

# Mentoring for change


A focus on mentors and their role in advancing gender equality

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# Introduction

## Can mentoring bring gender issues into academic staff development?

Helene Füger and Dagmar Höppel

In Europe, during the 1990s formal mentoring programmes for researchers in their early career started to be introduced in universities as instruments to foster women's careers in academia and research. The exclusion of women from the 'old boys' networks – or at least from the benefits provided by these networks – had been identified as a major obstacle preventing women from breaking the glass ceiling in professional and academic careers.

Readiness on the part of policy makers and universities to finance and support mentoring schemes to promote women's careers in academia and research certainly must be linked to the similarity of the suggested measure with a long-standing tradition of informal mentoring in academia between professor/master and student/disciple. The (re-)enhanced interest in mentoring within and outside of academia since the 1990s can, however, also be linked to a larger context of economic and political reforms which demanded new instruments and a new culture of learning in workplaces to help people adapt to changing circumstances.

Mentoring has frequently been highlighted by researchers as an ideal setting for learning experiences (Ziegler 2009: p. 14). According to them, mentoring provides opportunities to go through 'learning by

experience' cycles, where the mentee's experience is examined and reflected upon in the exchange with a mentor who helps to make wider sense of and to build upon it for further action (Hamilton 1993). According to Brewerton, the renewed popularity of mentoring as tool for personal and professional development must be seen in the context of a changing world of work that puts emphasis on flexibility and support of the individual, new styles of management with increased delegation of responsibility, and an emphasis on continuous learning to develop organisations and people that can 'self-generate', with managers that increasingly have to become facilitators, empowerers, and developers of others (Brewerton 2002: p. 365). Mentoring programmes fostering women's careers in academia therefore should be seen not only as palliatives for women's lack of access to the men's network, but also as institutional responses to changing contexts and settings for academic careers: a process in which mentors play a central role.

In the light of the above-mentioned capacity of mentoring to foster learning opportunities, the question arises whether this capacity also applies to learning about gender issues. And, if so, how does this learning about and development of sensitivity to gendered structures and career paths in academia come about? Can mentoring programmes foster mentors as agents of change with regard to these gendered patterns in academia and research?

These questions are all the more relevant as the implementation of academic mentoring programmes to foster women's careers has been accompanied by an important and controversial debate. Critics warned that instead of changing the gendered structures prevailing in academia and research, mentoring was helping a minority of women to better understand and adapt to male norms of the academic career and thus was contributing to the reproduction of dominant structures (Roux 2005; Schliesselberger/Strasser 1998). By contrast, others argued that mentoring programmes have provided new structures within which women's experience and needs could be voiced and discussed and thus carried a potential to foster institutional change (Füger 2005).

Mentoring programmes that aim at fostering women's careers and gender equality in academia and research have to deal with the tension between acknowledging existing possibilities for women to develop their potential and achieve an academic career and the persisting gender inequalities hampering them from doing so (Jäger 2009: p. 46). They have to take care to empower the individual while at the same time generating a transformative potential on the institutional level.

The international workshop 'Mentor Training and Coaching' organised by eument-net in spring 2010 in Lausanne (Switzerland) set out to provide a space to discuss and exchange on these questions. Two keynote presentations, by Jennifer de Vries and Pamela Alean-Kirkpatrick, laid the groundwork for input by participants along four thematic tracks: 'identification of mentors and matching procedure'; 'mentor training'; 'train mentees to steer the mentoring relationship'; and 'mentor training as staff development'. The current publication presents the main contributions to the workshop.

In her article, Jen de Vries introduces the concept of a bifocal approach to mentoring to describe the dual mandate of mentoring programmes aimed at enhancing gender equality to simultaneously develop the women and work for organizational change. Taking a critical stance towards a very often 'overly pragmatic and decontextualised conception of [mentoring] programmes', de Vries sets forth the 'mentoring continuum, as a framework for distinguishing between different approaches to mentoring and their potential contribution to the organisational gender change mandate'. In line with her feminist agenda, de Vries introduces a transformative dimension into mentoring that sees mentors as 'partners for change'.

If mentors are to be partners for change, the criteria used for the identification of mentors and the matching process immediately come to attention. The identification of mentors and the matching procedure constitute central elements in any mentoring programme working to accepted quality standards.<sup>1</sup> They are also among the most time-con-

1 See for example the eument-net quality standards for mentoring programmes or the standards defined by the German association, Forum Mentoring.

suming activities for coordinators of mentoring programmes. Thus, it is no surprise that several contributions by coordinators of mentoring programmes in this volume focus on the matching procedure and the identification of (good) mentors (Besson and Füger; Höppel; Sauter). The detailed description of these procedures highlights the need to introduce explicit steps and measures to allow for a basic assessment of the mentors' understanding of their role and their openness to gender issues as a prerequisite for a successful mentoring exchange.

An unclear or conflicting understanding of a mentor's role or their perceived lack of sensitivity to gendered structures in academia and research can easily result in frustration for both mentor and mentee. To raise awareness among mentors about the persisting gendered dimension of academic cultures and institutions is also one of the measures most frequently suggested to enhance the transformative impact of mentoring programmes (Jäger 2009: p. 23). However, while most coordinators of mentoring programmes identify a clear interest in and potential for mentor training (see for example Fagel), they also perceive significant obstacles, among which the 'lack of time' is probably most commonly advanced in academic contexts.

Pamela Alean's contribution at the eument-net workshop presented a trainer's firsthand experience with mentor training for different groups of mentors. Her article highlights the necessity of tailoring training to the needs of specific groups of mentors, taking into account their motivation to be mentors as well as their own professional goals and constraints. Enhancing the mentor's awareness and understanding of mentoring and of the mentor-mentee relationship are core themes to be addressed, including the question 'Who is responsible for what?' Alean stresses the need 'to help the mentors develop a broader understanding of what mentoring is all about ... and to get them thinking about their own personal "mentoring philosophy"'.

The themes put forth by Alean are echoed in various other contributions. In her article, Nöbauer explores resistance and favourable conditions affecting the readiness of mentors in the University of Vienna's mentoring programme to participate in the 'gender forum' for mentors, organised by the programme's coordinators with the help of experts.

In the mentoring programme of the LMU München, mentors have the chance to benefit from a variety of training and coaching opportunities both formal and informal, in-house and delivered by external experts. In their article, Weber and Sauer assess the experience with and mentor's responses to these different kinds of training.

Time constraints and the well-known difficulty in getting university professors to participate in training seminars that are not directly linked to their scientific activities induce many mentoring programmes to focus their attention on training the mentees to help them steer the mentoring relationship. Gilland Lutz's article in this volume presents the approach taken by the peer-mentoring programme at the University of Zurich. In this programme it is the peer-group leaders who receive coaching to manage the mentoring process.

Several contributions in the present volume, however, are witness to the interest among mentors in receiving training. As shown by Barth, this is the case, for example, in the mentoring programme jointly carried out by the Career Women's Forum and the University of Geneva. In the German programme MentorinnenNetzwerk, presented by Kéré in this volume, mentors have become a specific target group in the programme. Many mentors in this programme, which brings together women from academia and industry alike, have been acting as mentors for years. Having acquired more and more experience, they have increasingly been open to and interested in reflecting on, improving, and professionalising their skills. Partner institutions of the MentorinnenNetzwerk are also interested in the increased mentoring expertise of their staff and integrate mentoring and the associated training modules into their HR development plans. Mentoring as an HR development tool to foster leadership qualities and introduce gender awareness to the management is also at the core of the fff programme at the Zurich University of Applied Science (Bolli-Schaffner).

The contributions of and discussions among participants of the eum-net workshop show that while there are promising results and a constantly increasing expertise with training and coaching in mentoring programmes for women academics and researchers, such programmes are still far from mainstream. However, the expertise accu-

lated by mentoring programmes is all the more valuable in a context where voices that point to a need to train senior academics with regard to their role as managers, team leaders, and supervisors for early career researchers are getting stronger. In a recent declaration, the European University Association (EUA) has reassessed the prevailing principles for doctoral education in Europe. 'Providing professional development to supervisors' and 'developing a common supervision culture' are defined as an 'institutional responsibility', whether they are organised 'through formal training or informal sharing of experiences among staff' (EUA 2010). In a similar way, the League of European Research Universities (LERU) sees it as a key principle for institutions to have an 'institutional strategy for enhancing staff development, and provide adequate recognition and support for the highly professional career counseling schemes already run by universities' (LERU 2010: p. 14).

With the increasing attention brought to the issue of mentoring, supervision culture, and staff development in academia, it will be all the more important that mentoring programmes make sure the focus on gender issues does not disappear. In this respect, the bifocal approach and the mentoring continuum (de Vries) provide the perfect lens through which to discuss how mentoring programmes can position themselves in their respective academic and institutional contexts.

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## **Key inputs to the eument-net workshop on mentor training and coaching**

# Rethinking mentoring: Pursuing an organisational gender change agenda

Jennifer de Vries

Women only programmes, including women only mentoring programmes, remain a popular gender equity strategy in use within organisations today.<sup>1</sup> Yet they are not without controversy and criticism. Of particular concern, from a gender equity practitioner's perspective, is the criticism that women only (WO) programmes focus on 'fixing the women' to better fit the gendered status quo without addressing the need for organisational cultures and practices to be transformed (Meyerson and Kolb 2000).

As a practitioner delivering WO programmes I was challenged by this criticism. The question for me became, how could WO programmes, with their mandate to assist and develop women, more directly engage with challenging and changing the gendered status quo? I began to think of WO programmes as having a dual mandate: to develop the women and work for organisational change. I coined the term 'the bifocal approach' to describe this, playfully drawing on the idea of bifocal spectacles, which enable an almost simultaneous focus on distant (the organisation) and near (the women) vision.

Women only mentoring programmes, as I will outline, are ideally placed to pursue a bifocal approach because of their capacity to work with not just the women, but also a much broader and often more senior group of organisational members: the mentors. I will argue that

1 In this article I focus on the application of my research to practice. For a more theoretically grounded and detailed account of the research see de Vries 2010.

including mentors in the developmental work of mentoring opens up opportunities for pursuing the organisational gender change agenda. This article brings into sharp focus the role and approach of mentors and the mentoring relationship in order to explore the link between mentoring and organisational change.

Beginning with a broad overview of mentoring programmes, I then describe in more detail the history and development of the mentoring component of the Leadership Development for Women (LDW) programme at the University of Western Australia (UWA), and how it has been shaped over time to more directly address the need for organisational change. I introduce the idea of a mentoring continuum, as a framework for distinguishing between different approaches to mentoring and their potential contribution to the organisational gender change mandate. I then draw on research which investigated the approach taken by experienced mentors within the LDW programme at UWA. I conclude by considering the implications of this research for mentoring programmes that wish to move beyond 'fix the women' to directly engage with the need for organisational change.

## Mentoring programmes

Are WO programmes already grappling with the criticism of them from gender scholars that I highlighted in my opening paragraph? Some practitioners of WO programmes have also taken a critical stance towards an overly pragmatic and decontextualised conception of programmes (Gray 1994), questioning their value in bringing about change for women (Bhavnani 1997) and concluding that they contribute little to the statistical profile of women at more senior levels (Brown 2000). Investigation within the Australian higher education sector suggests that the criticism of WO programmes as focusing on the women without addressing the need for institutional change continues to be well founded. In 2008 I reviewed a total of eighty-eight documents, both the published and 'grey'<sup>2</sup> literature, covering the fifteen-year history of WO programmes within Australian higher education. Simultaneously my colleague Lucienne Tessens (2008) undertook a survey of

2 Refers to unpublished materials such as conference papers and institutional reports and evaluations.



current practice within the sector, at a time when thirty-one out of thirty-six universities had one or more WO targeted programmes. We found that both historically and in current practice the large majority of programmes focused on the women, and the positive outcomes for individual women, without reference to the gendered organisational cultures of their institutions. Seventy-four per cent of universities adopted a 'fix the women' framework (Tessens 2008) as did 57 per cent of the literature reviewed. The remaining literature, which grappled with moving beyond 'fix the women', was dominated by the publications of just four universities.

Criticism has not dulled the popularity of WO programmes within Australian universities, where mentoring programmes form the largest subset of such programmes. Anita Devos explored the popularity of mentoring programmes for Australian academic women, and argued that 'these programs are supported because they speak to institutional concerns with improving performance in a performance culture, while being seen to deal with the problem of gender inequity' (2008: p. 195). This highly instrumental approach to mentoring may have very little to do with improving gender equity. As practitioners, Devos challenges us to consider whether WO mentoring programmes have been co-opted for institutional purposes, at the expense of their broader gender equity goal. While individual women may be assisted to be more successful within the gendered status quo, the overall situation for women may remain unchallenged and unchanged. Despite our good intentions, the gender equity intent may easily be lost. I suggest, based on my observations, that Devos's critique may be equally applicable in the European context.

### **The mentoring programme at UWA**

Applying a 'bifocal approach' to WO mentoring programmes is designed to address the constraints of a sole focus on the women. But how can the bifocal approach be applied to the design and practice of a mentoring programme, and does it work? The mentoring component of LDW had always pursued the dual mandate. It was unusual in several important respects.

Mentoring, often a stand-alone programme at other universities,<sup>3</sup> was an integral part of the broader LDW programme when established in 1994. Each year thirty women, both academic and professional staff, participate in a workshop-based leadership developmental programme over a period of nine months. As part of this programme each participant was matched with a more senior male or female mentor. The inclusion of male mentors, commonplace now but somewhat unusual for WO programmes of the time (Quinlan 1999; University of Western Australia 1995), was instigated by the then Vice-Chancellor (VC) Fay Gale.<sup>4</sup> Gale was determined to ensure that the 'too few senior women' were not further overloaded and to 'involve the senior males in the process so that they would own and support' the programme (Gale 1998: p. 294). Mentors, and in particular senior male mentors, were viewed as potential collaborators, who might, and in Gale's view did, influence gender equity matters more broadly (Gale 1999). This intent, to 'convert' the men, became a defining influence in the way LDW developed and evolved.

The engagement of Gale and other senior executive members as mentors cemented the importance of mentoring, resulting in broad support and commitment at the most senior levels of the organisation. Many, most notably the then Deputy VC Alan Robson, mentored on numerous occasions. In the first review of LDW a participant noted, 'men acting as mentors will be exposed to gender equity issues and some male mentors have made positive statements about the programme at public forums' (Stanton 1996: p. 18). Male mentors in fact spoke up in support of LDW funding at Budget Committee and were instrumental in ensuring long-term funding for the programme.

This emphasis on the mentors, and their engagement and learning, most specifically about gender equity issues, is at odds with the majority of mentoring programmes. Professor Alan Robson, VC and still mentoring LDW women, has reinforced this focus by publicly reflecting on his own experience as a mentor: 'All my mentees over the years

.....  
3 For example Australian National University, Curtin University of Technology, Murdoch University, James Cook University, and the University of South Australia (Stanton 1996: Appendix 1).

4 Fay Gale was the second female Vice-Chancellor appointed in Australia and an outstanding champion of gender equity (Eveline 2004).

have shared the same problem. They all have difficulty getting heard in meetings. I began to think about meetings and what made it so difficult for women to make their contribution.’ This prompted the Vice-Chancellor to reflect on his own style of chairing meetings and he also initiated training for committee chairs that focused on building more inclusive meeting cultures.

Importantly, the VC’s example illustrates how gender issues have a basis in organisational practices – such as the way meetings are conducted. It is also worthwhile noting that the VC’s understanding of these issues resulted from repeat mentoring and the observation of patterns over time. By observing this difficulty, shared by a diverse group of senior female mentees, the VC’s attention was drawn towards systemic gendering practices. This understanding translated into action, whereby intervening to improve organisational practices builds more gender equitable workplaces.

Mentors are key to the organisational change process. As senior institutional members they are well placed to act on any increased understanding of gender equity issues that may occur as a result of their mentoring relationships, in order to bring about organisational change. This model of change is premised on the understanding, drawing on the work of Weick (1984) and others (Meyerson and Fletcher 2000) that individuals, using a ‘small wins’ approach, can bring about positive change in organisational cultures.

Over time, in order to strengthen the bifocal approach, the LDW programme focused more explicitly on the mentors and sought to maximise opportunities to educate mentors regarding gender issues. Rather than seeking to spread the mentoring load, repeat mentoring was encouraged, even for very senior mentors. Key institutional players were deliberately included as mentors on the programme. Presentations by the women as a group were introduced to further develop mentors’ awareness of gender issues.

This explicit focus on the mentor and their development is the main point of difference between the bifocal approach and most WO mentoring programmes. More commonly there is an almost exclusive focus on the outcomes for the mentee. The benefits of mentoring for the mentor are often highlighted during the mentor recruitment process.

However, these benefits are often considered an incidental by-product of mentoring programmes rather than a desirable outcome that can be designed into programmes and included in their evaluation. The bifocal approach, however, wishes to engage both mentor and mentee in the organisational change agenda. The role of mentor is seen as a vehicle for developing mentors’ gender insight. Repeat mentoring is seen as strengthening the learning process, allowing mentors to see common patterns or issues emerging, thus building a capacity to see gender equity as a systemic organisational issue, rather than seeing the individual women as problematic.

In the research reported here I set out to examine if the bifocal approach was working as intended. In order to examine this I focused on mentors, the mentoring relationship, the development of systemic gender insight and the capacity to act. The mentors’ approach to their mentoring role and the nature of the relationship they develop with their mentees will have important ramifications for their capacity to learn from their mentees. My focus on mentors is not intended to relegate the experience or outcomes for the mentee to second place, but is designed to maintain a focus on the more difficult and neglected organisational change mandate of WO programmes.

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### **A mentoring continuum**

The mentoring continuum is designed to clarify the role of the mentor and the purpose of the mentoring relationship. All mentoring is not the same and the mentoring literature provides some useful ways of distinguishing between mentoring approaches. In particular I came to the literature with an interest in exploring what type of mentoring approach would best support establishing a two-way relationship, where both mentor and mentee are intended beneficiaries of the mentoring partnership. From this literature I have developed the idea of a mentoring continuum, with instrumental mentoring on the left side and developmental mentoring on the right.

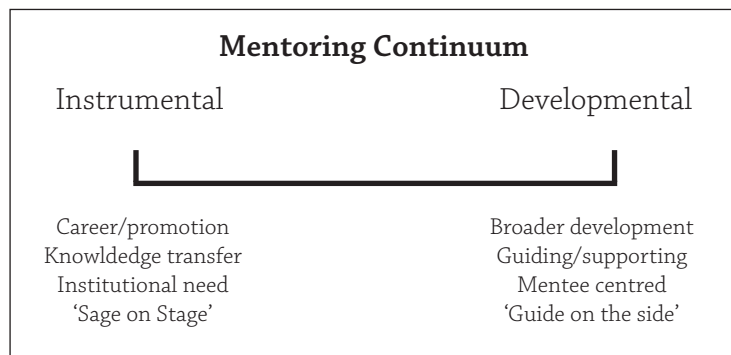


Figure 1: *The mentoring continuum*

Mentoring at the instrumental end of the continuum is characterised by a senior colleague mentoring a junior colleague with the intent of assisting the career of the junior colleague in their current role and context. The mentor uses their knowledge and experience to teach and/or advise the mentee how to succeed. In the case of WO mentoring, where the organisation wishes to progress women through the ranks to address the shortfall of senior women, there can be a strong focus on promotion. Based on unequal power relationships, an instrumental mentor relationship is one-way and lacks reflection or learning on the part of the mentor. Mentors may demonstrate a lack of capacity or desire to empathise, listen, or offer other types of psychosocial support needed to make mentoring a safe place to learn and take risks.

Instrumental mentoring, while apparently focusing on the women, can also be seen as a way of assisting women to navigate and thrive within existing organisational parameters, thus meeting organisational needs without disrupting the gendered status quo. From the perspective of the goals of the bifocal approach, instrumental mentoring becomes a way of 'fixing the women'. This organisational imperative often remains hidden from view and for this reason I refer to instrumental mentoring as mentoring for 'organisational fit'.

Instrumental mentoring is being increasingly criticised in the mentoring literature: for making institutional needs central (Colwell 1998); emphasising a one-way process of knowledge transfer (Zachary 2000); exclusively focusing on mentees' career outcomes (Greenhaus

and Singh 2007); using male models of success (McKeen and Bujaki 2007); ignoring the learning process (Lankau and Scandura 2007); and emphasising one-way relationships (McKeen and Bujaki 2007). The dangers of this instrumental approach include dependency, control, and greater power distance (Gay and Stephenson 1998); sponsorship and patronage (Jarvis and Macinnes 2009); social control and conformity (Colwell 1998); and socialisation into the majority culture (Chao 2007).

Mentoring relationships towards the developmental end of the continuum would be characterised by a more open-ended journeying approach facilitated by the mentor who works hard to provide a safe, supportive yet challenging learning environment, marked by critical reflection on both the part of the mentor and the mentee. This mentoring exhibits mutuality and collaborative partnership working on a broader range of issues identified by the mentee. Both partners focus on the learning and engage in active monitoring of the learning process to ensure goals are being met. The mentor refrains from giving advice and knowing the answers, instead seeing themselves as a guide.

In contrast to the instrumental approach, developmental mentoring makes mentee needs central to the relationship (Colwell 1998) with an emphasis on exploring, guiding, supporting, risk taking, and independence (Gay and Stephenson 1998). With less power distance the relationship becomes more reciprocal, thus perhaps counter-intuitively linking developmental mentee-centred mentoring with a relationship that is more conducive to mentor learning and reciprocal development (Fletcher and Ragins 2007). If mentors are to develop greater insight as a result of their mentoring relationships this presupposes a two-way relationship, more characteristic of developmental than instrumental mentoring.

### **Mentoring approaches adopted at UWA**

What approach did experienced mentors at UWA bring to their mentoring role and was the VC's experience indicative of other mentors' experiences? Mentors for this research were chosen from the pool of those who had been LDW mentors on at least two occasions. While I am primarily reporting on my interviews with UWA mentors, four male and four female professors, this is part of a larger study. I have also drawn on my own involvement as participant observer and an

interview with Alan Robson in his role as a ‘champion’ of the LDW programme. Pseudonyms are used for mentors, but not for the VC, Alan Robson.

There were two distinctive features in the interviews with UWA mentors, both male and female. Firstly, mentors painted a very positive picture of the progress that had been made towards gender equity at UWA. In fact several mentors suggested that UWA was seen as a level playing field for men and women:

*I have seen no sign that women who are working hard don't do as well, and the opportunities are there for women as much as the men. (Beverley)*

and

*I generally don't think the university is an anti-female organisation in any way ... I don't think there is necessarily any discrimination against women. (Christine)*

Both men and women used the number and presence of senior women as evidence of progress, and indeed there has been substantial progress since Fay Gale's arrival in 1990 when she could count the senior women on her fingers. However, their perception of a level playing field and numbers of senior women were at odds with the data. Men make up 85 per cent of professors, the position coincidentally occupied by all the interviewed mentors. With 15 per cent female professors UWA is ranked below the national average of 19.8 per cent (QUT Equity Section 2008).

Secondly there was very little variation in the approaches taken by these professors, with seven out of eight favouring a predominantly instrumental approach. The belief in a ‘gender fair’ UWA complements an instrumental mentoring approach, as it places the onus for change on the individual, not the institution. Clive and Raelene epitomise instrumental mentoring with their problem-solving approach. Clive described his role as a mentor as:

*Sharing experience and endeavouring at least to translate my own experience into candidate solutions to my mentees' problems. So, my standpoint is what is it this person wants to achieve where there is an obstacle? Then I would be saying, given what I know from my background, what would be the way this person should go about that? That would be how I would explain it.*

Raelene took a similar approach:

*My role as a mentor is really to open eyes, to provide ways of getting around obstacles to move ahead in your career I think ... What I usually try and do ... is identify an issue that I might be able to help with ... around networks ... a particular career issue ... how to deal with being overloaded with teaching or doing too much admin, or whatever the issue might be ... And usually to try and suggest approaches that are likely to keep everything rational and data driven in order to try and solve the problem.*

Much of Clive's and Raelene's problem solving and advice giving centred around maintaining some semblance of work/life balance while at the same time being a successful academic.

Christine was the exception among UWA mentors in describing a much more open-ended approach to mentoring:

*... and they could talk about anything ... To listen I think and to be available and to take on whatever and go with them wherever they wanted to go. It is hard to put your finger on it really. I think sometimes they would come with quite specific questions ... but in some ways it was more valuable probably to just explore things together – it's not coming to get an answer. I think the things you bring are the flexibility and trying not to solve the problems.*

Christine's approach to her mentoring role is directly at odds with those of Clive and Raelene. She deliberately avoided advice giving and solving problems. For Christine, mentoring was a mutual exploration, a journey where she accompanied the mentee ‘wherever they wanted to go’. Christine's approach is aligned with the developmental end of the continuum.

There was little mention in the interviews of what mentors had learnt from mentees despite the organisational expectation, often cited by Alan Robson, of mentoring as a two-way learning opportunity. Strong championing of gender equity by Alan and others has created a sense of complacency among the mentors that the work has been done, and that UWA is a good place for women. This combined with the highly individual and competitive framing of successful academe throws the spotlight on individual success strategies. The mentors, having achieved success, are more than happy to share their strategies. The prevalence

of the instrumental approach among male and female mentors validates Devos's (2008: p. 195) reading of mentoring programmes for women in higher education as oriented towards 'improving performance in a performative culture', thus emphasising organisational goals of 'fit', rather than equity goals per se.

### Extending the mentoring continuum

The lack of mentors bringing a developmental approach to mentoring, accompanied by a failure to develop greater gender insight as a result of the mentoring experience is disappointing. In contrast to this, the VC's experience creates a sense of possibility for mentoring, not just for development but for organisational change. However, it was not until I interviewed mentors in another organisation that I was able to put flesh and bones on a different approach to mentoring that incorporated the organisational change agenda. Trevor became my template of a mentor engaged in organisational change.

Trevor's approach was marked by a thoughtful questioning of the status quo within his organisation, combined with a capacity to speak up and challenge assumptions and practices when he considered it was important to do so. As an insider working for organisational cultural change, without being disenfranchised or disaffected, Trevor fits Debra Meyerson and Maureen Scully's (1995) definition of a 'Tempered Radical'. "Tempered Radicals" are individuals who identify with and are committed to their organizations, and are also committed to a cause, community, or ideology that is fundamentally different from, and possibly at odds with the dominant culture of their organization' (1995: p. 586).

Trevor, in his role as mentor, developed a much greater understanding of the situation for women in the organisation. Similarly to the VC, he observed consistent patterns and commonalities, particularly in the way that women were denied access to and overlooked for opportunities that were important to their development and career success. Not only did he begin to actively challenge these stereotypes, assumptions, and practices but he also consciously role modelled for his mentees, the behaviours necessary to challenge the status quo. Together, mentor and mentee sharpened their awareness of gender issues and their capacity to challenge the gendered status quo.

Trevor's approach to mentoring brings both the women's development and the institutional gender change process sharply in focus. He incorporated aspects of instrumental and developmental mentoring, with a strong focus on mentee development. But what set Trevor apart was his development of gender insight and capacity to act as a tempered radical. I see Trevor's mentoring approach as positioned further to the right of developmental mentoring on the continuum. Mentoring for organisational change or 'transformative mentoring' positions the mentor as a partner for change.

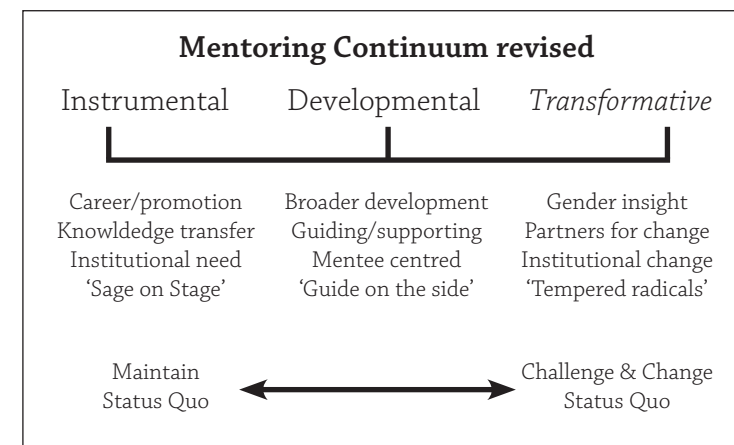


Figure 2: *The mentoring continuum revised*

This critique of mentoring using the bifocal perspective does not mean that instrumental and/or developmental mentoring are seen as unsuccessful from the point of view of mentees or mentors. Mentees and mentors may use quite separate and different criteria to evaluate the success of the mentoring relationship. At UWA high levels of satisfaction regarding the mentoring experience (70%) and its usefulness to participants' development as leaders (over 70%) were reported (de Vries 2005: p. 92). Mentors interviewed for this study indicated they gained substantial satisfaction from being a mentor, and their willingness to mentor repeatedly supported this. However, satisfaction on the part of mentors or mentees does not mean that the mentoring relationship had the potential to contribute to organisational gender change.

The mentoring continuum is also not intended to imply that instrumental mentoring be entirely abandoned. Instrumental mentoring has a place. We have all experienced times when we want someone to teach us how to play the organisational 'game'. Equally, the prevalence of instrumental mentoring is not surprising, given it is strongly grounded in the historical roots of informal mentoring. However, what is overlooked is that instrumental mentoring focuses on improving the 'organisational fit' of mentees within the gendered status quo. This is well illustrated with the example of Clive, tackling mentees' problems to enable them to be successful academics. The institution is not required to change. This perpetuates the ways in which women are disadvantaged by the requirement to fit male norms of success. Instrumental mentoring may appear to focus on assisting women, but what is more clearly in focus is the need of the institution.

Transformative mentoring is far removed from the instrumental mentoring that most people think of when they become involved in mentoring programmes. In order to pursue a bifocal agenda through a mentoring programme a radical shift in programme aims and outcomes accompanied by a greater emphasis on the role of mentor and the nature of the mentoring relationship are required.

### **Conclusion**

'Good intention is not enough to facilitate effective learning in a mentoring relationship'. This quote in the Preface of Lois Zachary's *The mentor's guide* (2000) provides salutary advice. Two-way developmental mentoring relationships, seen in this article as a precursor to transformative mentoring, do not just happen, and it cannot be assumed that mentors have the right skill set to enable developmental mentoring to occur. It is clear that the majority of the mentors interviewed subscribe to what I call a 'benevolent colleague' approach to mentoring, where they as more successful senior organisational members impart primarily career advice and support to younger colleagues. This research has highlighted a substantial mismatch between the LDW programme's bifocal goals, the understanding mentors have regarding their role, and the mentoring that is actually taking place.

Mentoring programmes and mentors seem to veer towards the instrumental end of the continuum. It is this tendency that needs to be addressed in mentoring programmes that wish to engage in transformative change. Building a two-way developmental model of mentoring and providing the opportunity for mentors to develop the appropriate skills is the first step. Reclaiming mentoring towards a two-way developmental (relational) mentoring relationship (Fletcher and Ragins 2007) is in line with the latest developments in the mentoring literature, and there are excellent resources available to support such an endeavour (Zachary 2000).

Neither does the development of gender insight just routinely happen, although both Alan Robson and Trevor provide examples of how this can occur. A developmental approach will only get us so far towards achieving bifocal goals. Focusing on the two-way nature of mentoring and introducing an explicit expectation that mentors learn about what it is like for junior women in their organisation may be possible. Combining the two goals – the development of the mentee and the education of the mentor – explicitly reasserts the gender equity agenda for mentor and mentee. It is the development of this 'gender lens' for mentor and mentee that is the more difficult and more ground-breaking work.

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# Mentor training: Considerations from a trainer's perspective

**Pamela Alean-Kirkpatrick**

This article outlines my approaches to and experiences with training mentors in two different mentoring programmes. The first, StartingDoc, is a group-mentoring programme across the French-speaking universities of Switzerland and coordinated by Carine Carvalho Aruda from the University of Lausanne. It is partly funded by the Swiss Federal Equal Opportunity at Universities Programme and partly by the partner universities. The mentors in this programme are women academics in the post-doctoral qualification stage, some with assistant professorships, and the mentees are female first-year doctoral students. Each mentor leads a group of four to six Ph.D. students. The second programme, coordinated by Eliane Barth of the University of Geneva, is a joint venture between the university and the Career Women's Forum (CWF), a 'Geneva-based association that promotes the professional advancement of women'. CWF provides the mentors for the programme; the mentees are students at the University of Geneva, some male but mostly female, in their final year of a master's programme. The form is that of classic 1:1 mentoring.

The duration of training in each programme varies considerably and reflects both the availability of the mentors and their potential needs. The mentors in the CWF programme are full-time, experienced businesswomen; the mentor training takes place in the evening and lasts for two hours. Some of the mentors have already had formal training in coaching for their work in Human Resources, for example; others are in leading positions in a company or an international organisation. At the outset it can be justifiably asked why this group requires mentor

training at all! It is therefore important to elucidate their questions and needs during the 'training', and to facilitate a discussion that helps them to clarify their role.

For the post-doc researchers in StartingDoc, there are two dedicated mentor-training sessions, each lasting a whole day: one day with me before the mentors meet their mentees for the first time and one day 'mid-term' in the programme, approximately eight months later, with a psychologist who can help them with issues connected to actual or potential conflicts, as well as group dynamics. In this article, only the first training session is described.

It is beyond the scope of this article to describe the design of the training sessions for the two programmes in detail. I have therefore selected certain points in order to highlight my approach and to illustrate the kinds of considerations I feel could be important for any mentor training. It should be said at the outset, however, that I believe every mentoring relationship is unique: there is no one specific way to mentor.

## **Focus on context**

When I train mentors I follow several objectives. The first is to increase their awareness of mentoring and the mentor-mentee relationship, including the question: who is responsible for what? At the same time I try to help the mentors develop a broader understanding of what mentoring is all about and what it entails, including thinking about their own personal 'mentoring philosophy'. In designing the programme for training, I integrate opportunities for the mentors to exchange ideas and experiences among themselves. Discussing thoughts and ideas with others in the same situation not only enhances peer learning, but also makes them realise who in the same 'mentor cohort' could be contacted in the future for advice and information. Finally, the training of the 'StartingDoc' mentors also looks at some practical skills specific to their mentoring context, for example leading a team, team roles, and improving team communication.

Each mentor comes to training with a different set of personal experiences and needs for their role as mentors. Each programme has a specific context in which the mentoring takes place. In the training, I focus on bringing these two aspects together. One of the central exercises aims at discovering how each mentor sees her role and where she sees personal challenges as a mentor in her specific context. I therefore first ask the mentors to complete a series of statements on their own (Table 1). Afterwards, sharing the answers leads to more intensive discussions about the various issues.

*Table 1: Statements for the mentors to complete during the training*

Programme StartingDoc	Programme CWF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The advantages of being a mentor are ...</li> <li>• The disadvantages of being a mentor are ...</li> <li>• As a mentor I am not prepared to ...</li> <li>• The part of my mentor role that I feel most confident about is ...</li> <li>• The part of my mentor role that I don't feel so confident about is ...</li> <li>• The ideal personal qualities and characteristics of a mentor in a group-mentoring context are ...</li> <li>• The ideal personal qualities and characteristics of a mentee in a group-mentoring context are ...</li> <li>• The main differences between 1:1 mentoring and group mentoring for me are...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The advantages of being a mentor are ...</li> <li>• The disadvantages of being a mentor are ...</li> <li>• As a mentor I am not prepared to ...</li> <li>• As an experienced professional businesswoman – in contrast to someone from within the university context – I can offer my mentee ...</li> </ul>

Some statements are identical for each group and some are specific to the context. It is especially important to encourage the young post-doc mentors in 'StartingDoc' to state what they feel confident about, but also let them share any 'worries' about their first mentoring role. Letting them talk about these reservations before they meet their mentees for the first time proves to be especially useful, since many of these 'worries' can be alleviated in the discussion following the exercise. Since the coordinator also participates in the training session, she can add concrete examples of how mentors in previous cycles coped with various situations. In contrast, the CWF mentors are asked to think about what is special about their mentoring relationship as opposed to one where mentor and mentee are both still in the academic world.

Mentors usually invest a considerable amount of time and effort in their role (clearly seen in the answers to the 'disadvantages' of being a mentor, where the issue of time dominates). I feel it is important during the training to give them a chance to think about and discuss what they can gain from the relationship. Table 2 shows the answers given by the two mentor groups about the advantages they foresee in their role. The answers clearly reflect the situation of the mentors and the context of the programmes: the post-doc women recognise the value of the mentoring context in developing new skills and qualifications, whereas the experienced businesswomen appreciate the contact with young people and the opportunity to reflect on their own situations. Both groups state a number of additional intrinsic gains, common to mentoring in general, for example sharing ideas and experiences, learning from others.



Table 2: The advantages of being a mentor are ...

Programme StartingDoc	Programme CWF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sharing ideas/passing on experience</li> <li>• not being the supervisor, but being able to act in a broader context</li> <li>• developing new skills, e.g. team-building, leadership, managing a group, communication ...</li> <li>• learning from others; being confronted with fresh ideas</li> <li>• developing good professional relationships; increasing my own network</li> <li>• having the opportunity to inspire and help advance others</li> <li>• having a recognised role as mentor; leadership/coaching experience to include in my CV</li> <li>• being able to attend workshops</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• feeling good about myself</li> <li>• sharing experiences</li> <li>• staying connected</li> <li>• seeing the business world through the mentee's eyes</li> <li>• being a role model</li> <li>• getting new insights about myself and my work</li> <li>• benefitting from someone else's experience/culture</li> <li>• analysing the generation gap</li> <li>• getting an opportunity to reflect on my own career/situation</li> </ul>

It is well known that clarifying expectations between mentors and mentees at the start of a mentoring relationship helps to avoid disappointments and even conflicts. Equally important in this respect, in order to avoid a potential mismatch between expectations and offers, is communication about what one is not prepared to do as a mentor (see Table 3).

Table 3: As a mentor I am not prepared to ...

Programme StartingDoc	Programme CWF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be available all the time</li> <li>• solve conflicts between mentees and their professors</li> <li>• solve all and every specific problem, in particular 'personal' problems</li> <li>• get personally involved</li> <li>• work on their Ph.D.</li> <li>• do the job of the supervisor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be a mother!</li> <li>• offer a job</li> <li>• be exploited; only give and not receive</li> <li>• organise everything; be directive</li> <li>• waste time</li> </ul>

The responses from the two groups again reflect the mentoring context, with the post-doc StartingDoc mentors realising they need to draw the line between their role and that of the Ph.D. supervisor. The answers from the CWF mentors provide an interesting insight into the reasons behind their request for mentor training: they are aware of the age difference between themselves and their mentees (hence, not being prepared to 'mother' their mentees) and the danger that their mentees will see them as being the gateway to a job. I sensed an implicit wish to get away from this image of 'mother' or 'job provider' and replace it with something else – but what? This is where knowledge about the theoretical frameworks of mentoring can help.

### Placing mentoring in a theoretical framework

In order to extend the inherent idea that mentoring is about 'helping' or 'giving advice', both mentoring groups were asked to consider the mentoring model developed by Clutterbuck 2004: p. 17) (Figure 1).

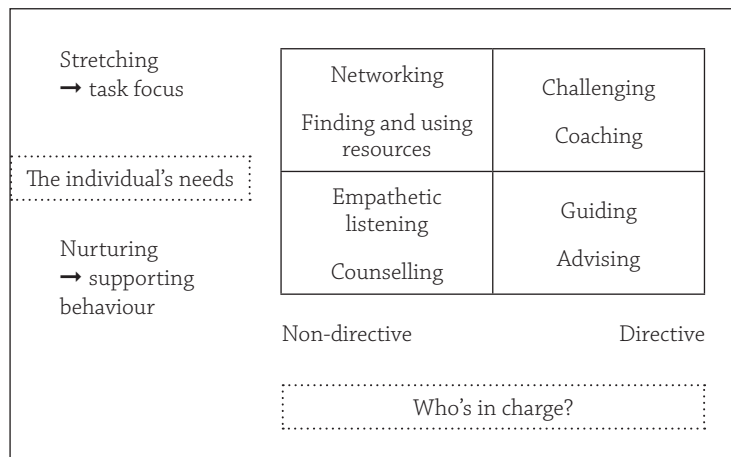


Figure 1: Dimensions and styles of mentoring. Adapted from Clutterbuck 2004.

Clutterbuck distinguishes two dimensions: the directive – who's in charge? – and the individual's needs. Whereas most mentors are at their natural best in the 'nurturing' sections of both guiding/advising (being a role model, passing on one's own behaviours to the mentee with practical support) and counselling (helping someone to cope, being a sounding board), Clutterbuck argues that developmental mentoring, believed to be the basis of the most effective mentoring relationships, requires the application of a mentoring style in which all four quadrants come into play, depending on the needs of a mentee at a specific point in time. Being a developmental mentor also means encouraging the mentee to take the lead; for example, 'networking' refers to making mentees aware of the large amount of information resources available to them, be these people, organisations, or more formal sources, and helping them to develop self-resourcefulness when they follow up on these. In this way, the mentee extends her personal, information, and influence<sup>1</sup> networks.

Discussing the framework during training made the mentors much more aware of the range of possibilities and the ways that they could support development of mentees than was evident to them at first. Talking about 'What is my present mentoring style and what do I want it to be in the future?' offered the CWF mentors clear alternatives to simply advising or 'mothering' their mentees.

1 Influence network: 'getting people to do things for me'.

### Developing a mentoring philosophy

Following my conviction that every mentoring relationship is unique and that there is no 'one specific way to mentor' I encourage the mentors to develop their own 'mentoring philosophy'. Using the discussion following the set of questions about being a mentor in their specific context, coupling this with theoretical framework considerations, the mentors are invited to think about how they now define mentoring. They are asked to consider: How do I define my role as a mentor and that of the mentee? What is my style of mentoring and what am I planning to do as a mentor? What do I want my mentees to say about the mentoring experience when it is over? How do I want my mentees to characterise me at the end of the mentoring relationship? What do I see as the main goals and challenges in my mentoring situation and where do I draw the boundaries of the relationship? Finally, what do I expect to get out of the mentor-mentee relationship?

Due to time restraints in the training session, CWF mentors are simply introduced to the idea of a mentoring philosophy. The one-day training of the StartingDoc mentors includes dedicated time for writing a first version. The kind of clarity that comes with a mentoring philosophy can provide a useful basis for discussing the goals of the mentoring relationship with the mentee and for the exchange of mutual expectations, as well as giving the mentor some underpinning principles for reflecting on how the mentoring relationship is proceeding.

### Improving mentor training in the future

Based on my experience in training mentors, there remain some aspects that I would like to include more explicitly in the future. One is to add more discussion and questions on gender issues. I feel the mentors in the StartingDoc programme in particular would benefit from concrete ideas about how to identify and tackle gender bias in a university context. Another is about goal setting and how to define or even measure success of a mentoring relationship. Finally, how can mentors encourage mentees to take more initiative in directing the mentoring relationship, given perceived obstacles caused by differences in hierarchy, age, or experience?

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# Experiences I: Identification of mentors and matching procedures

# Identification of mentors and MuT matching procedure

**Dagmar Höppel**

‘MuT – Mentoring und Training’ is a comprehensive programme for women researchers which consists of five components, the most prominent of which is a 1:1 mentoring relationship. MuT also offers encouragement and support in the form of an orientation course [1], information and training [2], counselling and coaching [3], mentoring [4], and networking [5]. The acronym ‘MuT’ taken as a word means ‘courage’ in German. The mentors are mostly full professors, both male and female. MuT targets those with high potential: Ph.D. students, and young researchers below the level of a full professorship. Currently there are more than 800 participants.

MuT was founded in 1998 as a low-budget programme. Costs are covered partly by participants’ fees and partly by the State Ministry for Science. MuT is not affiliated with any individual university, but is an independent research institution linked with Baden-Württemberg’s State Conference of Equal Opportunities Officers (LaKoG), which has been based in Stuttgart since January 2008.

## **MuT’s methods and procedures for the matching process**

### ***Selection of mentees***

People interested in participating in the MuT programme and who want to join as mentees can download the application form from the MuT website or request to have it sent. This form asks applicants to first state their qualifications and to describe their current employment status. They are then asked to describe their achievements in the academic field so far and to reflect on factors that have supported and hindered their academic career. Questions then turn to participants’ goals for their further academic career, and their plans for steps to reach these goals.

Mentees should show above-average commitment in the field of science and have clear goals for their careers in higher education and science. Personal or professional dependence on the mentor is to be avoided.

### ***Orientation course***

Women researchers are then invited to participate in an orientation course. This course aims to prepare mentees for a 1:1 mentoring relationship and to get the participants to reflect on their own skills and career goal of obtaining a professorship and to specify their expectations of mentoring. The participants draw up a profile based on their personal situation. Considering the profile of qualification for a professorship in their profession they develop aims for the mentoring relationship. Each participant determines the profile of their ideal mentor. They must decide, for example, whether they prefer same- or cross-gender, same- or cross-discipline mentoring. They discuss the desired profile with the programme coordinator, who in turn uses it to find a suitable mentor. Disclosing participation in a mentoring programme may sometimes – depending on a variety of circumstances – have negative consequences for mentees. There may be conflicts with supervisors, or participation in a support programme may be interpreted as an admission of incompetence. Therefore, the decision whether or not, and to whom, to disclose their participation in MuT rests entirely with the mentees. MuT facilitators discuss the advantages and disadvantages of doing so with mentees. Some participants have a clear view at the outset regarding their mentoring goals; others decide to wait until the mentoring relationship is underway and for the present simply attend the offered training. The participants also have the opportunity to exchange experiences with one another and to establish personal contacts.

## **The matching process**

The matching process takes place as follows:

- Defining both personal and professional goals: On the orientation course mentees define their individual personal and academic goals (topics for the mentoring relationship); for example: systematic career planning, positioning in the scientific community, work–life balance, networking.

- Looking for mentors: Some mentees have precise suggestions regarding their ideal mentor. Other mentees ask the MuT team for assistance. The MuT team can propose suitable mentors (reputable professors and scientists, in the same or a different field, male or female).
- In general, mentors should hold full professorships, be able to share valuable know-how with their mentees due to their senior academic positions, and should be ready to devote time and energy to a relationship with mentees that is both personal and professional.
- Mentors and mentees are expected to agree on some fundamental mentoring rules. These include confidentiality, openness, clarity, and honesty in feedback, empowering the mentee (without creating dependency), and clearly stated goals for the mentoring relationship, which mentee and mentor develop together. Following these rules is possible thanks to the establishment of the non-hierarchical and open relationships that the programme promotes.
- Matching: The MuT team verifies if a particular match fits the mentor's and mentee's expectations and contacts the prospective mentor by telephone. The MuT Team uses personal contacts and a database and asks the mentor if he or she can imagine supporting the mentee in reaching their goals and discussing further perspectives in science and business. In the event that the mentor is interested in going ahead, the objectives fixed by the mentee, whose identity is usually not revealed at this stage, are given to the prospective mentor along with the rules of MuT. The MuT team assists at the first meeting. The mentee is responsible for drawing up the written agreement between mentor and mentee and for fixing other details of the relationship (e.g. timeframe). After the first meeting they adapt the objectives and expectations of the relationship, which should be based on the mentee's personal and professional goals and focused on their learning and development.
- Mentors and mentees themselves define the end of their mentoring relationship. They negotiate its duration; it may formally end, for example, when the mentee successfully takes the next step in her academic qualification. After this, mentoring often continues informally.

We recruit mentors from all over the world. We start by doing an internet search and finding a link between the mentee and mentor. This can come from information on the CV, for example having worked at the same laboratory, or having been a fellow of the same programme. This link can be a helpful door opener. We also use personal contacts to get more information about the mentor, for example whether they would be a good advisor.

Mentors can also be suggested by others or can themselves apply to be mentors. Once a year MuT sends information letters to rectors, presidents, and equal opportunities officers and calls for interested professors to apply. This information also aims to raise awareness about MuT's goals. Approximately 10 per cent of mentors are recruited in this way. Mentors may also be suggested by other mentors or by MuT cooperation partners. Mentees, who often know about the best door openers in their scientific community, may also suggest mentors. On the orientation course criteria for the most suitable mentor are discussed and developed. If the mentees cannot decide on a person or if they ask for help, the MuT coordinators look for suitable candidates. The final decision is made together with the mentee. Now that the programme has been running for several years, a couple of MuT's former mentees have now become mentors.

More than 95 per cent of the mentors approached accept the invitation to become a mentor. In the personal interviews with the MuT coordinators they emphasise the necessity of supporting young scientists. They are proud to be selected as the most suitable partner for the mentee. They like the role of mentor and sharing their experience beyond the institutional hierarchical structure.

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### **Remaining obstacles and issues that need to be tackled**

MuT cannot so far offer financial or institutional recognition to mentors, as unfortunately we have no budget to reward them. Whereas mentees are trained extensively, so far there is no training for mentors. Mentors in the most senior academic positions do not usually welcome training; behaving as experts and evaluators is part of their academic professional identity. A possible motivation for mentors to participate in training seems to be a gain in reputation or insight in new scientific fields. Awareness among mentors about the positive

effects of mentoring for them is needed: Learning about their mentees' situations gives them new insights and a chance to reflect on their own academic careers. We are still looking for ways to increase their motivation.

The programme has so far been successful, but this is what we still wish for:

- to offer the mentors coaching, if they want it, including on specific topics they would like to work on;
- additional 'free' money, which the mentors can use for general academic purposes and not exclusively for mentoring;
- to increase the reputation of the mentoring role, e.g. a prize;
- to give the mentor more than intellectual benefits and space for reflection about university structures, for example by special reflection about their academic career or leadership training and human resources management;
- to show them the benefits of gaining greater gender awareness;
- to create a mentor network across mentoring programmes: for example in July 2010 we started with a two-day event – 'the Academy at Lake Constance' – as a kind of 'think tank' with high-ranking scientific figures (in the style of the annual Nobel Prize winners meeting in the city of Lindau);
- to launch a newsletter exclusively for mentors.

We have many new ideas and hope to get the required resources to develop our programme further.

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Identification of mentors and the matching process in a 1:1 mentoring scheme for early career researchers:

## The experience of the Réseau romand de mentoring pour femmes

Muriel Besson, Helene Füger

This article presents the process of identifying mentors and matching them with mentees in the Réseau romand de mentoring pour femmes (henceforth: RRM). The article is divided into seven sections: first, we provide a short overview of the RRM programme, then we present the method and procedure of the matching process, followed by a section on the criteria used for the identification of mentors. Further sections are dedicated to reflections on the programme's experience, what are good practices, and where do we see potential to improve.

### Information on the mentoring programme

The RRM is a trans-disciplinary 1:1 mentoring programme; it targets advanced women Ph.D. candidates and post-docs aiming at an academic career. It is a regional programme, involving the six universities from the French- and Italian-speaking parts of Switzerland (Universities of Fribourg, Lausanne, Geneva, Neuchâtel, Lugano, and the EPFL). The programme's head and coordinator are located at the University of Fribourg. They are supported by a group of partners, comprising an equal opportunities officer and one or two women professors from each partner university.

The RRM was initiated with the support of the federal programme for gender equality at Swiss universities. Its aim is to encourage and support women holding a Ph.D. to pursue an academic career and facilitate their integration into the scientific community. The programme is

well-regarded in the Swiss academic world. The programme has a biennial cycle. It offers a 1:1 mentoring exchange, an accompanying programme of five days comprising networking events, workshops, and discussions among pairs about the mentoring experience. Since 2000, the RRM has conducted five programme cycles with a total of 119 mentees and 108 mentors (76 women (70%) and 32 men (30%)).

### Information on the method and procedure of the matching process

The matching process can be divided into successive phases, starting with the evaluation of the candidates' dossiers and the selection of the mentees, followed by the coordinator's contact with mentees and (potential) mentors and in principle reaching completion with the first face-to-face meeting between mentee and mentor and their signature of the mentoring agreement.

### Selection of the participants

The selection of the mentees is part of the matching process. Women researchers who want to participate in the RRM have to send in a dossier, comprising an application form, a CV, and a covering letter. The application form contains questions about the anticipated progress of the candidate's career in the three years to come, the candidate's motivation for participating in the programme, and their expectations regarding their future mentor's support. The form also offers the applicant the chance to specify what they are looking for in a mentor: female/male, from French-speaking/German-speaking Switzerland or from abroad, same or related academic field.

### Evaluation of the candidates

Each application dossier is evaluated by two people: an equal opportunities officer and a woman professor from the programme's group of partners. All the evaluations are then discussed during a meeting. In addition to the formal selection criteria, the reasons for wanting to participate in the mentoring scheme and the motivation to pursue an academic career, as well as the formulation of realistic expectations towards the mentoring scheme and the mentor's support are also taken into account. In the RRM's experience over the five programme cycles, these aspects of the application are important in the matching process and the success of the mentoring exchange.



**Contact with the mentee**

In order to match an individual applicant with a mentor, the coordinator contacts each mentee to clarify her expectations of the mentoring relationship. During this contact, the coordinator also explains the RRM's criteria and rationale for the selection of mentors. Mentees are asked to play an active role in the identification of potential mentors and to suggest two to three names to the coordinator. The coordinator's search for potential mentors involves drawing on the pool of former RRM mentors, asking the programme partners, and searching on the web. Thereby, she is able to identify both potential women and men mentors, and mentors with childcare responsibilities. Then the mentee and coordinator decide together which person to contact first.

**Contact with the mentor**

The coordinator contacts the potential mentor first by email, then by telephone. She presents the mentoring relationship, what is expected from a mentor, and why the person has been contacted (see below: Criteria for the identification of mentors). She also gives some general information about the mentee's profile and expectations of the mentoring exchange. If the person is interested, the coordinator passes on the mentee's CV and asks the potential mentor to confirm whether they accept the invitation to be mentor to the specific mentee.

**The beginning of the mentoring exchange**

When the potential mentor has given their consent, the coordinator informs the mentor that the mentee will be in touch to organise a first meeting. At the same time, mentor and mentee receive a dossier with information about the RRM and the specific programme (i.e. the RRM's objectives and agenda, including dates, location, and themes of network meetings and workshops), as well as selected documents on the role of mentors and mentees, including a copy of the mentoring agreement. The mentoring agreement is a formal part of the mentoring scheme, wherein mentee and mentor define the aims of the bilateral mentoring exchange, the frequency of their meetings, and the confidentiality of discussions, etc. Mentee and mentor are asked to complete and sign the document at one of their first meetings.

**Second matches**

During the roughly fifteen months' duration of the mentoring exchange within the framework of the RRM, mentors and mentees can call on the coordinator to help if they are uneasy about the mentoring exchange. The coordinator's support can result in increased competence of the mentor or the mentee in steering their mentoring relationship, in mediation, or in the end of the mentoring exchange. Depending on the specific case and the mentee's needs, mentee and coordinator may then decide to look for a new mentor.

**Criteria for the identification of mentors**

The RRM uses two categories of criteria to identify mentors: a set of structural criteria and a set of criteria focused on the personal experience and competences of the individual.

**Structural criteria**

The structural criteria are easy to assess, but are not necessarily self-explanatory to the participants. It is therefore important to explain the rationale behind these criteria to mentee and mentor.

In the RRM's mentoring scheme mentors are:

- a professor or senior researcher with a tenured position;
- from a field close to that of the mentee, but not from the same specialisation;
- from a different university or research institution.

These structural criteria should help prevent cases of counterproductive competition between mentor and mentee (e.g. because the mentor is not yet tenured), or a confusion of roles (i.e. between the role of judge and supervisor and the role of non-judgemental mentor). The last of these formal criteria also helps to enlarge the mentee's network.

**Personal experience and competences**

The personal experience and competences of potential mentors can partly be assessed via an internet search. In addition, these more informal criteria can be addressed during the interview with the mentor or by word of mouth.



The personal experience and competences mainly concern the following points:

- positions, mobility, network, academic responsibilities;
- family, experience as dual career couple etc.;
- experience or reputation in supervising doctoral students or experience in mentoring;
- capacity to be non-judgemental, supportive, and open-minded;
- awareness of academia's unwritten rules and ability to critically reflect on and to share them with the mentee;
- availability (even if they are very busy).

### **Conclusions on the RRM's matching experience**

Based on oral feedback from mentees and mentors in peer-group discussions at network meetings, and from the answers to the evaluation questionnaire at the end of each programme cycle, it appears that the sets of structural and personal criteria defined for the identification of mentors at the RRM are effective in helping to find 'good' mentors. That is, they help identify mentors with whom mentees can work effectively in order to enhance their identity as researcher, their autonomy, and strengthen their position in the academic field, and thus advance their career. Feedback from mentees and mentors in the evaluation also shows that proximity of scientific specialisations does not increase the mentee's satisfaction with the mentoring relationship. With regard to the mentees, it is important to clarify their expectations regarding the mentoring exchange at the very outset of the matching process, as these will define specific characteristics in the personal experience and competences to watch out for when researching mentors. Finally, it is important for the coordinator to keep a personal record of the discussion with the mentee, including the specific criteria defined.

### **Good practice**

Having detailed the different steps in the RRM's identification of mentors and the matching process, we would like to stress a few elements which we consider 'good practice'. First, there is the definition of structural criteria. These criteria provide an effective basis for the coordinator's discussions with mentees and potential mentors during the matching process and appear to be convincing for both mentees and mentors. Secondly we would like to stress the pertinence of different steps of the matching process, including the application form and the personalised procedure. Thirdly, we would like to mention

the establishment of a 'mentor pool' of former mentors, as when the RRM contacts former mentors they mostly accept to the invitation to mentor for a second time, and a 'fatigue' among them has not been noticed yet. Finally, support from a group of partners located in the different partner institutions provides a precious network of contacts for the coordinator if she needs advice on potential mentors.

### **Potential to improve**

We have identified a series of good practices, but there are also different areas of our matching procedure where we see the potential for further improvement.

One of our concerns relates to matching mentees from small fields and rare specialisations, that is, fields in which there is a very limited labour market in academia – or even an almost non-existent one if we look just at the universities in the French-speaking part of Switzerland. In the RRM's experience, it has proved to be rather difficult to find appropriate mentors for these mentees, especially if their expectations towards the programme are more instrumental than developmental (de Vries 2010). In this respect, the RRM could make improvements by finding ways to enhance the mentees' and mentors' understanding of the developmental aims of its programme. This could help mentees from small fields to define pertinent aims for the mentoring exchange and thus make it easier to find mentors who can successfully support them.

A second dimension where we see potential to improve the RRM's matching procedure relates to the content of the documentation supplied to mentors. Until now, mentors have received information about their role orally during the matching procedure, through the documentation they receive when they have accepted, and during the kick-off meeting, where exercises and working groups are designed to discuss the roles of mentors and mentees. However, only a few mentors take part in the kick-off meeting. Therefore, the RRM is looking for ways to enhance mentor integration into the programme and formalise their role and function with regard to the mentee. One way of doing so would be to include a definition of the role of the mentor in the mentoring agreement, which, as mentioned above, the mentor signs together with the mentee. Other strategies to improve the information on the mentor role are:

- provide targeted information for first-time mentors;
- inform mentors on possible pitfalls;
- designate former mentors as contacts/‘coaches’ for first-time mentors;
- enhance mentees’ ability to steer the mentoring relationship.

The RRM’s potential to improve its procedure for the identification of mentors and the matching process also lies in its close cooperation with the programme Mentoring Deutschschweiz, a ‘sister’ mentoring scheme at universities in the German-speaking part of Switzerland. This scheme organises an information session for interested parties before they apply and it also organises the kick-off meeting at which mentees work on formulating their expectations towards a mentor before the matching process starts. Thus, in order to work on mentee competence in the steering of the mentoring relationship it should be interesting to compare the practice of Mentoring Deutschschweiz and to consider whether these different approaches have an impact on satisfaction with and the outcome of the mentoring process.

### **Final considerations**

The experience of the RRM shows that mentoring programmes become more effective if they have a well-structured procedure for the identification of mentors and the matching process. It also shows that a successful procedure for the identification of mentors and the matching process has to be consistent with criteria used for the selection of mentees.

The inter-university cooperation and especially the support from a group of partners in the selection of the mentees and the identification of potential mentors, and cooperation with similar mentoring programmes are also elements which support not only the efficiency of the mentoring scheme, but also its capacity to transfer good practice beyond the programme.

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Mentoring at the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft:

## Identification of mentors and the matching process

**Katharina Sauter**

Fraunhofer is the largest organisation for applied research in Europe, with a staff of some 17,000 qualified scientists and engineers. The annual research budget amounts to 1.6 billion euros. Fraunhofer comprises fifty-nine institutes all over Germany with research centres and representative offices in Europe, USA, Asia, and the Middle East. Fraunhofer undertakes applied research in all the principal areas of engineering, including life sciences. Its services are solicited by customers and contractual partners in industry, the service sector, and public enterprises. The organisation also participates in future-oriented projects, with the aim of finding innovative solutions for challenges in industry as well as responses to demands faced by society in general.

Fraunhofer is committed to bringing more women into applied research. It aims to increase the proportion of female scientists in all areas where they are currently under-represented. The specific advantages of Fraunhofer from the point of view of young female scientists are reflected in the defined objectives of its Human Resources policy. The percentage of women on the scientific staff increased from 6.1 per cent in 1989 to 19.2 per cent in 2009. This shows slow but continuous improvement towards our diversity management mission of having Fraunhofer research teams which are composed of a well-balanced mix of members. This will enable these teams to exploit the creative potential of both sexes and a variety of different age groups, cultural backgrounds, and scientific disciplines, and thus improve their results.

### The Fraunhofer-Mentoring-Programme

Fraunhofer stands for a proactive culture of equal opportunities. One measure with this aim is the Fraunhofer-Mentoring-Programme. Its goals are fostering the careers of members of the scientific staff as well as bringing more women into applied research. Mentoring is a highly effective method of encouraging personal development, in which experienced senior staff offer guidance to more junior colleagues within a structured professional relationship defined by the individuals themselves.

There are male and female mentees, but in the interest of equal opportunities, Fraunhofer has a quota of at least 65 per cent female participants. The mentees must have been at Fraunhofer for at least one year to be eligible for the programme. To make their application candidates must complete a profile form, which has to be sent to Fraunhofer headquarters, and they have to be recommended by the institutes. The programme starts every year with a kick-off workshop with mentees and mentors and also consists of a feedback meeting, seminars, a closing session with mentees, and an evaluation carried out by an external consultant by telephone. At the end of the mentoring programme all participants receive a certificate signed by a member of the board and the mentors are given a small present in recognition of the mentorship.

The Fraunhofer-Mentoring-Programme offers advantages to the mentees, the mentors, and the institution. What are the advantages for the mentees? The programme supports their personal and scientific careers. It broadens business contacts and networks and offers confidential discussions outside the professional hierarchy. Mentors can reflect their own career paths and experiences. In addition their consultation skills will be improved. The process of identifying and challenging gender discrimination and barriers will be strengthened mostly for the male mentors. Finally, what are the advantages for the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft? Mentoring improves communication between the departments, the Fraunhofer Institutes, and the Fraunhofer alumni. The Fraunhofer Institutes profit from the qualified and highly motivated staff.

### The matching procedure

The core of every mentoring programme is finding a good mentor. What are the methods and procedures employed in the matching process?

Mentees can choose whether they want to have a mentor from their own Fraunhofer Institute, from another Fraunhofer Institute, or from another organisation or company. Mentees can propose a particular person to be their mentor. Mentees can also indicate if the mentor should come from the same field. In fact, most mentees prefer a mentor from another Fraunhofer Institute or from outside the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, because these relationships profit from being more free from inhibitions of any sort, as internal politics and hierarchies have no bearing on them.

At the beginning of the programme, telephone contact is made by the project manager with the mentees in order to gain a personal impression of them and to find out which mentor will fit them best. When the mentee wants to have a mentor from the same institute, normally he or she is suggested by the potential mentee or the Human Resources manager of the institute. Otherwise recommendations by managers of the institute or the project manager's own contacts are very helpful. If the mentee prefers a mentor from another Fraunhofer Institute, recommendations by the Human Resources managers of the relevant institute are important. In this case, field and region have to be taken into account as well. According to experience at Fraunhofer, the mentoring relationship is generally more successful if the mentees and mentors come from the same region, because it is easier for the pair to meet. This helps mentors and mentees to establish a trusting relationship.

If the mentor is to come from outside the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, a recommendation by the institute is likely to prove most successful. Another possibility is for the project manager to use her own contacts to get suggestions of good mentors. Fraunhofer alumni and members of the board of trustees of Fraunhofer Institutes are also good sources of recommendations. Last but not least contact with other research organisations or universities is important too.

Before they agree to become a mentor, those approached are sent some written information about the Fraunhofer-Mentoring-Programme. Some potential mentors like to get in touch with the mentee in advance before they commit to becoming a mentor. In the event that the prospective mentor declines the invitation, the project manager asks him or her for another recommendation. After the matching process is complete mentees are advised to contact the mentors by telephone before the kick-off workshop.

Aside from recommendations by people who have professional contacts with the institutes, other important factors in finding suitable candidates are that potential mentors should already have mentoring experience or be known as good managers and leaders. Furthermore they must be enthusiastic about participating in the programme. It is also very important for the project manager to have personal contact with the potential mentor, at the very least by telephone, and not only by email. A questionnaire, which is sent to the potential mentor at the beginning of the matching process, is a very useful way of getting to know more about him or her. The form contains questions about personal and professional background as well as competences. This information contributes to the effective support of a good matching. Finally it is a good sign if the mentor is present at the kick-off workshop. It shows that the mentor is prepared to devote time to the mentoring relationship.

There are still some issues that need to be tackled in the Fraunhofer-Mentoring-Programme. Sometimes mentees find it difficult to deal with more senior mentors, such as professors, or they take less initiative in determining the relationship because of their great respect for these eminent professionals. Therefore mentors from middle management can be most suitable for very young scientists. Another problem is that in the event of difficulties mentees wait too long for first contact and a feedback session with the project manager. In addition, some mentors struggle to give the necessary time to the mentoring relationship. Finally an element of uncertainty is introduced when mentors are not known to the project manager and are not recommended by the project manager's contacts.

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### Summary

In summary, identification of good mentors and the matching process are decisive for a successful mentoring relationship. This can be exemplified by the following statement from a Fraunhofer-Mentoring-Programme mentee: 'I never took part at any events of the Fraunhofer-Mentoring-Programme, but the programme achieved its goals by finding a good mentor'.

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# Experiences II: Reflecting training needs and strategies

# Mentoring at the Berlin Mathematical School. A case for mentor training?

Tanja Fagel

This article will introduce the structure of the Berlin Mathematical School (BMS), its mentoring programme, and considerations about training for mentors.

## Structure of the graduate school

The Berlin Mathematical School (BMS) is a joint graduate school of the mathematics departments of the three major Berlin universities: FU Berlin, HU Berlin, and TU Berlin. It was founded in summer 2006, started its course programme in October 2006, and is mainly funded as a graduate school within the 'Initiative of Excellence' by the German Research Foundation (DFG). The BMS offers a coordinated, highly diverse course programme in English with access to all maths research groups in Berlin (in particular, to the DFG Research Training Groups and ongoing research projects). The support for students ranges from housing and visas to childcare and language courses as well as soft-skills seminars and mentoring programmes. The graduate programme offers a fast-track to getting a Ph.D.

## Target group

Our target group is talented students in mathematics from all over the world. Applicants for Phase I are expected to have a bachelor's degree, or equivalent. For entering Phase II the students need to have a master's degree or 'Diplom', or to have passed the BMS Qualifying Exam (an oral exam at the end of Phase I). After the BMS Qualifying Exam the students can directly enter Phase II in order to write their Ph.D. thesis. Students apply online for membership and also for scholarships. After interviewing pre-selected applicants during 'BMS Days', the BMS board decides which candidates will be given an unconditional offer.

## Members

As of February 2010 there are 67 professors in the BMS faculty, 7.5 per cent of which are women. The junior faculty consists of 19 post-docs, 26.3 per cent of which are women. As of December 2009 we have 140 students (29 per cent women), 39 of them are in Phase I and 101 are in Phase II; 41 per cent are international students from 29 countries (see Figure 1).

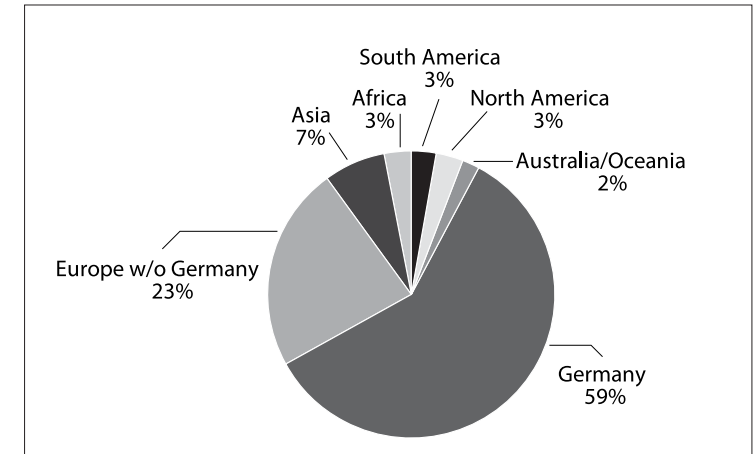


Figure 1: Countries of origin of the BMS students

## Networking events and activities

One week before the lectures start we offer the 'BMS Orientation' to our new students. After two months there is the 'Orientation Follow-up' at which student representatives meet with the new students. Furthermore there are the 'BMS Friday Colloquia' every two weeks where all the students can meet each other at so-called 'Tea and Cookies' before the colloquium starts. For our female students there is the 'Kovalevskaya Lunch' once a semester, at which they can meet and exchange experiences with a female mathematician.

Since February 2010 we have organised a 'Meet the Post-docs Luncheon'. A 'Dual-career Lunch' is planned for the winter semester 2010. In future both events are planned to take place once a semester. The chair meets each student separately once a year. In addition we have annual BMS faculty meetings. The BMS organises one social event per semester, such as canoeing, kart racing, bowling, climbing, or cycling.

## **BMS mentoring programme**

### ***Understanding of mentoring***

At the BMS, mentoring is used as a tool for the participants' broader professional and personal development as well as for their career advancement. It is based on the pairing of a mentor and a mentee. These pairings are formed across hierarchies and generations. A person with more professional life experience (the mentor) supports the development and career of a younger, less experienced person (the mentee). Mentees learn from their mentors, benefit from their knowledge, and gain insight into their networks and the mechanisms and unspoken rules of academia and research. Mentors pass on their personal experience based on their own careers and professional styles. Mentors provide mentees with guidance that helps them to develop on their own (for example on matters such as, gender, family, and dual career, self-esteem as a scientist, international experience, formal and informal networks, the functioning of the scientific system and planning strategies in order to reach their goals). The meetings between mentor and mentee are confidential and discussion of personal issues is encouraged. The rules of the programme are written down in the BMS mentoring guidelines, which can be downloaded from the BMS website.

### ***The type and form of mentoring***

The BMS mentoring programme is designed for two target groups within the BMS student body: Phase I and Phase II students. The mentoring programme is seen as a compulsory part of the graduate programme. It is designed as 1:1 mentoring for both female and male students. All mentors are drawn from the BMS faculty.

The idea is that the BMS faculty member guides the student during the entire duration of Phase I and/or Phase II (see the sections on BMS mentoring for both phases of students). The mentoring is meant to detect possible difficulties early, so that additional support and guidance can be offered and countermeasures can be taken if necessary. It is recommended that at the end of each meeting the outcomes are written down for future reference, and that a date and topic for the next meeting are arranged, and any necessary action to be taken is agreed upon. Whereas for male students pairing with a same-gender mentor is easy, it is not for female students. As noted above, only 7.5 per cent of BMS faculty are women. As a result the majority of pairings

for female students are cross-gender. Students may also choose their mentor from the BMS junior faculty, five out of nineteen of whom are women.

Mentees are expected to participate in different soft- and transferable-skills seminars such as on communication skills, conflict management, presentation skills, intercultural training, organisation and work methods, project management, team dynamics and leading teams, career planning, applying for jobs and positions in English, LaTeX (a document markup language and document preparation system for scientific typesetting), a writing mathematics workshop, and a mathematical graphics workshop. Each training course is evaluated: Participants fill out questionnaires at the end of their course. They answer questions about the trainer's competence, about their expectations, impressions, and ideas for improvement. They can also make suggestions for other seminars, workshops, or training. Interviews with mentees and mentors about the mentoring programme are planned for the future.

### ***BMS mentoring for Phase I students***

For the mentoring in Phase I (see the section on 'Target groups') each student is assigned a mentor from the BMS faculty. The BMS Admissions Committee tries to match mentor and mentee according to their mutual academic interests. However, at the time of admission to Phase I, students are not expected to have decided on a field of concentration. Therefore the BMS does not expect there to be a 'perfect fit' between the mentor's specialities and the mentee's interests, which may develop and change during the course of Phase I. Mentees should be encouraged to find and shape their own interests; this may lead them away from their mentors' interests. The BMS hopes that the mentor can give valuable information to their mentee regarding research fields and possible advisors. Other faculty members within the broad scientific spectrum of the BMS may help to provide specialised expertise. Mentors advise mentees on their studies and follow their successes and achievements. The mentor meets the mentee on a regular basis to evaluate the latter's progress. Moreover he or she helps the mentee to get to know Berlin mathematics, and gives advice about different research groups and scholarship opportunities. After each semester, Phase I students write a short report on their activities. These reports form the basis for discussion with the mentor. Ideally



mentor and mentee meet twice a semester. The mentees are expected to contact their mentors to arrange the meetings.

### ***BMS mentoring for Phase II students***

Each Phase II student has a scientific advisor, who provides support in all aspects relating to the progress of the student's dissertation, choosing conferences, and publishing articles. A separate mentor is chosen to give a second opinion and to help in the event of problems with the advisor. Both the advisor and the mentor can assist Ph.D. students in forming career plans and in establishing their own professional network. The mentoring relationship ends formally with the finalisation of the dissertation.

### Matching process in Phase II

In contrast to Phase I, the Ph.D. students in Phase II choose their mentor on their own from among BMS faculty. It is communicated to them that mentor and advisor should not be members of the same research group. The reason behind this is that the students should not be dependent on the mentors in a personal or professional way.

At first the mentoring coordinator contacts the mentees and offers her support. Some mentees already know whom they would like to invite to be their mentor and others accept the mentoring coordinator's help. The final decision is made by the mentee. In the event of problems with their mentor, mentees are free to find another.

## **Training mentors**

### ***Acceptance***

One idea in the BMS application to the DFG concerning the mentoring programme was to offer training for mentors.

However, shortly after establishing the BMS mentoring programme in 2007 the professors in the Committee on Mentoring, Gender, and Diversity voted against a training programme for mentors. Part of their understanding was that they "were experts and therefore do not need a training course" and they also believed faculty members would not accept training. Since then, however, the BMS has encountered problems with a few students and mentors (see below). On the basis of these experiences and after further discussions the committee

changed its mind and now recommends training. Therefore, the BMS is now planning to offer training for mentors, which is scheduled to begin in 2010. The objective is to improve the mentoring programme by exchanging experiences between the mentors, by explaining their role as a mentor in contrast to their role as an advisor, and by teaching the limits of mentoring. The participants will also learn what the expectations and perspectives of mentees are and how to handle them.

### ***Motivation***

Some Phase I students had encountered difficulties with their mentors. Personal communication between mentoring coordinator and mentees revealed, for example:

- One mentor expected his mentee to take German maths courses although the programme is taught in English.
- One mentee expected her mentor to invite her, while the mentor expected her to ask for a meeting.
- Some mentees expected the mentor to find their funding for Phase II although the students are responsible for finding their own funding.
- A few mentors seemed to lose interest in their mentees when the latter changed their scientific field.
- Some mentors seemed not to take enough time for the meetings.
- Some mentors seemed unable to communicate clearly.
- Some mentors seemed to lose motivation to help the mentee.

Issues related to gender have not so far been mentioned by mentees.

### ***Considerations***

For mentors, training offers a great opportunity to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses, time-management skills, as well as their own academic career. Different cultural backgrounds, the (perhaps unrealistic) expectations of their mentees, and gender in male-dominated structures can also be discussed in order to raise awareness. There are two points to take into account when considering the training of mentors: first, all professors are under time pressure, and, second, some of them are convinced they already know enough about mentoring and leadership. As was reported during the workshop in Lausanne, some coordinators of mentoring programmes found that male professors often dislike reflecting on certain issues, especially on gender issues. It has also been recognised that the mentee is not the only one who profits from the mentoring, but so too does the



mentor. As was suggested during the workshop, the professors can be asked directly about what they would like to learn in training. The exchange of experiences between the mentors as well as a meeting for lunch with invited speakers could be productive. More recognition of unpaid duties seems to be necessary; one approach could be assistance from additional tutors in order to compensate for the time and effort the mentor invests.

### Conclusion

It is planned to offer at least one training session for mentors and assess its efficiency. If eventually some key players among the BMS faculty are convinced of the need for training they may communicate its benefits horizontally within the BMS faculty. Awareness concerning gender and reflection on discriminatory structures in science must be dealt with. The only way I see of integrating these two matters into the training session is by changing the wording, for example avoiding terms such as 'gender' and 'discrimination', which could help to avoid prejudice right from the beginning.

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## Training by doing: Peer mentoring at the University of Zurich

**Karin Gilland Lutz**

At the most generic level, mentoring may be defined as a personnel development tool whereby a junior person setting out to build a career is allowed access to the accumulated professional wisdom of a senior person. In academia and other areas where the higher echelons are very male dominated, specific mentoring programmes are commonly used as part of an equal opportunities strategy. Nevertheless, in academia mentoring also takes place where no specific programmes exist, especially in the traditional supervisor–Ph.D. student model. The idea behind peer mentoring as a particular form of mentoring, and as developed at the University of Zurich, Switzerland, is that it should resemble academia as closely as possible. Just as academics write project proposals on the basis of their own ideas of what would be interesting, relevant, and appropriate to examine, and seek each other out and form research teams on the basis of shared interests and complementary skills, mentoring peer groups form around shared interests and a sense that the group constellation has a value in itself. The junior and senior academics involved benefit in different ways from interaction with one another. What makes peer mentoring especially interesting in the context of this volume is that it is a form of mentoring that requires group members (peers) to assume the mentee role sometimes and the mentor role at other times. However, they are not specially trained within the programme for either of these two roles. Neither are the professors that act as scientific advisors to the groups.

### Peer mentoring

Peer mentoring developed in the context of a federal political programme to increase the proportion of women professors at Swiss universities. In this context, mentoring was viewed primarily as a tool to enlarge and improve the professorial recruitment base of young women academics – and to provide structures that would motivate these women to stay in academia, despite the particular uncertainties that characterise an academic career in Switzerland.

In other words, peer mentoring is most appropriately understood as a career development tool intended to enhance the perspectives of young women academics in particular. Broadly speaking, it has two elements. The first comprises programmes of activities for each peer group, and the second element is a framework programme which brings all peer groups together.

Generally there are two or three calls for peer-mentoring applications per year. In order to obtain funding, groups submit applications to the university's Office for Gender Equality. The applications are subsequently considered by juries consisting of professors as well as experts in equal opportunities and/or the professional advancement of young academics.

The peer groups consist of doctoral students and/or post-docs wishing to inform themselves about the requirements and conditions for an academic career and to equip themselves with (some of) the skills necessary to advance in this respect. Each group determines its own specific goals and also how to implement them. For example, depending on their stated aims, groups may hold workshops to acquire various transferable and academic skills, arrange discussions with successful academics, or organise public panel discussions on career planning. A group could also focus on members' individual publications and publication strategies, and even on their actual research if members' academic profiles are similar enough. The peer group's programme of activities should also enable members to find out more about the implicit rules of the scientific community, and give them the opportunity to reflect on their individual careers with their peers, as well as on how to achieve their career goals.

Each group has a leader (a woman) or two to three members who act as a leadership (all-woman or mixed-gender) team. Each peer group moreover chooses at least two professors as scientific advisors. The peers and the advisors jointly determine how the advisors are to work with the group, although as will become clear below, the peers are necessarily the driving force.

Peer mentoring also consists of a framework programme. Group leaders attend meetings hosted by the Office for Gender Equality three to four times per year. These meetings enable group leaders and the project management to exchange information, and also allow the group leaders to get to know one another. Before each meeting a particular discussion topic is prepared, such as success indicators and motivation levels in the group. In addition, the groups as a whole are invited to events concerning different aspects of career development once or twice per year.

### **Training the mentees**

Peer mentoring requires the peers in a group to steer the mentoring relationship. They do so from the very beginning: if they do not write an application for funding for the group, there simply will be no group. Similarly, if the group does not take the steps necessary to organise the various events foreseen in the funding application, there will be no group activities, and consequently no mentoring takes place.

Peer groups are units with flat hierarchies. Usually group leaders invest more in the project and in many cases they also benefit more from it. Nevertheless, group leaders are not in any formal sense group superiors and are not in a position to define the group's goals or activities with any more authority than any other peers. Since group leaders often become group leaders because they have a high level of commitment to the project, they may experience the lack of authority as frustrating if other peers do not commit to the same degree (or to a degree the group leaders in some sense consider adequate). Group leaders do receive a certain amount of training in that they may attend a two-day workshop on leadership and group dynamics to prepare them for the task.

As mentees and mentors to each other within the group, peers are alternately in the position of receiving feedback from others and in the position of giving feedback. In this way, peers learn from each other about the realities of academic life, in an atmosphere of mutual critical encouragement. Being part of a well-functioning, visible peer group frequently enhances the profiles of the individual group members at their institutes, if there is a general sense at the institute that the institute's goals and the group's activities complement one another. In such instances, the peers are generally regarded as a greater asset to the institute than would otherwise have been the case.

An additional potential advantage is that fellow peers usually get to know each other and each other's work very well. On the assumption that networks play a particular role in academia given the informality that determines who works with whom on important research projects, building networks must be a central part of any strategy for an academic career (although this may be truer in some disciplines than others) and thus peer mentoring is designed to further the peers' networks.

The relative closeness between peers in a group must nevertheless be carefully managed – by the peers themselves. Given that the pursuit of an academic career is characterised by uncertainty about one's prospects and a high degree of dependency on one's supervisor(s) – a situation that often lasts for many years and which most experience as difficult – there is a certain risk that peer groups turn into talking shops for fellow sufferers. Although peer mentoring is about informing oneself about the admittedly difficult realities of an academic career, in the context of the federal programme in which peer mentoring occurs, it is nevertheless central that the mentoring activities encourage rather than discourage the participants. In fact, discouragement seems to occur infrequently, perhaps because of a certain self-selection process in the formation of peer groups: presumably those who decide to spend time on mentoring are highly motivated to pursue the academic path, and this motivation makes them resilient during difficult phases in their career.

In addition to the mentoring that goes on within the group, there is also the mentoring that takes place between the group and its scientific advisors. Professors prepared to act as group advisor usually have prior mentoring experience and/or are interested in equal opportunities and/or simply view it as an additional way of supporting their younger colleagues. These professors receive no training within the peer-mentoring programme, and it would probably be very difficult to convince them to act as advisors if it appeared time-consuming. At the University of Zurich (as well as at most other universities), professors are expected to excel in several roles other than the core activities of teaching and research, without receiving any training for those roles. Given this culture, professors appear to have little inclination to participate in mentor training. Moreover, since mentoring has a lot in common, at least superficially, with the supervision of Ph.D. theses and other research projects, many of them would probably feel such training to be superfluous.

In order to steer the mentoring relationship, group leaders are encouraged to bring their group to consider the following questions: What do the group members expect from their academic advisors in general? What kind of support would the group like to receive? When will the group involve the advisors? In which situations and for which activities? Should advisors act as role models and, for example, share some of the peers' private experiences, such as combining an academic career with having a family? Or should they simply be successful in their chosen academic field?

Depending on the answers to these questions, a group decides which professors to approach for support as advisors, and what expectations the group has on its advisors. During the peer mentoring, the peers primarily have to ensure that involvement with the group is interesting to the advisors. The latter are often prepared to do 'CV checks' with the group, to discuss career paths, offer advice on individual career opportunities, or to act as a facilitator when the group invites other senior academics. It is also not unusual for advisors to recognise the value of the group's activities for an entire institute and to offer to co-finance specific events, which are then open not only to the peers but to an entire institute as well. Many advisors also feel comfortable about giving a privileged insight into their own backgrounds.

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## Outlook

That the peers steer the mentoring relationship is self-evident, for the simple reason that if they do not, nobody else will do it for them. Doing it effectively depends on a range of different factors and issues, and the Department for Gender Equality supports the groups in this respect, primarily through the meetings with the group leaders. Coming back to the core idea of peer mentoring – that its structures should resemble academia itself as far as possible – the main responsibility falls on the mentees to ensure that they succeed in this respect, or to ensure that they obtain the support they need. In the interests of running successful mentoring programmes, support should be on offer – for those who come and get it.

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# Gender forum for mentors: Positions, problems, and perspectives

**Herta Nöbauer**

The University of Vienna was the first university in Austria to organise a mentoring programme for (women) academics.<sup>1</sup> This represents one crucial measure among others for strengthening gender equality at the University of Vienna – which has become a role model for other universities in Austria and even abroad. *muV* (mentoring university vienna) can look back with a certain pride on the four cycles which have already run at the University of Vienna over the period between 2000 and 2009. Around 160 mentees and forty mentors participated. The next cycle began in autumn 2010 and is incorporating a new focus on target groups and some further slight modifications. As in past years *muV* will continue to be organised by the Center for Gender Equality. While until 2006 *muV* was funded by the European Social Fund, the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, and the University of Vienna, since 2007 it has been completely funded by university financial resources.

As elaborated elsewhere (Nöbauer/Genetti 2008) *muV* is characterised by its innovative design and structural approach to career development. Its organisational scheme is based on cross-disciplinary small-group mentoring; each group of mentees (the peer group) comprises four women who enter into a mentoring relationship with one mentor, who can be either a man or a woman. This form of mentoring underscores the importance of support not only from those with higher status (mentors), but also those with the same status (peers). Apart from the mentoring relationships at the core of the programme, *muV*

1 I would like to thank Evi Genetti and Waltraud Schlögl for their comments on this article.

also provides accompanying measures for mentees and mentors in order to offer as much support and coaching as possible (*ibid.*). These include a gender-training course for mentors in order to promote the process of gender sensitisation and gender equality in academia.

## The gender forum for mentors

In what follows, I will present the gender-training course in more detail. As already argued at the eument-net workshop on 'Mentor training and coaching' this course represents a case study of gender sensitisation in academic leadership positions. Thus the following reflections contribute to broader discussions about methods for developing gender sensitisation in academic leadership positions and staff development more generally.

### *From strategic framing of the forum ...*

From the outset *muV* has offered a 'gender forum for mentors' in each cycle of the programme. Against the backdrop of a 'politicised practice' approach in mentoring (Schliesselberger/Strasser 1998) in *muV* the category of gender is considered as central in reflections on the structural nature of academia's manifold hierarchical relationships. Sensitising the mentors to gendered experiences and structures is thus a significant aspect of the *muV* agenda.

The gender-training course concept was drafted by the programme's coordinators in cooperation with two executive coaches – a woman and a man, both reputable academics – who have been charged with organising the event by the *muV* coordinators. The forum is defined broadly as a space for the exchange of mentors' experiences, with an emphasis on gender(ed) experiences and fostering gender competence. The forum is structured around the transmission of gender-specific knowledge and information on formal laws relevant to the academic context, on the one hand, and interactive modules in which the experiences of the mentors are linked with gender theories and gender politics, on the other hand.

The gender forum focuses on such broad topics as mentors' gendered roles, gender structures and gender expertise in academia, and last but not least gender-sensitive mentoring relationships. Within this framework the forum also has more specific content and goals which relate to two major aims of *muV* defined at the level of mentors:

transferring mentoring skills into their teaching more broadly and enhancing the gender sensitivity of academics in leadership positions. First, the participants are asked to reflect on experiences, outlook, and problems informed by gender roles, gender relations, and gender politics (from the perspectives of their academic careers as well as their roles as mentors). Accordingly, mentors discuss their gendered roles, that is, how to become, be perceived and act as a 'male' or 'female' mentor, and the manifold and conflicting standpoints and problems such identifications and ascriptions imply. Secondly, in a similar vein, they learn to reflect on the structural circumstances and effects of gender in academia. Finally, they are introduced to new perspectives on how mentoring relationships can be shaped in a gender-sensitive way.

Alongside devising the content and goals, two time factors have to be taken into account when organising the gender forum: Given that lack of time is often a key argument against and in fact an obstacle to mentors' participation in additional meetings, the forum is scheduled to last for five hours at the most. Furthermore, taking into consideration the course of the mentoring process, the gender forum is usually planned to take place not at the beginning but rather at the halfway point of the mentoring relationship.

### ***...to gendered motivation for the forum***

In this section I will identify some of the mentors' key experiences with the gender forum. Besides describing what has worked well I will also present what has worked less well and what can be concluded from that.

Altogether the experiences in *muv* clearly show that the gender forum itself is in fact shaped by gendered practices. The motivation to participate has emerged as the most challenging step of a gendered practice. To put it differently, it is the gendered lens on the need for such a forum and in particular the motivation of male mentors to participate which represents the greatest challenge. However, after successful motivation the gendered experiences can be exchanged in more detail during the meeting; this is the second step of gendered practices. In this section I will thus focus especially on the issue of gendered motivation.

It is if not a surprising fact then an interesting one worth reflecting on that the vast majority of women mentors usually respond very positively to our offer of the gender forum. In contrast, most men mentors tend to be less open to and interested in participating, arguing that 'they do not need it' (to quote them). It seems that men do not consider themselves to have a gender nor that gender differences affect them. Rather, gender still tends to be treated by most men, but partly also by women, as the exclusive social domain of women. However, the experiences of *muv* reveal that there are at least three aspects which increase men mentors' motivation to participate in the gender exchange forum.

First, they are more motivated if they are confronted with an explicitly gendered issue in dealing with one or all of their mentees. For example, when a mentee is pregnant and presents the male mentor with her new situation as well as questions on employment law and a resulting change of career plan. Such a situation not only affects the dynamics within the mentoring group. It may also cause significant uncertainty for a male mentor and make him realise the 'need for support and exchange in matters relating to gender differences'.

Secondly, general openness to coaching and self-reflection tends to be greater among younger male mentors than older ones. This is even more so for those men among the younger generation who have not had a typically linear academic career.

Last but not least, the third aspect increasing participation in the gender forum among male mentors is closely linked with the gender composition of the cohort of mentors. To put it more specifically, the more balanced the mixture of women and men mentors in a cycle of the programme, the higher the chances of motivating men mentors to participate in the gender forum. This was especially apparent in the first and second cycles of *muv*. However, the gender forum is less well attended if there is gender asymmetry among the mentors. Whether there is a majority of women or men mentors has a significant effect on overall numbers of participants in the forum. Thus, in *muv* 3 with a majority of women mentors, all women participated in the gender forum but none of the (few) men. However, if the number of men dominates significantly, as was the case with *muv* 4, very few are



ready to participate. In fact, the gender forum had to be cancelled in that cycle due to a mixed group of only three out of ten mentors being ready to take part. Arguing that they 'have no time' for the gender forum, the men mentors instead accepted an at most two-hour moderated exchange meeting between the mentors but no 'gender-specific exchange'.

Once this greatest challenge of motivation is met, both women and men are ready to exchange on a range of gendered experiences within the forum. In the subsequent step – the discussion of gendered practices – women and men mentors then realise together that due to their different socialisation patterns and expectations regarding gender roles they perceive different matters as problems. Accordingly, different issues are at stake and are important for them to reflect upon. To give a prominent example, women mentors often experience excessive demands on multiple levels and these evoke insecurity about their manifold roles both inside and outside of their professional field. As is shown by research on gender in academia more generally and mentoring in particular, women academics are often expected to do not only more administrative work but also additional social and emotional labour. This may constitute a serious pitfall for women mentors and one which requires constant critical reflection (Schliesselberger/Strasser 1998). In comparison, men mentors report heavy demands focused on academic labour but no associated insecurity about their professional roles.

### Conclusion

The experiences with the gender forum from the first to the fourth cycles of *muv* have shown that one of if not the most significant factor for its success is the degree of acceptance among mentors of this specific kind of exchange forum and their readiness to participate. As demonstrated, the need and willingness to participate have gendered implications from the beginning. A mixed group with a good gender balance proves to be a precondition for a well-accepted and successful forum in which the main focus is on gender differences and gender-equality issues in academia. In fact, it is only by comparison that men and women alike learn about gendered experiences and relationships as well as the social significance of the category of gender. Linked to that is another equally important factor: the question of how male

professors in particular can be motivated to engage more explicitly in issues related to gender differences and equality, including a reflection on their own gender. This is of course a much broader agenda than *muv*, as a mentoring programme, is able to tackle. Despite these limitations *muv* will continue to contribute to the gender sensitisation of professors by offering a gender forum to its mentors. However, as is demonstrated by the results of the evaluation of the long-term effects of the early years of *muv* a majority of mentors in *muv* 1 and *muv* 2 has gained greater expertise in gender-equality issues due to their reflections with their peers as well as their mentees.

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# The Career Women's Forum – University of Geneva mentoring programme: Partners for change!

**Eliane Barth**

*If you have an apple and I have an apple and we exchange these apples then you and I will still have one apple. But if you have an idea and I have an idea and we exchange these ideas, then each of us will have two ideas.*

George Bernard Shaw (cited by the CWF President at the opening session)

In 2007, for their 25th anniversary, the Career Women's Forum (CWF) made an offer to the University of Geneva (UNIGE) to mentor twenty-five (male and female) students entering the professional world for up to twenty-five hours each. The CWF is an association of more than 200 women business leaders: from banking and marketing, as well as HR managers or those directing their own companies. A wealth of experience and skills was offered to the students. It was indeed a great opportunity for the University of Geneva to implement a type of mentoring not yet available within the institution.

The objective of these entrepreneurs was to help the students to be successful professionals – independent, self-confident, and able to drive their own professional development. At the same time, the Equality Office realised that it was an opportunity to work on prejudice towards women, and to help the public and students to be more aware of the presence of outstanding women as leaders in the economy. We at the Equality Office hoped that this would impact on the perception of women scientists as key figures in their field.

After a brief history of the implementation of the programme, the recruitment and selection of mentors and mentees will be presented in this article, followed by a description of the method chosen for the matching of pairs. The support given to the mentors will be mentioned. In conclusion, we will discuss the challenges and possible reflection brought about by this programme.

## **Brief history**

In 2007, the university launched the mentoring programme for a trial period of four months. The programme's popularity was such that 109 students enrolled. The CWF found thirty-eight mentors, for thirty-eight students. The selection of students was made according to their motivation and to the date when their registration forms were filed.

In the following years, due to this success, the programme was extended for two periods of eight months each. At the end of each session participants completed an evaluation questionnaire. Their suggestions, together with the Equality Office's experience of mentoring programmes, indicated the need for some adjustments. It became clear that it was important to give a framework to the mentoring relationship. This brought the following improvements:

- Not to fix in advance the number of hours offered by the mentors. This question was left up to the pair.
- During the first meeting, some time was allowed for the completion of an agreement which laid out goals and a schedule.
- The mentors had the opportunity to take a course on mentoring, organised once a year, to determine the exact role of a mentor.
- Two meetings were organised. One was to exchange best practice between mentors and the other for all the participants – mentors and mentees – to exchange their first experiences in the professional world: what to do and what not to do. Those meetings were optional, so as not to overload those with busy schedules; but they were a great success. Networking was central in these events.

These changes have been put into practice since the third round of the programme.



### Selection of the mentors

Mentors are recruited by the CWF from among its members. Therefore, the requirements to be a mentor are the same as those for a member of the association:

- To be in a leading position in the business world. The CWF has high expectations in terms of management responsibilities: members have to be managers, heads of companies, independent businesswomen.
- To have advanced education and training. Preferably at university level or long-standing working experience.
- To be sponsored by two members; this is actually very important for our programme, as it works as an automatic control. Indeed, the mentoring committee at CWF provides us with mentors who are known within the association.
- Last but not least, members have to volunteer for the programme; this guarantees that only those who show full commitment will become mentors.

### Selection of the mentees

Experience shows that it is important to choose advanced students ready to enter the job market. Indeed, mentors noticed that mentees who planned to carry on their studies are not easy to advise due to their lack of motivation to enter the world of work. Therefore, it was decided to target more precisely those in the final year of their master's and possibly Ph.D. students who want to depart from academe.

A second criterion for the selection of mentees is to have students who are open-minded, motivated by the desire to exchange ideas, and not just interested in finding a job. To be successful, the mentoring relationship requires a generous attitude. This programme is designed primarily so that the mentee acquires 'life skills', rather than qualifications for a job, because mentors are willing to share their broader life experience. The information about the programme makes this explicit, and the students' motivations stated in their application forms are used in the selection process. To be really successful, mentoring has to be done by open-minded mentees and mentors, with no 'ready-made' answers but with a willingness to challenge their points of view.

### The matching process

A 'speed-dating' event was set up to allow students and mentors to meet and express their preferences in terms of whom they would like to have as mentor/mentee. The students had the opportunity to meet eight to nine mentors for five minutes each, to present themselves. Unfortunately, because of the numbers involved each mentee could not see each potential mentor – and vice versa. Another purpose of this event was to allow students to practise giving a good first impression to businesswomen within a very short time limit. Beforehand, a brief brainstorm and question-and-answer session prepared the students for the interviews. The evaluation questionnaire showed that 73 per cent of the students were pleased with the event.

The matching process does not look for similarities between the business the mentor is in and the mentee's academic field. Indeed, the goal is, as we said, to learn to behave in the professional world, and the attitude which pays off is virtually the same in all fields. The matching is done by the university's programme coordinator after the speed-dating event and takes into account – as much as possible – the preferences of the mentors and the mentees. According to the evaluation (response rate 78.5%) 84 per cent of mentees have been satisfied with the choice of mentor.

### Course on mentoring for the mentors

As previously stated, some mentors in the first rounds of the programme expressed a need for a course on mentoring. In the two hours' training they received, the teacher, Dr Pamela Alean-Kirkpatrick, developed the mentors' understanding of their role and helped them reflect on their 'mentoring philosophy'. During the course, it became clear for the participants that the act of mentoring has to be thought through: spontaneity may not be the best way of doing it.

Unfortunately, not all the mentors took the course. The course is offered but not required. From the viewpoint of the coordinators this is unfortunate. Yet, it is difficult to make this course mandatory, considering the busy schedules of the businesswomen involved. However, the high levels of participation in the meeting organised at lunchtime

showed their willingness to share and discuss their practice with colleagues from the CWF. The discussions were productive, generating a list of 'tips and tricks' that has been distributed to all mentors. Scheduling the meeting in this way could be the most effective way of delivering training.

### Challenges

Over time, one of the challenges has been to attract around thirty potential mentors each year. The women we are talking about are dynamic and enthusiastic and are willing to share their experience, but they are very busy professionals. The evaluation questionnaire showed their motivation to be clearly altruistic. The key word behind their commitment is 'sharing'. Fortunately they are inspired by the youthful and ingenuous perspective on their careers that their mentees bring, they enjoy the opportunity to reflect on their working practice, and find it gratifying to be useful.

Only 18 per cent of students who attended the first session were male and there have been even fewer in subsequent years. We can only guess the reason for this lack of interest. It might be a sign of some prejudice linked to the gender of these business managers. This may also mean that men get spontaneous support through the 'old boys' networks' existing in every field.

### Conclusion

This cooperation between an association of professional women and the university has proved to be a success. Mentoring is an effective means of transmitting ideas and a way to learn how to be successful – namely to gain confidence and a better understanding of the professional world. This objective has been achieved.

The aim of changing attitudes is a long-term one. The evaluation questionnaires showed that most of the students were truly impressed by their mentors; we can take this to mean that the mentoring experience had a positive impact on their awareness of excellence among women leaders in general. However, it did not seem to change the core conviction of most of them concerning the traditional role of women as responsible for looking after the family, for instance. Changing the distribution of roles between women and men in our society will be a long process and we must work on it to be real partners for change!

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# LMU Mentoring excellence: Training and coaching for mentors – experience with different forms of ‘training’

Margit Weber, Manuela Sauer

LMU Mentoring is the mentoring programme at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität (LMU) of Munich. It is part of the LMU's equal opportunities concept within the German Research Council's Excellence Initiative of 2006. The programme started in April 2007, with the aim of providing career support for highly qualified, emerging female graduates working towards a professorship. Applications are accepted from women researchers who have reached at least the post-doc level. In certain circumstances, Ph.D. candidates or even advanced senior students may apply, for example in subjects where there are very few female graduates at an advanced level, such as in mathematics, physics, or the earth sciences.

Respected and experienced female senior professors – preferably holding a chair – act as mentors. In addition to the basic requirement that one be at the post-doc level before applying to be a mentee, the mentors themselves are able to specify the selection criteria relevant to their own particular scientific fields. This guarantees a highly specific selection process that is aligned with the scientific needs of the subject area. Mentors are also free to decide which outstanding young female graduates they will accept, and how many. Examples of the criteria applied in the selection of mentors include:

- the number and quality of publications;
- access to third-party funds;
- projects which are highly interesting and innovative;
- experience in tutoring.

Mentors offer both 1:1 as well as group mentoring. The basic idea of the programme is for mentors to act as role models, offering mentees support in career planning and in creating their own academic profiles. But above all else, mentors are expected to encourage young female graduates to stay in college and university and pursue scientific careers.

## Basic characteristics of LMU Mentoring

### *Focusing on one female mentor per faculty*

The programme's main characteristic is that one female senior professor per faculty acts as the mentor and therefore as a role model for the mentees, having perhaps had similar experiences during her own career. So it is also expected that in certain respects women are more likely to confide in another woman. In addition, within the faculty this female mentor, who should be a well-known professor within the scientific community, acts as the representative responsible for this special programme. Furthermore, potential mentees and mentees already in the programme proved to be staunch supporters of female mentors when they voted decisively for female role models in a 2008 survey.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, it is still very difficult to find many female professors at the LMU. This is due to the low overall number of female professors, with some faculties having only one or two, and some faculties having none at all.

### *Focusing on mentees post-Ph.D.*

Since each year about 50 per cent of our successful Ph.D.'s are women (university-wide over the last twenty years), with even more in some faculties (in the College of Medicine and School of Veterinary Medicine for example), there is a more urgent need to support women pursuing their academic career after their Ph.D.'s. All figures point to

1 Daubner 2008: p. 57f.

there being a leaky pipeline after the Ph.D. has been awarded.<sup>2</sup> LMU Mentoring therefore aims to support young female academics to reach the upper levels of academia. So mentees are required to have at least completed their Ph.D., which means they are at the intermediate stage of their research careers and not at the beginning.

#### ***Acknowledging the mentors' work by reducing teaching loads and adding extra personnel***

To support mentors and acknowledge their work and effort, a mentor's teaching load can be reduced by two hours per term; alternatively, she may apply for personal scientific support, which means she can employ a graduate student as an assistant scientist and substitute (wissenschaftliche Hilfskraft) to help her: in preparing lectures, tutoring, developing exercises, and coordinating, for example. The assistant and the reduction in teaching load are financed by funds the LMU gained from the Excellence Initiative Competition at the end of 2006.

#### ***Programme funding***

General funding for the programme is also provided by LMU Excellence in the form of 305,000 euros per year. This sum is divided equally among eighteen mentors in the LMU's eighteen different faculties. The mentors then use these funds to support their mentees in their scientific careers, for example by covering expenses for travelling to conventions.

#### ***Central programme coordination***

The assignment of 'Zentrale Programmkoordination' (central programme coordination) to the LMU's women's representative is essential to the programme's funding. A senior academic advisor and research scientist with teaching experience, and a faculty member at the LMU herself, she is the head of the programme; as such, she is responsible for quality management, control, and development, as well as for evaluating the programme and submitting its annual report. Furthermore, she is responsible for counselling mentors and mentees about the basics of the programme. She is its public representative.

<sup>2</sup> Figures for Europe and Germany: European Commission 2008: p. 17; CEWS 2008; CEWS 2009; Gemeinsame Wissenschaftskonferenz (GWK) 2009: pp. 7f., 21–31. Figures for the LMU: 20 Jahre Frauenbeauftragte an der LMU 2008: p. 23.

#### ***Central support officer***

Another key element of the programme is that a central support officer was established at the office of the women's representative. This was done by creating an academic position in support of the equal opportunities officer, the aim of which is to guarantee effective and sustained coordination, organisation, and improvement of the programme. This academic position is also financed out of the Excellence Initiative's funds, and is of key importance with regard to budgeting, budgeting oversight, and administration. The women's representative and this senior scientific assistant work together as a team and act as points of contact for the mentors and mentees.

#### ***Goals of LMU Mentoring***

It is possible to highlight four major goals that summarize what LMU Mentoring is trying to achieve:

1. Make the path to academic positions in research and research decision making easier.
2. Encourage and support young female scientists in overcoming difficulties caused by gender bias, automatic assignment of traditional gender-based roles, department and faculty culture, the good old boys' network, and lack of encouragement – even in this day and age – in order to help them identify their own individual academic careers.<sup>3</sup>
3. Enlarge the pool of potential female professors, even though the LMU is not allowed to retain any of these highly qualified mentees as professors because of a legal restriction in the Bavarian Higher Education Law.
4. Finally, increase gender awareness and gender commitment by making the programme and its members highly visible, both within each individual faculty and throughout the university at large, and even by promoting public awareness through open lectures and certificates of participation for mentees: for example when applying for scholarships or third-party funds, or when mentioning the programme in prefaces to their research publications. LMU Mentoring has gained its own corporate identity. Mentors have also become a force for change within the

<sup>3</sup> These are also essential goals for Zimmer et al. 2007, pp. 122–127.

university, acting together to foster gender equality and spotlight structures that still impede a woman's academic career. At the same time, the mentees themselves have started to band together, thereby increasing their self-confidence. So LMU Mentoring not only offers resources – financial and psychological – but it is also concerned with the structure of the scientific community itself.

### **Coaching programme for mentors**

LMU Mentoring has developed internal and external forms of coaching for mentors. Internal/in-house coaching is offered on a formal basis, and on an informal and very personal basis. Informal coaching is often simply the result of everyday needs and is offered by the women's representative as head of the programme.

#### ***Internal informal coaching:***

##### ***Personal 1:1 coaching by the head of the programme***

This form of informal in-house coaching is in high demand among mentors. It is a very intimate and strictly confidential exchange between the mentors and the women's representative. Mentors therefore make contact by email or by telephone, and in special cases, or in cases where there has been conflict with either a mentee or a faculty member, the women's representative offers 1:1 coaching. In these cases, when mentors turn to the women's representative, they are usually asking for counselling on higher education law policy, LMU Munich's general gender policy, or personal conflicts or problems with mentees – frequently even on conflicts with male members of their own faculties who still do not see the need or point in having a mentoring programme. It also offers consultation and mediation when fellow faculty members are not receptive to mentoring, when they do not even agree to their female assistants taking part in the programme (which is often due to their own underestimation of mentoring), or when they accuse mentoring of discriminating against men, stigmatising women, or even wasting time. Other topics discussed have included support for target agreements between mentor and mentee (such as their duration) and information on 'best practices' for budgeting. In addition, mentors can contact the support officer if there are administrative problems. This type of in-house coaching is informal, as neither the women's representative nor the central support officer

are trained coaches; both are experts in the field in which they are counselling, however.

#### ***Internal formal coaching***

Formal in-house coaching includes regular meetings of all mentors at least once per term with the head of the programme and the central support officer, who together, as shown above, are the central programme coordinators. Another type of formal in-house training we offered was a course to enable mentors to create a successful and satisfying mentoring relationship. This training was provided by the head of the Training Center for Leadership and People Management at the LMU, Professor Dieter Frey, along with his team.

#### ***Regular meetings with the central coordinators***

These meetings take place at least once a term and are chaired by the programme head and prepared jointly with the central support officer. They are highly effective and much appreciated by mentors for various reasons, of which the following are the most important according to regular feedback from the mentors.

Mentors benefit from general information we provide about financial funds and legal obligations with regard to how the money can be spent. The meetings serve as a platform to discuss problems, experiences, common needs, and resource-allocation measures. For example, together we developed new measures for supporting mentees and for allocating money to pay for childcare, trainings of mentees as a group, and publicly visible events and their staging. The opportunity to exchange views, problems, and even annoyances in an informal setting is of great benefit to the mentors, who appreciate the free and sheltered atmosphere. Finally, the regular meetings also serve as a platform to search for new goals, objectives, and strategies to increase the quality of the mentoring. Topics discussed in this setting have included: mentoring contracts, that is, agreements between the mentor and mentee that cover the objectives of mentoring; mentoring certificates as official documents for establishing a mentee's participation in this very demanding programme and as a means to increase general awareness and enhance the reputation of the programme; and finally, making honorary mention of the programme in prefaces and other locations.

### ***Training course to enable mentors to create a successful and satisfying mentoring relationship***

This was in-house training with formal coaching that was carried out in June 2008 by the LMU Center for Leadership and People Management. Mentors attended this training, however, it was severely criticised because it focused on the basics of communication and perception and not on mentoring. It also lacked additional information on personnel management and emphasised soft-core over hard-core criteria for locating the excellence of the outcome of mentoring programmes in science. The mentors rejected many questions and exercises in the training because these were focused on feelings, personal skills, and attitudes. Consequently, almost all the mentors refused to take part in an evaluation survey offered shortly after the training (by the same centre), since the questionnaire again stressed psychological questions, feelings, and personal attitudes. As a result, the mentors stated they did not gain any benefit from the training or the survey.

### ***External formal coaching to improve self-reflection***

One example of formal external coaching we offered was a training course entitled: 'Female Leadership Training', for which we contacted Kronos Network AG in Munich. Our aim was to provide a tool to improve self-reflection and self-awareness among mentors, but the mentors didn't respond to, but rejected this training as we discussed the offer with them. Consequently this course did not take place. There were subjective as well as objective reasons why the offer was rejected. Professors who act as mentors rate themselves highly and have a high degree of self-confidence due to their experience in their own academic careers. They regard themselves as competent and highly qualified because they have been doing 'mentoring' for many years. A purely objective reason is the lack of time when it comes to intensive coaching, which should ideally last for several days if everything is to be covered. On the other hand, mentors at LMU considered short coaching sessions ineffective, and we were unable to find a compromise. However, the option of being able to take advantage of individual external coaching when facing serious problems has gained more acceptance among the group of mentors. In such cases, it is possible for them to apply for external professional coaching, but this has not happened yet.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, we have definitely noted a difference in the general acceptance of the different kinds of coaching. The informal and formal in-house coaching offered by the head of the programme are in very high demand and well-accepted; the formal in-house coaching offered by trained coaches which took place, however, was harshly criticised and rejected as a tool for supporting mentors; and the formal external training, never even took place because the mentors refused the offer.

Three main reasons for this falling level of acceptance among mentors can be found in their own reactions. First, mentors reject or do not feel the need for personal reflection when it comes to their own roles as mentors, especially when it takes place in a group with an outside trainer. This is because they already have extensive knowledge as mentors and because they are experienced senior professors. They prefer to have a confidential exchange with the women's representative, who is also a scientist and tutor herself. Second, mentors are quite convinced of the need for reflection when it comes to the programme's tools and resources, so they have a high degree of confidence in the central support officer. Finally, lack of time is still a problem for mentoring and for the coaching of mentors. As a consequence, in the future we plan to strengthen and intensify informal exchanges between central coordinators and mentors, and increase the number of opportunities for 1:1 coaching sessions.

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## **Experiences III: Mentoring as part of academic staff development and leadership training**



# Mentor training as part of Human Resource development at the MentorinnenNetzwerk

**Ulrike Kéré**

The MentorinnenNetzwerk is a joint effort by the academic institutions of the State of Hesse in Germany. With 1,300 members it is one of the largest mentoring networks of its kind in Europe. Ten universities finance the network and participate in it. In a public/private partnership six large German companies and three non-affiliated research organisations also participate in this successful project; they are Deutsche Bahn (DB), Sanofi-Aventis, Fraport, Heraeus, Merck, Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen (ZDF), Max-Planck-Gesellschaft, Helmholtzzentrum für Schwerionenforschung (GSI), and Senckenberg Gesellschaft für Naturforschung. The coordinating office is located at the Goethe-University in Frankfurt.

## **Promoting young women in science and engineering**

The MentorinnenNetzwerk was founded in 1998 in order to establish an effective platform for promoting young women in science and engineering at academic institutions. The goals are to strengthen women in their professional competencies, to give them more visibility as role models, to support female students and doctoral candidates in their transition between studies, dissertation, and professional work, to increase the percentage of women in science and engineering and to improve career opportunities for women in business and academia towards leadership positions. The target group is female students and Ph.D. candidates. Human Resource development for mentors only became part of the programme more recently, initiated by the mentors themselves and by the participating companies.

## **Participants in the network**

As noted above, currently 1,300 women are participating in the MentorinnenNetzwerk: 900 students and Ph.D. students in science and engineering (the mentees) and 400 professional women from business, academia, and government (the mentors). The mentors come from very different companies, academic and government institutions, and not just from the participating companies listed above. Both mentees and mentors usually remain in the network for many years. Some mentors have already been involved for ten years and have looked after up to six mentees. Mentees continue to participate in the network, even when their formal mentoring relationship has ended. This way they still benefit from the training on offer and from the network as such. Many of them become mentors as well, once they have started their careers.

## **Mentoring, training, and networking**

The MentorinnenNetzwerk offers mentoring, training, and networking opportunities. Each year a 1:1 mentoring programme is launched for approximately 120–140 pairings within a comprehensive framework programme (comprising a kick-off event, half-time reflection, mentoring seminars, supervision, and final event). In order to foster networking there are a number of activities, such as visits to companies, topical networking events, and networking nights for mentors. The complementary training programme caters for both mentors and mentees. For the mentees there are soft-skills workshops and job-application training. For mentors there are various advanced training options.

Over the years the mentors have evolved into a target group in their own right, and more and more specific training has been provided for them. One reason is that many mentors have been active in the MentorinnenNetzwerk for years. They are increasingly interested in professionalising their mentoring activities and in improving their leadership and counselling skills. So the training offered is also a way of showing appreciation and gratitude for the often unpaid activities of the mentors, thus making the network more attractive to them.

As a specific unit of training for mentors the MentorinnenNetzwerk offers one-day seminars on leadership skills, for example ‘Confidence to lead’ and ‘Professional communication’. There is also advanced training about mentoring comprising a one-day seminar called ‘Effective mentoring’ and a series of events entitled ‘Professional mentoring, goal-oriented counselling and coaching’. A recent addition has been ‘Collegial counselling’ in a moderated mentors’ group. It was initiated by individual groups of mentors who had met on a regular basis to share ideas. They had found this form of mutual support a great help in motivating and strengthening each other. Because of this positive feedback the initiative was taken up and became an official offering to all participating mentors.

### **Integration of mentoring into HR development**

The participating companies also have a great interest in integrating mentoring and the associated training modules into their HR development plans. The companies participate in a number of ways. They make mentoring part of their HR development programmes, and their HR departments recruit mentors. The companies host seminars for mentors and workshops for mentees. They participate in the Working Committee called ‘Companies in the MentorinnenNetzwerk’, which coordinates the collaboration and facilitates sharing of information and experience. And last but not least they make considerable financial contributions. A large proportion of the seminars and workshops are therefore paid for and executed by the participating companies. This also leads to better mentoring.

### **Benefits and long-term effects**

Participating companies benefit from the programme in more than one way. They gain access to highly qualified young women. The network provides them with an efficient and cost-effective tool for their HR development. They can sponsor future women leaders and retain and motivate their existing female staff. The programme facilitates an informal knowledge transfer with academia and also initiates internal networks. Moreover, the companies can improve their image as attractive employers for women.

And what are the benefits for the mentors? A large-scale external evaluation study was carried out by the Center for Evaluation (CEval) of the University of the Saarland in 2008, at which point MentorinnenNetzwerk had existed for ten years. This study documented the great benefit the programme has had for both mentees and mentors. The mentors responded that they benefitted particularly from reflecting on their own careers and by passing on experience. They gained new impetus for their own work and for their professional development. Moreover, they could as a result enhance their counselling and leadership skills and expand their professional networks (see fig. 1 and fig. 2).

For the first time the positive long-term effects for former mentees’ careers were also examined. The results demonstrate that participating in the MentorinnenNetzwerk makes it easier for mentees to find their first job and that it increases their potential for advancement. For most mentees the transition into their chosen profession after graduating was easy and straightforward. Twenty-five per cent of former mentees are already working in a managerial position. Their job satisfaction is also above average when it comes to the kind of job they are doing, their roles in their organisations, and with regard to job security. Eighty per cent of the mentees would like to become mentors themselves and pass on their positive experience.

### **Conclusion**

In summary it can be said that integrating the HR development aspect has brought many benefits for the MentorinnenNetzwerk. Quality was improved through active participation from companies in designing the training offered. Mentoring activities gained prestige through their integration into the HR development of the participating companies. The network has become more attractive and useful for mentors and it facilitates a beneficial exchange between companies, research and academic institutions in the field of HR development and supports young talent among women. In this way the MentorinnenNetzwerk represents an effective and sustainable contribution to promoting gender equality in academia, research, and business.

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Fig. 1: Evaluation of the MentorinnenNetzwerk: How did mentors benefit personally from the MentorinnenNetzwerk?

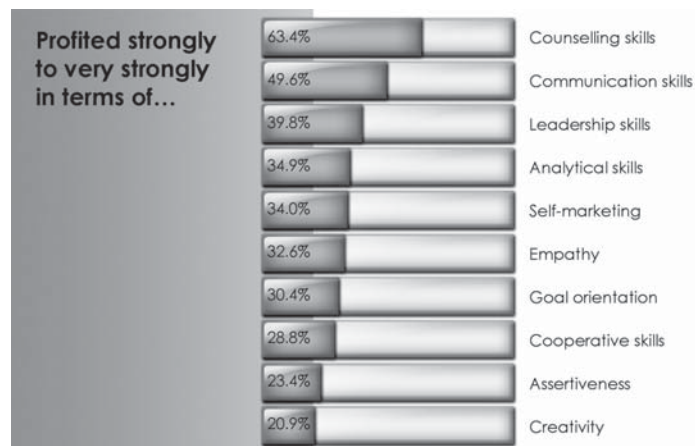


Fig. 2: Evaluation of the MentorinnenNetzwerk: How did mentors benefit in terms of the following key competencies?

## Women for Leadership Positions (mentoring fff)/Frauen für Führungspositionen (fff) at the Zürcher Fachhochschule (ZFH)

Ursula Bolli-Schaffner

It has been recognised widely that organisations profit from mixed gender representation in all areas of responsibility and on all levels. At the Zürcher Fachhochschule (ZFH) and its affiliate schools – the Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW), the Zurich University of Teacher Education (PHZH), and the Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK) – the fact is reflected well in the increasing number of women holding positions in middle management. In top leadership positions, however, women have to date remained a scarce minority – the ZHAW, the largest of the three affiliate universities,<sup>1</sup> being no exception with its nine male members of the board, including the chair, the managing director, and seven deans, only one of whom is female and one further female dean designate to replace a male dean who was set to retire by the end of 2010.

In 2009 Prof. Dr Werner Inderbitzin, Director of the Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW), therefore initiated Women for Leadership (mentoring fff/Frauen für Führungspositionen – fff) to motivate and consequently bring more women into the top leadership positions of

<sup>1</sup> The ZHAW consists of eight departments: Architecture, Design, and Civil Engineering; Health Professions; Applied Linguistics; Engineering; Management and Law; Life Sciences and Facility Management; Social Work; Applied Psychology.

the ZHAW.<sup>2</sup> Appreciating the initiative, the other affiliate universities of the ZFH have readily agreed to participate in the project.

Thus the board of the ZFH and boards of all the affiliate universities have acknowledged the advantages of mixed gender representation in leadership, and, even without explicitly acclaiming gender-integrated management, the ZFH board wants to impart these benefits to the school, which may – as would be hoped – eventually result in a cultural change. It is therefore a special challenge for the project leader to create enough momentum for the project to have just that effect, since, after ten years of untiring, yet not unequivocally rewarded efforts at integrating gender management at the ZFH, the board has decided to promote women in leadership with a mentoring project.<sup>3</sup>

## The project

### *Mentees and mentors*

The programme Women for Leadership Positions (mentoring fff) is aimed at mentoring women with a professional or academic degree, or a similar qualification, who have had some years of professional and possibly leadership experience within the ZFH or another organisation.

Mentors, on the other hand – in addition to showing self- and social competence – must consequently have at least the same qualification and a higher leadership position than their mentees. Furthermore, mentors cannot be the direct superiors of mentees and the mentoring exchange must be prevented from reproducing patriarchal patterns based on gender-biased role stereotypes within what is still a male-dominated leadership culture.

2 'Women for Leadership Position fffs' is a project of the Zürcher Fachhochschule ZFH with a funding contribution of the Bundesprogramm für die Chancengleichheit von Frauen und Männern an Fachhochschulen of the Gender and Diversity Office of the ZHAW (Zurich University of Applied Sciences). It is also supported by swissnex Boston; swissnex: Network of the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs dedicated to fostering closer ties and exchange of knowledge in academia, industry, and society.

3 Prof. Ursula Bolli-Schaffner, project leader, mentoring fff, head of the equality office at the ZFH, 1994 to 2009, board member of the Federal Programme for the Equality of Women and Men at Universities of Applied Sciences (Bundesprogramm Chancengleichheit von Frauen und Männern an den Fachhochschulen), and lecturer at the ZHAW.

### *The contents of the project*

The aim of mentoring fff is to introduce mentees to leadership and organisational cultures within the ZFH in particular and to leadership and management theories in general as well as to help them profit from each other's experience and knowledge and be coached in the active planning of their careers.

Hence mentoring fff includes seminars, workshops, lectures, and networking, and it is based on two mentoring phases of six months each with a different mentor for every mentee in each phase. In the first mentoring phase mentor and mentee are from the same school or department within the ZFH, whereas in the second, cross-mentoring – in which mentee and mentor are from different schools or departments of the ZFH – will give the mentee the opportunity to get an insight into the leadership culture of another department or school than her own.

Including at plenary events, mentee and mentor should have contact at least five times within each six-month period of the programme. They sign a mutual agreement that they will adhere to the basics of the programme as well as approved standards of confidentiality. Mentees and mentors are offered the opportunity to suggest a match or refuse the project leader's matching proposal and ask for a new matching.

Mentoring fff starts and is concluded with a plenary meeting which includes a keynote address and panel combined with an open discussion on one particular aspect of leadership. The opening event also features a workshop on the nature and aims of mentoring.

In addition, as part of the programme the mentees attend a seminar on the assessment procedures customary in the application process for higher leadership positions. Women are known to have worse results than their male colleagues in assessments<sup>4</sup> and whereas one variable – the design of the process, which may or may not be based on male aspects of biography and career – cannot be influenced by fff in the short run, the other – the women's preparation for an assessment – will certainly be improved by the fff seminar.

4 Prof. Dr Christof Baitsch, as exemplified in his lecture at the School of Engineering, Kadertagung, August 2004; see also Fried, Wetzel, and Baitsch (2000).

Furthermore it quickly became evident that the participants are so highly qualified that the exchange of experience among them can be partly formalised, with mentees giving lectures to their peers on a topic of their expertise such as gender-specific aspects of communication or leadership strategies.

The highlight of the programme, however, is a seminar and conference at Simmons College School of Management in Boston on women in leadership, which focuses on the assessment, exploration, and development of the mentees' individual leadership potential and leadership brand. In addition there will be visits to other women's colleges, for example Wellesley College, the famous Harvard University and MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), and other points of interest in and around Boston, as well as a networking reception at swissnex Boston. Mentors are invited to participate in the Boston programme.

Thus, besides being a mentoring programme, fff rather resembles a higher education management seminar. It will be evaluated at mid-term – after the first six-month phase – so that obvious flaws may be corrected before the first round ends. A final evaluation will be carried out after the first round has been completed and results will be incorporated into the second round of mentoring fff.

### ***The project structure***

In its implementation the project follows the hierarchical structures of the organisation. In showing the commitment of the school directors at every stage of the project, this strategy thus endows it with the necessary prestige. Communication of the project, too, therefore strictly follows the channels of other directives of the board of the ZFH and the boards of the schools. Consequently the selection of mentees and recruitment of mentors is also a hierarchical process.

Thus involving the board at all steps of the programme was a special concern of the project leader in planning fff, as experience shows that gender projects are often handed over to the gender agents of the schools, who are not given the structural means to achieve their successful realisation.

Furthermore a steering group comprising representatives of the boards of the different schools of the ZFH, the board of directors of the ZFH, and the mentees and mentors has been formed as an intermediary between these bodies and groups and the project leader and also as an authority to which the mentees and mentors can appeal if need be. At the same time, it releases the project leader from having sole responsibility for the success of the programme.

### ***Nomination – participation***

#### Mentees

With the heads of the organisational units being responsible for the appointment of candidates for mentoring fff, the nomination process also adheres to hierarchical structures. Candidates are therefore appointed by their immediate superiors. To preclude bias in nomination candidates can also be appointed by their second next superior or – as the programme became generally known – apply for nomination to the director of their school or department directly. The directors of the schools or departments then hand in the nominations to the project leader, who can suggest further candidates. Finally, the steering committee confirms the nominations.

Due to these selection procedures, being given the opportunity to participate in mentoring fff gains the quality of a reward rather than being one of several available options.

#### Mentors

To provide enough highly qualified mentors for the targeted group of mentees the project virtually relies on being positioned with the directors of the schools involved. The fact that those in higher leadership positions normally have a full agenda and avoid additional responsibilities considerably limits the number of people available for the mentoring task. However, as mentoring fff is an integral part of their leadership role, the directors are themselves asked to participate and appoint further mentors in a top-down process; this ensures that all mentoring teams are endowed appropriately. Mentors also receive adequate compensation.

## First experiences

### Participation

The response to the project was beyond any expectation and consequently the school directors had to be asked for priority nominations. The steering committee then selected eighteen mentees from a total of thirty-four applications, increasing the original number of placements in the first run of the project by three. Regarding the number of applications, a second round with a new call, where the surplus candidates of the first must be confirmed by the directors of their schools or departments and new ones may be nominated, has already been announced by the steering committee.

Due to the affiliations of the mentors participating in the programme, the idea of forming teams in which mentee and mentor were from the same school or department in the first mentoring phase had to be abandoned. So that teams of mentors and mentees in both phases are now based on cross-mentoring. In the first and with minor alterations in the second phase all matchings have been approved and the second teams by now are well established.

### Contents

Mentoring fff started with the opening event on 14 June 2010, scheduled from 4pm to 8pm.

A highly acclaimed keynote speech by Prof. Dr Caroline Brüesch, Zurich University of Applied Sciences/School of Management and Law, on the 'Specific Aspects of Public Management' led into a first discussion on what questions and challenges might arise in leadership at the ZFH. The second part of the opening event included a workshop by Dr Pamela Alean Kirkpatrick in which mentees and mentors, first as separate groups, then as individual teams of mentee and mentor, discussed what they expected from mentoring fff and what they understood to be their individual engagement in the programme. The session concluded with the signing of an agreement by both parties to adhere to the mentoring fff programme. In addition, the opening event gave everyone involved in mentoring fff – mentees, mentors, members of the steering group – an opportunity for informal networking and socialising.

In chronological order on 8 November 2010 the first of the peer to peer series of lectures on 'Language as an Instrument of Governance in Organisations – Gender Differences in Communication', by Prof. Dr Sylvia Manchen Spörri of the Linguistics Department, ZHAW, set another milestone in the mentoring fff agenda. The second peer to peer lecture is planned for March 2011.

The assessment training with Christof Baitsch, s.a., took place in two groups and met with the unanimous approval of the mentees.

Expectations with regard to the conference and workshop at Simmons College School of Management, Boston, are high and the details of what will hopefully be a successful programme are being negotiated.

Mentors and mentees were also asked to participate in a mid-term evaluation of the programme. The answers to the different sets of questions for each group show that mentoring fff is highly appreciated by mentees as well as mentors. Cross-mentoring was particularly well received and, in fact, for reasons of possible interference with relations at work – loyalties, bias – were stated as a necessary condition for the success of a mentoring team; a requirement that dovetails so well with the aforementioned affiliations of the given group of mentors can thus easily be met in the second mentoring phase.

The comments of the mentees revealed a serious desideratum with regard to coaching and leadership training. However, by definition mentoring is not formal education, so the mentees have to be referred to the Boston workshop, which is meant to satisfy at least part of the need, and offers of further study programmes on leadership beyond mentoring fff.

## Conclusion

At this early stage of mentoring fff no definite statement as to the effect of the programme can be made. As with most of the programmes promoting women, with mentoring fff, too, success in terms of achieving total or near total gender equity within an organisation is a medium- if not long-term goal.



However, although the first run of mentoring fff has not been completed, firstly the commitment of the board of directors, implying the implementation of the project according to hierarchical structures, and secondly the project design as a combination of classic mentoring and leadership seminar have proved to be of utmost importance for a successful beginning. Although mentoring is never a guarantee of a position within the organisation, women participating in mentoring fff will be taken notice of in the further development of leadership at the ZFH and potentially increase mixed gender representation in all areas of responsibility and on all levels. Thus, there is every chance that what started in order to develop an instrument to recruit women for leadership positions might well have initiated a change in leadership culture at the ZFH.

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## About the authors

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## About eument-net

eument-net is an international network of mentoring programmes promoting women and gender equality in academia and research. eument-net provides experience and expertise in transnational cooperation, knowledge transfer and exchange on mentoring.

At the outset, eument-net started as a project coordinated by the University of Fribourg (Switzerland) funded by the 6<sup>th</sup> European Framework Programme, with partners from Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, and Switzerland. Since October 2008, eument-net has established itself as an association, in order to pursue and enhance its activities and to integrate new members.

### Goals of eument-net

- Foster gender equality in academia and research.
- Highlight the role of mentoring as a tool for the promotion of gender equality and women's careers.
- Foster exchange of experience among mentoring programmes and facilitate their continuous improvement through exchange of expertise and best practice.
- Facilitate cooperation among programmes and the promotion of new mentoring services and activities.
- Support knowledge transfer on national and European levels.

### Previous publications

*Establishing Mentoring in Europe. Strategies for the Promotion of Women Academics and Researchers* (ISBN 978-2-9700611-0-6).

The manual provides a systematic comparison of different mentoring programmes and offers relevant expertise for programme coordinators and stakeholders alike, dealing with best practice examples in different national contexts and defining general quality standards. Eument-net has also issued policy recommendations to foster gender equality in academia and research and organised international conferences and workshops.

**Утвърждаване на наставничеството в Европа. Стратегии за насърчаване на жените преподаватели и изследователи.** Ed.: eument-net, Fribourg 2008, ISBN 978-2-9700611-1-3 (Bulgarian translation)

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Mentoring programmes that aim to foster women's careers and gender equality in academia and research have to acknowledge existing possibilities for women to develop their potential but must also take into account persisting gender inequalities. They have to empower the individual while at the same time generating transformative potential on the institutional level: a process in which mentors play a central role.

With the increasing attention brought to the issue of mentoring, supervision culture, and staff development in academia, it is important that the gender issue does not disappear.

The international workshop 'Mentor Training and Coaching' organised by eument-net set out to provide a space to discuss and exchange on these questions. The current publication presents the main contributions to the workshop.

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