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# AUSTRALIAN PRINCIPALS CENTRE

## Monograph Number 4

### **MENTORING FOR PRACTISING AND ASPIRING SCHOOL LEADERS: THE “SAGE” MODEL**

by Bruce Barnett

#### **BACKGROUND ON MENTORING**

##### **What do we know about Mentoring?**

There are many and varied definitions of mentoring. A simple one is that it is ‘the establishment of a personal relationship for the purpose of professional instruction and guidance’ (Ashburn, Mann and Purdue, in Lester, 1981).

Different types of supportive relationships may be appropriate at varying times of a person’s career — early, middle and late — since people will have different learning needs in each of these time frames (Kram, 1985).

Many school systems have recognised the importance of mentoring as a way to provide support to educational administrators, but this is not necessarily a straightforward process — simply matching pairs of administrators and calling one a mentor does not ensure that a true developmental and supportive relationship has been created.

As a result, many systems have sought or developed specialised training to prepare practising administrators to serve as mentors and professional development coaches. In the USA Columbus, Ohio and Greeley, in Colorado where I am based, are examples.

What are the characteristics of the mentoring that we seek to develop? In general terms, drawing on the thoughts and experience of educators who have worked in this area, effective mentoring:

- uses networks already there to help people recognise their abilities and limitations, ie, seize opportunities and come to terms with career realities
- is not an easy option — it is hard work for all four sides of the mentoring relationships
- enables people to learn by experience (others’ as well as own)
- is not a replacement for conventional training
- is not intended to undermine supervisor/subordinate role
- is applicable to people at any level where career development is an issue
- can be for high flyers or everyone.

Daresh & Playko  
(1991, pp 24-25)

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Mentoring also involves:

- a developmental process where the mentor recognises the attributes of the mentee and is able to provide appropriate growth-producing opportunities and activities
- the act of serving as a role model, where the mentor provides the mentee with a sense of what s/he is becoming
- five mentoring functions — teaching, sponsoring, encouraging, counselling and befriending — which a mentor may need to provide individually or conjunctively at any given time
- a focus on professional and/or personal development, where the scope of the relationship may vary according to the individual and circumstances
- an ongoing, caring relationship.

Anderson and Shannon, 1995, pp 30-31

## The phases of mentoring

Clutterbuck (1986) emphasises that a mentoring program must have a flexible approach to allow for changes in people and circumstances. He suggests that this tends to happen in four phases:

- 1 During the first 12 months of a positive relationship, the mentee<sup>1</sup> will tend to see the mentor as very competent, as a role model providing emotional support. The mentor tends to be drawn by the mentee's potential to learn, and looks to speed his/her development.
- 2 The most rewarding period tends to be between two-to-five years into the relationship, with growing friendship, sense of self-worth and confidence, opportunities to develop work skills, and relatively low levels of stress related to career objectives.
- 3 The relationship tends to be less close in the third phase, as the mentee seeks increasing autonomy.
- 4 There tends to be a re-starting phase, with emotional adjustments, since the two participants now 'equals' in the relationship.

Other writers have also seen the mentor-relationship in terms of stages. Walker et al (1993), for example, talk about five: a formal stage, a cautious stage, a sharing stage, an open stage, and a stage where the participants move beyond the relationship but maintain contact and friendship. Phillips (cited in Walker et al, 1993) described six stages: initiation, sparkle, development, disillusion, parting and transformation. Kram (1985) labelled the stages as initiation, cultivation, separation and redefinition. Walker et al (1993) refer to further definitions by a number of other researchers in the field, which are effectively variations on the theme.

My own preference is to suggest that all relationships go through three phases:

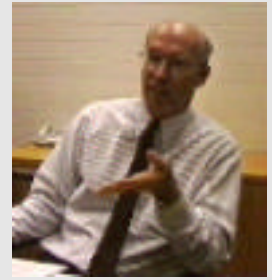
- 1 an initial period of **definition** (formal and cautious stages)
- 2 a period of **intense interaction** (sharing)
- 3 a **dissolution** of the relationship where new roles may be defined (the open and beyond stages outlined by Walker et al, 1993).

Not all relationships will pass through these stages, especially where there turns out to be a mismatch between mentor and mentee. It is important to get the matching as 'right' as possible from the start of the process, taking into account personalities and individual needs. In addition, it needs to be remembered as the process continues that not all relationships move or develop at the same rate. No-one can force a relationship to grow, although there may be occasions when the inclusion of a third party may encourage progression through the stages.

## Characteristics/roles of mentors

What do we look for in a mentor? Writing about mentoring in a 'business' setting, Clutterbuck (1986) suggested that the mentor need not necessarily be a great 'performer', but must be a good tutor and communicator. Clutterbuck also argued that the mentor should be a volunteer, and would need to have the skills, the knowledge, the will and the time to encourage and support the mentee. Mentoring, Clutterbuck said, needs to be conducted in a context of mutual respect.

In the area of educational administration, Bolam et al (1995) provide the following list of what new principals have judged to be the most important skills and characteristics of successful mentors.



*... not all relationships  
move or develop  
at the same rate  
No-one can force  
a relationship  
to grow ...*

## Characteristics of a successful mentor as identified by principals

- listening skills
- open, warm, enthusiastic and interpersonal behavioural style
- experience as a principal
- providing feedback
- being non-judgemental
- having counselling skills when needed.

## 4 Expectations of protegés/mentees

Walker et al (1993) suggest that mentors also have expectations of their mentees. These can be characterised as follows:

## Characteristics of a successful mentee as identified by mentors

- sensitivity
- being willing to learn
- having a positive attitude
- a capacity for professional leadership
- commitment and initiative
- a capacity for joint decision making.

## 5 Benefits of mentoring

There are benefits not only for the mentee, but also for the mentor and the school, organisation, institution or system.

Clutterbuck (1986) suggests that the mentees improve their self confidence, gain and develop a range of skills and learn more about the culture, values, relationships, structures and operations of the organisation/system in which they work. They also receive career advice, work with a role model who can advise on career directions and strategies for gaining advancement, receive tutelage in management processes and protocols, and are able to ask questions about sensitive topics in a non-threatening environment.

Mentees surveyed by Walker et al (1993) believed that through first-hand experience of working through 'real-life' issues and situations with their mentors, they had improved their management and leadership skills. Specific areas that they mentioned included human relations, problem solving, planning and delegation.

The benefits of mentoring appear to be reciprocal. Mentors develop an enhanced sense of purpose, as well as satisfaction and pride from the mentee's progress. They receive personal and professional development, gain an enhanced professional image and recognition among peers who observe the process, and can sometimes achieve tasks through working with the mentee that might not have been possible to achieve from their own senior management positions. In some cases mentors may achieve advancement partly as a result of recognition of the work they have done in mentoring, or perhaps because they have effectively trained successors.

Walker et al (1993) also comment on the benefits to a mentor of feedback from a fellow professional on his/her own management and decision making — feedback that in a day-to-day working situation might well not be available.

The only disadvantage that both mentors and mentees have identified was that the additional time commitments that had to be made sometimes were disadvantageous to the school.

More commonly, mentors and mentees believed that the school and by implication the educational system benefited from the reciprocity of the relationship — from the benefits that accrued to both mentor and mentee. They believed that the program could supply a fairly stable 'pool' of trained potential administrators who would be more prepared to move into a principalship role.

Some participants commented on the positive nature of a program that allowed older, experienced and effective principals to pass on some of what they have learned over years working in the system.

Referring to a business context particularly, but with direct applicability in a school framework, Clutterbuck (1986) suggests that the organisation can benefit not only from mentoring between senior administrators and aspirants to senior positions, but also from mentoring that forms part of improved recruitment and induction procedures, which can reduce culture shock among newcomers and ease the early stages of their work in a new setting.



*... the mentee ... is able to ask questions about sensitive topics in a non-threatening environment.*

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Organisations can also find benefits in terms of increased motivation, stability of culture, leadership development and improved communications across levels among the staff.

Walker et al (1993) said that responses from mentoring principals in their research suggested that *“future principals who had undergone mentoring should be more competent, more reflective and more confident than principals currently in the system. One respondent suggested that a ‘new style of principalship can emerge’”*.

To summarise some of the key outcomes, responses from mentoring principals suggested four patterns of principals’ behaviour that are likely to be encouraged through the process:

- 1 Principals keep learning on the job. They can learn from experience and through interactions with other principals, including formal training programmes conducted by senior principals.
- 2 Principals involve themselves in the development of future principals. They seem aware of the opportunity to ensure ‘a big pool of future principals’ to whom they have transferred their knowledge and skills.
- 3 Principals continue to improve the status of the principalship.
- 4 Principals put theory of school management into practice.

Walker et al, 1993, p 45

## What it takes to form effective mentoring relationships

Bolam et al (1995) suggest a number of features that can help make mentoring successful for beginning principals. These include:

- confidentiality between partners
- mutual trust
- the mentor acting as a sounding board
- compatible personalities
- a mentor who is an experienced Principal
- an open and frank relationship between the mentor and the new Principal
- availability of time for mentoring
- mutual respect
- a structured and agreed mentoring process

In addition, they identify what effective mentoring relationships look like and suggest that key characteristics include:

- frequent and regular face-to-face meetings of the mentoring pairs
- a relationship that develops over time
- a relationship built on mutual trust and respect
- jointly agreed, structured procedures, agenda and plans
- observation/visitation/work shadowing of mentees by mentors
- a mentor who encourages mentees to engage in self reflection and problem solving
- a process that helps mentees deal successfully with current problems
- a process that enhances the mentor’s professional development.

## Problems/hindrances with mentoring

Positive as most participants are about the value of their mentoring experience, some have identified possible problem areas. For example, new power alignments may emerge, or be perceived as emerging, within the organisation; senior administrators may feel ‘put out’ if they feel that their authority or position are under threat; and/or there may be work problems if mentees are seen as falling down in completing their own work.

At a basic level, the right people, or combinations of people, might not be selected and/or matched for participation in the mentoring program — mentor and mentee might not get along, be ill at ease, ‘have no time’, or demand too much of each other. In an extreme case ...

... *“If the protégé screws up, the mentor may abandon him, for fear of being pulled down too (and vice versa).”*

(Clutterbuck, 1986).

Walker et al (1993) suggest a number of possible hindrances to an effective relationship, as shown in Figure 1 (opposite).



*Organisations can ... find benefits in terms of increased motivation, stability of culture, leadership development and improved communications across levels among the staff.*

**Figure 1: Hindrances to an effective mentor-protégé/mentee relationship**

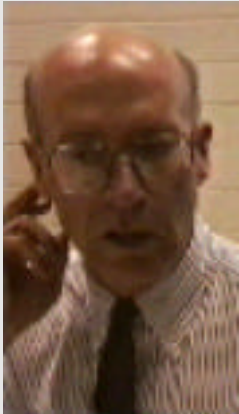
**For Protégé/Mentee**

- Uncertainty of role expected
- Feeling of interference
- Role ambiguity
- Not enough time
- Not enough time
- Uncertainty about when to join in
- Having to balance work and coursework
- Feeling uncomfortable
- Language difficulties
- Lack of assertiveness
- Unfamiliarity with the system
- Mentor not willing to share
- Mentor did not want routine upset
- Teachers still go to the principal

**For Mentor**

- Time needed
- Not sure of protégé's stage of development
- No privacy
- Protégé can get in the way
- Nervous of close scrutiny
- Feeling of being watched
- Too negative
- Uncomfortable
- Protégé feels he/she already knows it all

(Walker et al, 1993)



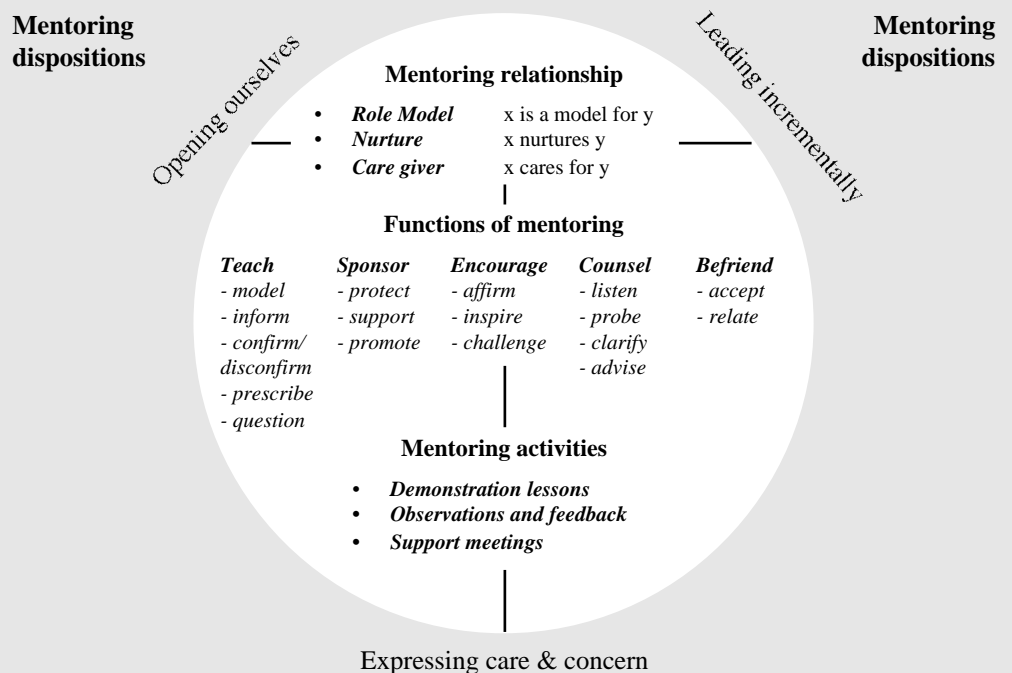
*Models for mentoring programs generally have common objectives, although they may vary both in their conception and their delivery.*

**How are other mentor programs conceived and delivered?**

Models for mentoring programs generally have common objectives, although they may vary both in their conception and their delivery. One example is Anderson and Shannon's model (1995), as shown below (Figure 2). Embodying a number of the characteristics discussed earlier, the basis of this model is that the protégé/mentee

sees the mentor as a role model and the mentor nurtures and cares for the protégé/mentee. Five mentoring functions are carried out within a variety of mentoring activities. The mentoring process as a whole is carried out in the context of a set of 'dispositions' displayed by the mentor (Anderson and Shannon, 1995).

**Figure 2: Mentoring model — Anderson and Shannon, 1995, pp 32-33**



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Clutterbuck (1986) suggests that whatever model is adopted, the organisation/system establishing the program must make some basic decisions:

- Who should be mentored? All staff? High flyers? All senior staff? If individuals, according to what criteria?
- Who should recommend and/or select them? The boss/principal? The mentee him or herself? The person or people responsible for professional development?
- What should the organisation/school be looking for in mentees? Intelligence? Ambition? Succession potential? Interpersonal skills? Some or all of the above?

Clutterbuck (1986) also suggests a checklist to complete when setting up the program:

- 1 Establish clear objectives that can be measured later.
- 2 Gain top management commitment.
- 3 Fit mentoring into the existing management development program.
- 4 Ensure commitment and participation.
- 5 Point out the time involved to all parties
- 6 Match participants carefully, and have trial meetings.
- 7 De-mystify the mentoring process.
- 8 Run workshops to introduce it.
- 9 Make sure everyone understands the risks involved.
- 10 Prepare the protégé/mentee's boss/principal/head of department.
- 11 Ensure the mentor and the protégé/mentee know what to expect.

One example of a successful program is the model developed in Singapore, which serves as the focal point for their Diploma in Educational Administration program (Walker et al, 1993). Both primary and secondary teachers are involved. The ministry selects mentors, according to a set of criteria that they have developed, from among its most effective principals. The protégés/mentees are identified by the Ministry as potential future principals.

The mentees are formally attached to a mentoring school for two one-month periods. Mentors and mentees are matched and attend 'pre-attachment' seminars on five successive mornings to prepare them for working together.

Review sessions are held by the Ministry during the attachment period, to share perceptions with the participants and to resolve any problems that have arisen. Lecturers visit the participants during the program to offer support and advice.

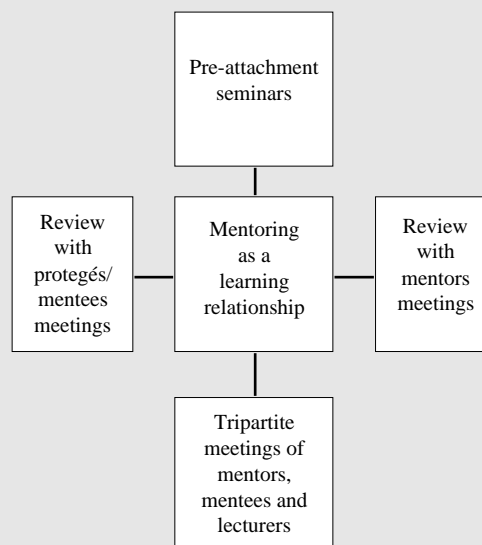
The entire process is seen as developmental. All coursework for the diploma leads to or from the attachment, and at the end of the attachment mentor, mentee and lecturer meet to discuss progress, the mentee's strengths and his/her future developmental needs (Walker et al, 1993).

The structure for this model is illustrated below, in Figure 3.



*The entire process is seen as developmental*

**Figure 3: National Institute of Education, Singapore, model for mentoring during practicum**



## AN INTRODUCTION TO SAGE: THE APC MENTORING PROGRAM

### Rationale for the program

The Australian Principals Centre (APC) has developed a mentoring program, called SAGE. Identifying the need for a quality mentoring program came directly from observation of trends and a growing demand in the current educational context. Across Australia, including Victoria, where the Centre is located, many principals — as well as other experienced administrators and teachers in their schools — are retiring early. For reasons unrelated to teaching — the terms of superannuation packages, for example — many are now lost to the system by the time they are fifty-five.

The continuing high attrition rate among experienced school leaders in the prime of their professional lives, and an anticipated acceleration related to the rising average age of teachers, has a number of implications. Among these are the need to:

- prepare increasing numbers of teachers to fill principals' positions
- ensure that their skills are well developed in a range of relevant areas
- ensure as smooth a transition as possible in the context of a changing school culture
- ensure that the best of the experience and accrued wisdom of retiring principals is passed on to their successors
- enhance the capability of the state system, the Education Department Regions and principals to develop targeted succession planning in their schools
- expand upon current understandings and approaches to mentoring, learning from and drawing on the best of what is happening around the world, to create a program tailored to meet local requirements.

APC staff concluded that a custom-designed mentoring program could be expected to help in meeting these needs, which was the inception of SAGE.

### Background and overview of SAGE

Following an approach from principals in Victoria's Western Metropolitan Region, a partnership was formed between APC, Western Metropolitan Region, and Deakin University to develop an Accredited Pilot Mentoring Program.

#### The program design had the following features:

- The mentoring program should offer growth experiences for mentees and mentors together in an experience-based program.
- The training program would allow mentoring pairs to build their mentoring relationship during the program.
- The program would not merely be a repeat of past mentoring programs, but would incorporate the best of research and practice.

The pilot program was trialled and implemented in 2000. Modifications have taken place based on the feedback, and the APC SAGE program is a result of these changes.

The word 'sage' refers to the building, sharing, passing on and growth of wisdom that has been gained by experience — as well as being the name given to the person who gathers, holds and shares that wisdom. As an acronym, SAGE encompasses what is done in mentoring to achieve that 'passing of the torch':

**S** Supporting  
**A** Accomplishing  
**G** Guiding  
**E** Enriching

These are the basic tenets that participants are expected to build into their personal mentoring relationships.

### Purpose of the program

Development of the APC SAGE program has been based on the premise that although other mentoring programs exist, there is need for an accredited training program to develop new school leaders and also to see them as prospective mentors themselves



*Identification of the need for a quality mentoring program came directly from observation of trends and a growing specific area of demand in the current educational context*

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The aims of SAGE are:

- to develop a high quality, interactive mentoring program
- to develop a program that will allow participants to eventually become accredited mentors through APC
- to build a supportive group of trained mentors who will be available to work in regional development programs in succession planning, induction, leading teacher accreditation, and assistant principal programs
- to develop a quality mentoring program that eventually could be recognised for principals' performance, post graduate study and APC accreditation
- to nurture, develop and facilitate the growth of principals, assistant principals and leading teachers through the provision of an accredited mentoring program.

## Anticipated outcomes

It is anticipated that at the conclusion of the program, participants will be able to:

- identify and use their preferred learning style for mentoring as mentors or mentees
- critically examine and analyse the role of a Department of Education, Employment and Training (DEET) school leader and plan a mentoring partnership that will be nurtured and developed within each region in consultation with Regional Principal Consultants (RPCs) and plan for the implementation of these ideas
- identify different working styles for mentoring
- use and apply effective listening, observation, critical questioning, and feedback skills
- support beginning principals in 'learning the ropes' and helping them develop skills in the DEET capabilities of:
  - driving school improvement
  - delivery through people
  - building commitment
  - creating an educational vision

- have trained mentors develop facilitative skills to effectively implement and develop a productive mentoring relationship
- identify and evaluate successful mentors to become recognised as effective trained and accredited APC mentors for future training in mentoring

## Expectations of participants

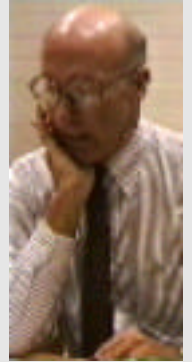
It is an expectation of the SAGE program that all participants will be willing to make a formal commitment to the mentoring partnership in terms of time, effort, availability and accessibility. This expectation is reflected in the signing of a jointly developed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) by each participant. Their commitment is also to attend and participate in each of the designated training sessions. Throughout the program there are:

- course tasks and activities to shape and refine the mentoring relationship
- feedback and survey data gathered through skill building exercises
- ongoing feedback and evaluation of the program content and impact
- development of an agreed MoU and action plan for a shared project for each mentoring partnership. Some of the material will be useful for inclusion in personal development plans and portfolio evidence.

Participation in the program is voluntary. The pilot program launched in 2000 was developed for eight to ten mentoring partnerships. Those selected were expected to commit to undertake the total program and be willing and active learners.

In selecting mentees, they must be willing to:

- further develop their leadership skills and self-confidence as leaders
- seek new ideas and reflect upon their practice, as well as have frank and open discussions with a mentor
- share experiences and learn along with a mentor partner.



*It is an expectation of the SAGE program that all participants will be willing to make a formal commitment to the mentoring partnership in terms of time, effort, availability and accessibility.*



Similarly, selected mentors must be:

- willing to take on the role of a mentor who is open, and guides and supports a mentee, without being overly directive
- sensitive to the needs of the mentee and the process
- aware of, and have developed, effective communication skills
- conscious that they must not be 'experts', but rather individuals who are willing to share experiences and to support and learn along with the mentee partner.

## Components of the SAGE program — Guiding frameworks

### Program phases

As outlined earlier in this paper, mentoring passes through a series of stages, or phases, which is a pivotal component of SAGE. In SAGE we classify these stages in the following way:

Phase 1:	Initiation Getting acquainted
Phase 2:	Development Task achievement Goal achievement
Phase 3	Separation Closure Celebration

We expect relationships to change over the duration of the program. Relationships will differ and so will the 'real life' contexts in which the partnerships operate. Oftentimes, mentoring partnerships are organised to work in regional groups — reflecting the fact that the shared task they develop will, when they return to their home bases, be worked out in consultation with their Regional Principal Consultants, to ensure that it applies within their own contexts.

The program and its phases are still evolving. For example, feedback from some of the participants who completed the program in 2000 suggests that they want to use the mentoring approach with their own schools and that they would find it useful to meet more frequently to discuss experiences and strategies. How these change and evolve will depend on the regions that have supported their training thusfar.

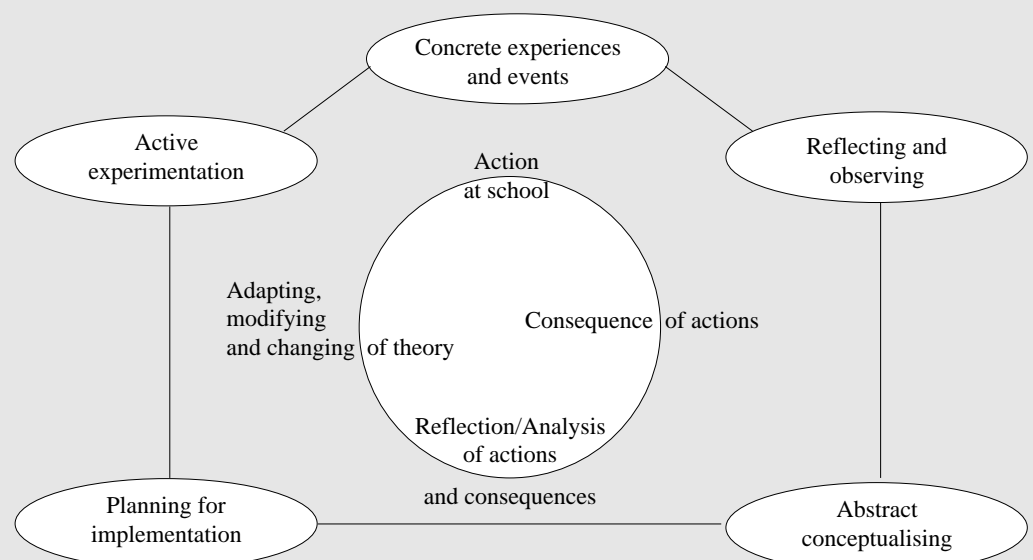
### The importance of reflection

In the SAGE model, reflection is the key to learning. It is a vital element in mentoring and in personal growth. Kolb (1984) developed a model that we have adapted and extended — the place of reflection in the SAGE program, as we see it, is illustrated below as Figure 4. One example of how reflection is used in SAGE is that participants are asked to complete a learning styles inventory for themselves — both to become aware of their own styles of learning, but also to provide them with skills and a vehicle to express their preferences. Reflection leads them from introspection to effective communication and decision making between mentors and mentees.



*In the SAGE model, reflection is the key to learning. It is a vital element in mentoring and in personal growth.*

**Figure 4: Model of reflective practice for mentoring relationships**



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## Content areas

The SAGE program content areas include:

- the participants' previous mentoring experiences
- what research tells us about mentoring
- clarification of expectations for partners to experience a positive mentoring relationship
- the APC's set of leadership dimensions — Educational, Ethical, Strategic, and People
- reflective practice, including an exploration of learning styles
- strategies for providing constructive feedback
- strategies for observation and reflective questioning
- assessing progress of the relationship
- celebration of accomplishments through the program.

## The five main challenges of mentoring

As part of the program, participants are introduced to five main challenges of mentoring and are given a number of strategies/reminders about how to deal with them.

### 1 Developing a trusting relationship

Participants are advised/reminded to:

- constantly revisit the written Memorandum of Understanding
- clarify expectations and establish boundaries at the beginning of the relationship
- be prepared to be vulnerable, but maintain confidentiality
- encourage the mentee to call and visit the school
- demonstrate sensitivity and sincerity by valuing one another's opinions
- be willing to invest time and effort to make the relationship work
- show interest in each other's workplaces
- offer genuine care and commitment through words and deeds (eg, body language)

### 2 Finding time for the relationship

Participants are advised/reminded to:

- put meeting times and dates in diaries (in ink)
- meet before and after school hours or over meals
- accept the limitations in each person's time availability
- email questions and information prior to meeting
- meet with a predetermined purpose and come prepared to learn.

### 3 Providing and accepting constructive feedback

Participants are advised/reminded to:

- be open to receiving feedback
- listen, listen, listen
- act on their partner's advice and discuss what happened later
- practise two-way communication

### 4 Taking risks to try out new ideas

Participants are advised/reminded to:

- challenge their school's current philosophy and curriculum
- seek promotion to new roles and positions
- engage in role plays (eg, mock interviews)
- consider alternative actions and their possible consequences

### 5 Assessing the progress and outcomes of the relationship

Participants are advised/reminded to:

- ask one another about how the relationship is progressing (eg, Have we stopped progressing? How does our situation compare with other mentoring relationships we have experienced?)
- keep constant contact by phone, email, fax
- reflect on which phase(s) of the relationship they have experienced
- bring groups of mentors and mentees together periodically to reflect on their experiences.

## REACTIONS OF PARTICIPANTS

In terms of feedback and evaluation of the program, it is valuable to see what the participants said about their participation. The following summarises or uses participants' own words.

### Reactions of mentors

Mentors have had positive reactions, which vary from individual to individual, but include: anticipating building a similar program into their own school, encouraging leading teachers to take



*Mentors have had positive reactions, which ... include ... recognising the value of being challenged and "sharing the loneliness of leadership"*

part; using collegiate meetings for reflective discussions; recognising the value of being challenged and “sharing the loneliness of leadership”; and valuing the program for its effects on improving and enhancing the capacity of principals and their leadership teams. SAGE mentors said that in particular they appreciated:

- sharing, discussing and learning to value objective feedback
- learning how powerful interactive sharing can be when the motivation exists and experiential growth of trust can occur
- developing new relationships, meeting people and facing new challenges. “When I learned how the learner became the ‘learned’ is the most rewarding challenge of all.”
- being exposed to the theories of mentoring, plus the opportunity to establish and refine their relationships over time
- developing an awareness of all the complexities of being a mentor, which can happen naturally if the key elements of trust, time and commitment are in place

## Reactions of mentees

SAGE mentees commented that: the program assisted thinking through broadening and crystallising of ideas and was about improving the practice of leadership; it was valuable to share one’s own experiences and to explain the personal benefits of having a mentor; “It was a fantastic experience”; they would recommend it for anyone who wishes to enrich and extend his/her experiences as a leader; it was a “real eye-opener for the uninitiated and the smug!”. One comment was that the best advertising of a program is word-of-mouth and participants intended sharing the value of the program among their own collegiate groups. Mentees said that they particularly appreciated:

- being able to question and reflect, and to “give and receive feedback leading to a crystallisation of my thinking and a broadening of my ideas”
- “... sharing and obtaining different perspectives on the leadership and mentoring role and learning to solve problems”

- “... having the time to share ideas and experiences and to discuss issues with your mentor with a focus on your project, which enabled this to be defined”
- “... having a buddy who has been prepared to assist and guide me in anon-threatening manner”
- “... sharing quality time with a leader to admire, trust and respect, and the sharing of ideas and decisions during a project which gave a focal point”
- “... watching the pairs develop a relationship of trust”.

## What participants learned about themselves

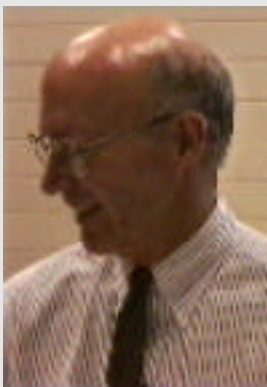
Participants’ comments on what they had learned about themselves included:

- “I believe I now have the capacity to help my colleagues in a variety of ways while receiving permission to be able to personally reflect.”
- “You often get caught up in the daily administration and don’t see the need to spend more time on reflection and learning. I am appreciated for who and what I am as an educator, colleague and friend.”
- “I am now a different person and leader than when I started out, and this is good. I have much to offer and need to further enhance my growth.”
- “I need to create more quality time for myself to reflect the need for patience.”
- “A good question is worth volumes of explanation, so continually seek feedback and points of view.”

## What participants learned about mentoring

Participants’ comments included the following:

- Time is essential and so is commitment, and you gain as much as you give through the program.



*Mentees said that ...  
“It was a fantastic experience”;  
they would recommend it  
for anyone who wishes  
to enrich and extend his/her  
experiences as a leader;  
it was a “real eye-opener  
for the uninitiated  
and the smug!”.*

# APC Monograph Number 4

Bruce Barnett — *Mentoring for Practising and Aspiring School Leaders: the “SAGE” Model*

- “I’ve been given powerful tools for reflection.”
- “(I’ve learned) the value of what experience and insight can do.”
- “(It is) important being valued and made to feel worthwhile.”
- “The model of mentoring was really useful and provided a stimulus for idea on developing the mentoring relationship.”

## What participants learned about leadership

Participants’ comments included the following:

- “There is always something to help you learn and keep growing.”
- “It provided time for reflection on my leadership and a chance to look at the styles of others.”
- “... learning when to lead, when to coach, and when to just be there.”
- “... a multi-faceted view, where everyone contributes to make leadership effective.”
- “... the importance of sharing and interacting. The value of trust.”
- “... growth in another dimension, where we passed on skills, shared and taught each other.”
- “Leadership can be enhanced by mentoring.”

## What we have learned from conducting the SAGE program

Feedback to this stage has been very positive. This program has been firmly based in the best research and practice from its beginning, and is progressing via a process of continuous evaluation and improvement.

We have taken on board the reactions of participants and already have made changes to the program, for example delivering it in two forms — in one designed for mentor-mentee partnerships, and another to take previous participants further in developing their own skills as mentors. The success of the program thus far augurs well for the future.

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### Note:

<sup>1</sup> In the mentoring literature, authors tend to use either *mentee* or *protégé* for the person who works in partnership with a mentor. Both terms indicate a relationship that is supportive, but not between ‘equal’ peers (which is the case, for example, in the APC PRISM program — the subject of APC Monograph Number 3). Both terms imply that the relationship is about one partner imparting knowledge and skills to another, although it can be argued that the two terms have slightly different connotations in other respects. In the SAGE program we use the term *mentee*. For this paper *mentee* has therefore been used throughout, but where a researcher/author has used *protégé*, this has been indicated by the inclusion of both terms.

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Bruce Barnett has asked that the following be included in this paper: *Having the opportunity to create and deliver SAGE with my friends and colleagues, Gary O’Mahony and Ian Miller, has been one of the best professional experiences of my life. Not only have they accepted my advice and suggestions throughout the project, their wisdom and insights have made a significant contribution to the quality of SAGE. I look forward to refining and delivering the program again with them on future visits to APC*



*Feedback to this stage has been very positive. This program has been firmly based in the best research and practice from its beginning, and is progressing via a process of continuous evaluation and improvement.*

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