

# Role of Mentoring in Competency Development of Teacher Trainees

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## ABSTRACT

Education programs in India have been led by carefully considered concepts in order to attain critical outcomes for advancement. Many innovative education efforts have been launched in the past, and they have all led to beneficial transformations, regardless of the complexity of execution. The emphasis has primarily been on making education generally accessible while ensuring a solid foundation at the primary level. It has been practiced to create child-friendly environments in which children can thrive and grow into well-adjusted, confident individuals. Structures that enable learners track their progress while viewing teachers as facilitators and fostering a collaborative environment are beneficial. The role of teachers has undoubtedly emerged as an important aspect in transforming the landscape of the education system and energizing it to meet the difficulties of balancing quality, accessibility, and equity.

Teachers' skill and temperament play an important role in defining educational quality and contribute to national development. The National Education Policy 2020 recognizes the teacher preparation process as requiring "multidisciplinary perspectives and knowledge, formation of dispositions and values, and development of practice under the best mentors". As a result, it suggests mentoring as an add-on to teacher development in general.

**Keywords:** Mentoring, Competency Development, Teachers role, Teacher Trainees

## INTRODUCTION

Teachers need innovative solutions to the huge demands and challenges of today. There are many professionals in the field of education who can help colleagues solve problems and develop their own capacities. Systems that can adjust to the ever-changing environment can give their citizens the skills they need to lead satisfying personal and professional lives. This results in sustainable and equitable economic growth. As a result, a mentorship structure offers a more decentralised way to fill in the gaps. Learning from a seasoned expert. Teachers can develop their skills and capacities through a variety of mentor-mentee interactions. This offers chances to network with professionals, participate in forums to share knowledge and best practices, and share discoveries in a variety of fields, including curriculum, pedagogy, school leadership and administration, educational policies and evaluations, etc.

Constructive mentoring interaction is essential for a successful mentoring relationship that benefits both mentor and mentee; nevertheless, the relationship between mentor and mentee develops with time. Throughout the engagement, the mentor-mentee relationship must be consistent and reliable, and they should reflect on why they chose to participate in a mentorship. A mentoring program's aims are determined by the interaction of mentors and mentees.

## The Mentoring Concept

Mentoring—the term has long been used to describe an interaction between someone who is skilled at what they do and someone who want to learn from that expertise. It is thought to be an excellent technique for both mentors and mentees to advance personally and professionally. These contacts may include replying to mentees' questions, providing assistance, in-depth counselling, resolving complex and difficult challenges, etc. The

mentoring relationship is a long-term, structured symbiotic connection based on tailored interactions between professionals from comparable professions, with the primary purpose of professional development for the mentees.

### **Principles of Mentoring**

While mentoring can take several forms depending on the needs of the participants in the contact, some guiding principles can help to maintain the structure's essence. The mentoring structure is most effective when both the mentor and the mentee are invested in the process.

1. **Mentee-directed:** Mentees should participate in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of their learning. The mentee should lead the relationship and be pushed to take more responsibility for their own development. Mentor agendas and compulsion should not be the primary forces behind mentoring encounters. A mentor should help the mentee create their own goals, recognise problems, and prioritise based on their requirements.
2. **Derivative:** During the mentoring process, consider the mentee's life experiences. It should allow mentees to reflect on their experiences.
3. **Application-oriented:** Mentoring should assist in translating process insights into real-world challenges and/or processes.
4. **Facilitated:** Mentors' primary goal should be to create environments that encourage and support the conditions required for a self-directed, derivative, and application-oriented mentoring experience.
5. **Safe:** While the mentoring experience should be voluntary for all participants, ongoing efforts should be made to make the places safer. The framework should promote trust, confidentiality, mutual respect, and sensitivity. Mentors should begin by agreeing on limits and ground rules with their mentees to balance any power differences.
6. **Mentoring should be a symbiotic process** in which both the mentee and the mentor grow continuously. They may seek guidance and/or support to strengthen their mentoring encounters as needed. Mentors will get the most out of the relationship if they recognise that they will profit from the process.

### **The National Mission for Mentoring**

A National Mission for Mentoring (NMM) to foster the systematic exchange of ideas for mutual professional growth would speed up the development of the Indian education system by leveraging existing resources. In keeping with this, the NCTE proposes a national mentoring mission to improve the acquisition and sharing of information, skills, and values among school teachers.

### **Mentor Selection**

A mentoring construct necessitates the presence of designated mentors and mentees, in addition to an administrator (person or unit), in order to facilitate frameworks and sustain the process over time. This section discusses potential mentor selection processes as well as mentor and mentee characteristics that will allow a mentoring framework to flourish.

### **The Mentor Selection Process**

The mentor in a mentoring relationship must be trusted by the other stakeholders in the system. The technique used to pick mentors is critical in creating trust in mentors and, as a result, access to mentoring exchanges. The mentor selection procedure must allow:

- Potential candidates' expressions of interest and/or peer nominations
- Evaluation of the candidate's application based on Mentor selection criteria
- Mentor training and development

Sociologists, psychologists, and educators from diverse fields/disciplines may also be brought on board to assist in developing an effective mentor selection process. This may also help to contextualise the selection process based on the system's requirements.

The mentor selection process should be open to all potential candidates. For example, some potential candidates may be uncomfortable with or lack access to technology. Similarly, if the mentoring structure wants to choose mentors from other professions, such as All India/State Service Officers, the selection procedure should be publicised so that they can apply. The mentor selection procedure should not prevent potential applicants from applying.

### **The Qualities of Mentors**

To get the most out of a mentoring relationship, both the mentor and the mentee must possess, prepare for, and develop certain characteristics. The mentor should possess aspirational attributes that have contributed to the program's desired learning results. Some traits may be considered necessary to play a part in a mentoring relationship, while others can be cultivated over time through mentor training and continuing capacity-building programs.

1. **Awareness of diversity:** In this context, being aware of diversity is being aware of the presence of various persons, groups, and perspectives in a given environment during a mentorship program intervention. It entails being aware of an individual's diversity in terms of socioeconomic status, gender, age, culture, caste, religion, and other characteristics of various mentors and mentees.
2. **Effective communication** is a key quality for a mentor. It refers to the ability to communicate ideas, concepts, knowledge, thoughts, and sentiments in a concise and compelling manner. Mentors must also be able to actively listen, comprehend, and respond to others. As a result, successful program execution requires excellent communication.
3. **Empathy:** Mentors should be empathetic towards their mentees and understand and relate to their perspectives, feelings, thoughts, and experiences. This allows mentors to provide appropriate guidance and support.
4. **Experience:** Experience matters in this situation since both mentors and mentees are important players in the program intervention. Experience refers to the knowledge, skills, and competence that mentors have gathered throughout the course of their professional development. Mentors' rich experience in the same cadre as the mentee is necessary to relate to situations and challenges being faced by the mentee and to elicit and share examples of best practices.
5. **Expertise** refers to someone who has a high level of knowledge, skill, or proficiency in a specific subject, career, or area. For the mentee to gain a better understanding of their subject, the mentor must be an expert in that field or domain and be able to provide insights and best practices.
6. **Flexibility in mentoring approach** is an important characteristic of mentors. Throughout the mentorship program, mentors must be able to adjust and modify the material and approach to meet the needs of their mentee. She/he should be able to represent content in a variety of ways so that all mentees may quickly access it. The mentorship program relies heavily on flexibility in both procedure and approach.
7. **Inspirational:** A successful mentor must have inspiring attributes. Mentors who inspire their mentees help them realise their full potential by instilling passion, excitement, and drive. An inspiring mentor encourages mentees to strive for greatness and sets high standards for achievement. By demonstrating via their own actions and triumphs that great things are possible, they inspire their mentees to push beyond their comfort zones and pursue their goals.
8. **Leadership skills:** Mentors must be able to lead, influence, and motivate others towards a common goal or objective. Mentors must have strong leadership abilities in order to influence mentoring relationships and inspire and advise their mentees.
9. **Critical thinking:** Mentors must analyse and assess ideas, thoughts, circumstances, and so on using logic and reasoning. Mentors should constantly approach problems logically and examine alternative viewpoints rather than simply accepting facts or information without seeking evidence. Mentors use critical thinking to help mentees overcome challenges and hurdles, analyse their approaches, and adapt and respond properly to the circumstance.
10. **Creativity** enables mentors to develop new ideas and inventive solutions to help mentees overcome obstacles. Mentors should also encourage mentees to consider alternative points of view and experiment with fresh ideas, thoughts, and perspectives in order to develop unique solutions.
11. **Reflection:** Reflective abilities allow mentors to analyse their thoughts and ideas for self-reflection, evaluate mentoring sessions, actively seek feedback from mentees, and continuously improve as mentors. It enables

mentors to adjust their techniques, gain a better knowledge of their mentees' needs, and provide valuable guidance and support. Mentors should also encourage their mentees to acquire and cultivate reflective abilities.

### Characteristics of a Mentee

For a mentoring relationship to be successful, a mentee must be goal-oriented, take initiative, seek challenges, be eager to learn, and accept responsibilities. They should actively participate, maintain critical faculties, seek new capacities in addition to knowledge, accept responsibility, and be open to different influences for success.

### Mentor Roles and Responsibilities for Mentoring Programs

1. Effectively organising mentoring sessions for groups of mentees through intelligent, supportive conversations about the problem.
2. Understanding and valuing the difference in perspectives of their various mentees. Recognising and working through problems in compassionate ways, inviting discussion of differences with the mentee.
3. Ask probing enquiries (open-ended "how" and "what" questions) to help them understand the situation.
4. Actively listening to mentees and making them feel heard.
5. Investing in mentees to help them progress by providing comfortable challenges and empowering them to address present problems and develop future coping mechanisms.
6. Differentiating support for mentees based on their specific needs.
7. Giving honest, open, positive, and constructive feedback.
8. Assisting mentee(s) in identifying professional development opportunities, connecting and networking with relevant resources, and other mentors as needed.
9. Holding the mentee(s) accountable for their co-created action plan and revisiting it at frequent intervals.
10. Managing their time successfully between work and mentoring commitments.
11. Professional development activities such as trainings and feedback cycles can help you build and improve your mentoring skills.

### CONCLUSION

All mentors (experienced resource persons/retired professors/teachers, etc.) will be visible and available through a single interface, regardless of whatever mentoring application is installed on their devices. This would allow users to access a larger pool of mentors from a single platform rather than having to install many applications to connect with resources. Effective mentorship exchanges can only occur when all of the actors on the platform trust each other. Trust will be enabled by trusted Mentor registers maintained by various academic institutions and state departments. Verifiable credentialing will be available for all trusted mentor profiles on the site.

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