop the psychosocial functions of mentoring is here regarded as directly conflicting with any organizational requirements in terms of management and task completion. The stress is entirely on the individual and the individual's personal development. This echoes the emphasis placed in the CPD documentation that CPD is a personal responsibility that an individual must tailor to their own needs rather than a set of activities prescribed by any organization.

The British Dietetic Association (BDA) has developed a policy of voluntary CPD that stresses that CPD 'is the responsibility of the individual dietician'. For the BDA, mentoring is defined as:

a way of developing individuals and assisting them to reach their full potential. Formally, mentoring is often associated with a senior 'expert' person within the organization adopting a 'protégé' to develop their potential and to support their career development. For the majority of dieticians engaged in a mentoring relationship, the process will be less formal and probably focused on the mentor helping the learner to discover new things about him/herself and his/her capabilities. Typically, mentoring in the workplace covers such areas as career enhancement—for both the learner and the mentor; induction into the department/organization and the politics of that particular organization/department.

Although organizational as well as individual career and psychosocial benefits form part of the definition of mentoring, the aspect of personal development (developing potential, discovering new things about yourself) is privileged both by being placed first in the definition and by the amount of space devoted to it.

In the same way that voluntary CPD policies, in particular, highlight the personal development possibilities offered by CPD, web-in contributors also stressed that mentoring is about personal as well as career development. Most participants emphasized that a mentor should be someone they could trust and who is non-judgmental. The general consensus was that the mentor should never impose his or her views, but rather 'help the mentee to address their problems themselves', thus contributing to their ability to determine their own futures. Some participants felt that the primary role of a mentor is to 'reflect on the development of one's current practice' and that:

A mentor should be taking a long term view looking at the career as a whole, rather than the short term interventionist or boosted input of a coach or the organizational approach of a supervisor.

The contributors felt very strongly that the role of mentor should be separate from that of a supervisor because of the danger that what should be a personal

relationship could be jeopardized by factors such as performance, targets and salary issues. It was suggested that the relationship would work better if the mentor was 'off line' and not directly connected with the project of the mentee. In this scenario, more unbiased reflection could be given by the mentor:

I feel that a neutral observer is best in the workplace, a work supervisor may cause anxiety especially when promotion or an increase of salary is possible. A neutral observer would give (hopefully) an unbiased opinion.

Mentoring in CPD programmes—a way forward?

Mentoring can be invaluable in developing reflectivity—one of the most important elements of participation in a programme of CPD. A practitioner needs to reflect on current practice to determine the learning experiences necessary to facilitate further development and to reflect how those experiences, once undertaken, can then inform practice. Schön (1991) further argues that reflectivity is essential if professionals are to forge new kinds of relationships with clients and within organizations to ensure their survival in a society that is becoming increasingly hostile to them. It is worth reminding ourselves here that one of the primary stated aims of compulsory CPD programmes is to reassure a sceptical audience that standards are being maintained. Schön believes that senior practitioners, those who are most likely to be cast in the role of mentor, should reflect on what he terms 'knowing-in-practice', most of which is tacit, or 'reflection-in-action', a capacity for reflection on this intuitive knowing even in the midst of action, in order to help learners fully access the system of usually unarticulated understandings that lie behind their actions. Moreover, Schön argues that the situations of practice are inherently unstable so that even if a professional's knowledge can keep pace with new demands and development, any improvement in performance would be fleeting. Professional competence can no longer be modelled in terms of applying a body of professional knowledge and techniques to a series of stable, recurrent events. Rather, competence should be recast, not as problem solving, but as problem setting, making sense of uncertainty and selecting from competing professional paradigms (pp. 14–19).

The difficulty of reducing professional expertise to a list of competencies based on knowledge is illustrated by the CPD programme of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA). This programme is compulsory for Registered Members in Practice who are required to undertake structured CPD in order to retain registered status. Participation is voluntary for members not in practice. CIMA's documentation analyses competencies into nine key roles which the Management Accountant can be expected to perform, and within each role, there are further sections and sub-sections of competencies. A mentor would assist participants find their way through this labyrinthine programme of knowledge acquisition. More importantly, the mentor would assist the learner to use that knowledge within a reflective practice that includes an articulation of previously tacit recognition of phenomena, judgements and skilful performance.

The mentor, then, reflects on his own practice in order to demonstrate not just 'knowing' but a means of articulating 'knowing' to the learner. As the learner presents the mentor with problems, the mentor acts as a mirror that not only reflects back the professional the learner wishes to become but actively engages in the construction of that professional. This process is also reciprocal; in the act of mirroring, the mentor is provided with an opportunity to bring to the surface and criticize any tacit or spontaneous understandings that might have attached themselves to seemingly repetitive experiences. The mentor can experience situations in a new way that will allow him to develop fresh understandings and new ways of setting problems. The mentor is acting here as a role model, demonstrating reflective behaviour and also helping to make learning more effective. This view is supported by research undertaken by Hale (1999) and Hale and Whitlam (1995: 78). A key finding was that 'mentoring supported the development of skills and behaviours which are actually difficult to develop through traditional off-job training'. Hale and Whitlam report that only 20% of managers interviewed were actively practising taught skills one year after training due to: lack of feedback, reverting to previous work patterns, losing personal motivation and doubts that skills would work in practice. They believe that mentoring would help to address some of these problems. Additionally, Hale (1999) and Mumford (1998) both suggest that mentoring improves the development of the mentee by providing or facilitating 'insight'. Bahrych (1999: 23) focuses on the role model aspects of mentoring. She argues that mentoring facilitates the inculcation of the values and standards that define a professional's role and that the amount of technical information that needs to be digested in a very short time makes it difficult for young professionals to 'learn the things that distinguish [them] from other health care providers'. This resonates with Schön's view that there is something beyond mere technical know-how which must be articulated in order to be learnt.

Mentoring can help to develop reflective practice across the range of CPD programmes but it might prove particularly useful as a component of compulsory policies. Although there is very little difference in the level of prescription or the balance between structured and unstructured learning between types of programmes, it seems reasonable that where professionals are compelled to participate in CPD, they have access to support systems. However, the main difference between programmes seems to lie in their ethos. As previously demonstrated, compulsory CPD programmes tend to emphasize the maintenance of competence as a means of protecting a professional from threatening external sources. By developing 'reflective practitioners', mentoring could help professionals overcome their sense of beleagueredness, where they are set in adversarial contexts against clients, employers and government. Mentoring could counter the tendency to regard professional expertise as a body of mysterious knowledge to be learnt and then imparted from on high. Instead, following Schön, the practitioner learns to engage in a reflective conversation:

Here the professional recognizes that his technical expertise is embedded in a context of meanings. He attributes to his clients, as well as to himself, a capacity to mean, know and plan. He recognizes that his actions may have different meanings for his client than he intends them to have, and he gives himself the task of discovering what these are. He recognizes an obligation

to make his own understandings accessible to his client, which means that he needs often to reflect anew on what he knows. (p. 295)

Through mentoring, both mentor and mentee can learn to understand and to articulate the body of understandings that makes up their professional expertise. Through the process of communication that this entails, they will learn also to communicate those understandings to others. Professionals would still have to operate within regulatory mechanisms that hold them accountable to client and the wider public. However, the reflective practice and strategies of interaction learnt through mentoring will demonstrate competence as it emerges in their dealings with clients. Mentoring will help to achieve and make manifest something far more important than simply taking part in a programme, particularly if that participation is enforced; it can fundamentally alter a practitioner's view of what it is to be a professional. Further in-depth research on the outcomes of mentoring would be useful in order to test this claim.

However, there are real difficulties to overcome if this approach is to be successful. Potential mentors have to share this new vision of professionalism and be trained in their role. The matching process between mentor and mentee will also require careful consideration and resource input from the professional association. Perhaps more importantly, if the learning professional is employed, the culture of the employing organization has to support learning and encourage more flexible and creative ways of relating to corporate clients as well as workplace colleagues.

In this article, an attempt has been made to show how mentoring and CPD are positioned within the overall concept of lifelong learning. This is not a simple task as all three are subject to ambiguity and contestation. However, it does seem apparent that individuals are being increasingly thrown back on their own resources in a society where patterns of employment, and the sense of identity produced by those patterns, are unpredictable. Those who will overcome the challenges posed by the risk society, rather than becoming overwhelmed by it, will be those who can adapt to new structures of learning and working. Professional associations can assist in that process by incorporating mentoring in their CPD schemes.

Notes

1. Even though sanctions can be inconsistent and lack clarity, see Friedman *et al.* (2000: 81–90).
2. For full details of the rationale and methodology behind the web-in see Friedman *et al.* (1999, 2000).

References

- BAHRYCH, S. (1999) Mentoring. *Clinician Reviews*, 9, 23–27.
- BARKER, P., MONKS, K. and BUCKLEY, F. (1999) The role of mentoring in the career progression of chartered accountants. *British Accounting Review*, 31, 297–312.
- BECK, U., GIDDENS, A. and LASH, S. (1994) *Reflexive Modernization* (Cambridge: Polity).
- CLAUGHTON, J. and LLOYD, C. (1995) On the right track?: exploring the roles of the mentor with Network South East. In T. Barnes and M. Stiasny (eds), *Mentoring: making it work* (Southampton: Bassett), pp. 37–43.
- CLUTTERBUCK, D. (1991) *Everyone Needs a Mentor: Fostering Talent at Work* (London: Institute of Personnel and Development).

- CLUTTERBUCK, D. (1994) Blooming Managers. *Management Training*, February, 17–19.
- COFFIELD, F. (2000) Introduction: a critical analysis of the concept of a learning society. In F Coffield (ed.), *Different visions of a learning society* (Bristol: Policy Press), pp. 1–38.
- COHEN, N. H. (1995) *Mentoring Adult Learners: A Guide for Educators and Trainers* (Florida: Krieger).
- CORRALL, S. (1993) Mentoring: the role of DTET in promoting continuing development. *Personnel, Training & Education*, 10, 6–7.
- CROPLEY, A. J. (1979) *Lifelong Education: A Stocktaking* (Hamburg: UIE Monographs, 8).
- DEWEY, J. (1916) *Education and Democracy* (New York: The Free Press).
- EDWARDS, R. (1998a) *Recent Thinking in Lifelong Learning: A review of the literature* (Sudbury: Open University).
- EDWARDS, R. (1986b) Flexibility, reflexivity and reflection in the contemporary workplace. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 17, 377–388.
- ENGLISH, L. M. (1999) An adult learning approach to preparing mentors & mentees. *Mentoring & Tutoring*, 7, 195–202.
- FAURE, E. (1972) *Learning to Be* (Paris: UNESCO).
- FISHER, B. (1994) *Mentoring* (London: Library Association Publishing Ltd).
- FRIEDMAN, A. L., DAVIS, K., DURKIN, C. M. and PHILLIPS, M. (2000) *Continuing Professional Development in the UK: Policies and Programmes* (Bristol: Professional Associations Research Network).
- FRIEDMAN, A. L., DAVIS, K., DURKIN, C. M. and PHILLIPS, M. (2001) *Continuing Professional Development in the UK: Individual Practice* (Bristol: Professional Associations Research Network).
- FRIEDMAN, A. L., DURKIN, C. M. and HURRAN, N. K. (1999) *Building a CPD Network on the Internet* (Bristol: Professional Associations Research Network).
- GIDDENS, A. (1991) *Modernity and Self-Identity* (Cambridge: Polity).
- HAKÉ, B. J. (1999) Lifelong Learning in Late Modernity: The Challenges to Society, Organisations, and Individuals. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 49, 79–90.
- HALE, R. (1999) The dynamics of mentoring relationships: towards an understanding of how mentoring supports learning. *Continuing Professional Development*, 2, 75–80.
- HALE, R. and WHITLAM, P. (1995) *The Power of Personal Influence* (Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill).
- HARRIS, R. M. (1993) The Mentoring Trap. *Library Journal*, 118, 37–39.
- KANTER, R. (1977) *Men and Women in the Organization* (New York: Basic Books).
- KRAM, K. (1983) Phases of the mentor relationship. *Academy of Management Journal*, 26, 608–625.
- LENGRAND, P. (1975) *An Introduction to Lifelong Education* (London: Croom Helm).
- LENGRAND, P. (1979) Prospects of Lifelong Education. In A. J. Cropley (ed.), *Lifelong Education: A Stocktaking* (Hamburg: UIE Monograph, 8), pp. 28–35.
- LEEDS METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY (1995) *Mentoring: The 'Working for a Degree' Project* (Leeds: Library Training Guide Series).
- MEGGINSON, D. and CLUTTERBUCK, D. (1995) *Mentoring in Action* (London: Kogan Page).
- MUMFORD, A. (1998) Sources for courses. *People Management*, 14 May, 48–50.
- NANKIVELL, C. and SHOOLBRED, M. (1996) *Mentoring in Library and Information Services: An Approach to Staff Support* (British Library Research and Innovation Centre).
- RAGINS, B. R. (1997) Diversified mentoring relationships in organizations: a power perspective. *Academy of Management Review*, 22, 482–521.
- SCHON, D. A. (1991) *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action* (Aldershot: Ashgate).
- STARCEVICH, M. (1999) Coach, mentor: Is there a difference. Essay available from The Center for Coaching & Mentoring: <http://www.coachingandmentoring.com/Articles/mentoring.html>.
- STARCEVICH, M. M. and FRIEND, F. L. (2000) Attributes of effective mentoring relationships: Partner's perspective. Essay available from The Center for Coaching & Mentoring: <http://www.coachingandmentoring.com/mentsurvey.htm>.
- SUCHODOLSKI, B. (1979) Lifelong Education at the Crossroads. In A. J. Cropley (ed.), *Lifelong Education: A Stocktaking* (Hamburg: UIE Monograph, 8), pp. 36–49.
- WHITE, H. L. (1990) The SELF method of mentoring. *The Bureaucrat*, 19, 45–48.
- YOUNG, M. F. D. (1998) *The curriculum of the future* (London: Falmer Press).