Vlasta Zabukovec

Development of the Mentoring Relationship

Mentoring can take place in various contexts (e.g. study, work, private). Although it differs in each situation, it shows certain common features (Eby, Rhodes and Allen, 2007) which are described in this chapter. Overall, mentoring is a unique relationship between two individuals with interpersonal exchanges. Mentoring is a learning partnership which, despite the various forms it can take, generally includes learning and personal growth, and can be understood as providing professional and psychosocial support for the mentee. The mentoring relationship is reciprocal, yet asymmetric, because the mentor is an experienced person, and more attention is devoted to the mentee. The mentoring relationship is dynamic and changing.

Phases of Mentoring

Kram (1983) is one of the first works to empirically research the levels of mentoring relationship, and the author notes four predictable developmental phases: initiation, cultivation, separation, and redefinition. While the many researchers who followed Kram present different numbers of levels, they report similar developmental features with regard to such relationships. At the relationship *initiation* phase, both the mentor and mentee feel the excitement of a new challenge, and both are gradually developing the relationship. The mentor cares for the professional development of the mentee (e.g. training, promotion), and provides psychosocial support, and it is important that in this phase, and in the continuation, that the mentee recognizes this support. It is also essential that the mentor becomes aware of his/her role.

In the *cultivation* phase the professional and psychosocial dimensions of the relationship are strengthened, and any expectations regarding the relationship are experienced in practice. The mentor and mentee learn about the importance of the mentoring relationship and its limits, thus enabling their partnership to become stronger. Of course, not all mentoring dyads develop their relation in the same way, because this depends on the needs and interests of both the mentor and mentee. In general, it can be observed that in this phase both parties will have positive evaluations of the mentoring relationship.

After this, changes occur which are reflected in the greater independence of the mentee and thus less perceived need for the mentor's professional support. This phase of *separation* can bring some unpleasant emotions, such as sadness, anxiety, loss, and confusion. The relation between the mentor and mentee thus changes and a *redefinition* is required. The two parties can work to strengthen their relationship even more, or it may end in a period of ambivalence or discomfort. Ideally the mentee can feel a higher level of self-confidence and independence with regard to his/her professional performance, and this will cause the gradual closing of the relationship. When the existing relationship is concluded, the two parties either separate or establish a new professional relationship based on a new foundation.

Lamb, Anderson, Rapp, Rathnow and Sesan (1986) study the development of professional relationships during internships in clinical settings. The six phases of the mentoring relationship which were discovered by Lamb et al. can, in my opinion, be transferred to different fields of psychological practice. These phases are courting, bonding, rapprochement, mentoring, launching, and reunion, and they are discussed in more detail below.

Courting (introducing and establishing rapport) takes place outside the work environment, where the mentor and the mentee meet for the first time; this is the time of exploration and creation of expectations regarding the professional relationship and selection of mentees. The mentee will generally introduce his/her strengths, and less often mention his/her weaknesses. Both parties wish the mentoring to be as effective as possible, so they agree to direct their energies to completing a successful internship. In this phase the mentor introduces the mentee to broader picture of the mentoring relationship.

Bonding (establishment of the relationship) takes place in the work setting. The mentee starts meeting other people who are employed in this location, and his/her first connections are created with the mentor's help. The mentee's initial insecurity in the new context is thus reduced. In the first three months the mentor takes care of establishing the border between dependence and autonomy and at the same time protects the mentee. At this stage consistency by the mentor is important, regardless of which behaviour of the mentee he/she is developing.

The following three to four months belong to the phase of *rapprochement*, where an individual's strengths and weaknesses are clearly differentiated. This is the phase when the mentor has to encourage the mentee's independence and autonomy and

take care that clear boundaries are being set. The provision of greater freedom enables the development of an individual's competence and professional identity, but can lead to more risk taking. As a result, some conflicts may occur during this phase which can be successfully resolved by the mentor and mentee provided they have established a relationship based on trust and good connections. In this phase the mentor becomes more aware of his/her role, and thus he/she may decide to redefine it.

However, due to their increased autonomy the mentee may make more mistakes, and this leads to the next phase, that of *mentoring*. This occurs in the sixth or seventh month and relates to an increased awareness of the mentee's professional role and his/her tendencies with regard to new challenges. The mentor's role is to engage in active listening and provide support for and recognition of the mentee's professional development. At this time the mentor opens up more, communicates his/her expectations, problems and goals. The mentor encourages socialization outside of work, as this can strengthen his/her role and the relationship itself. Sometimes the mentor also offers assistance with regard to helping the mentee find a job. One danger that can arise because the mentee is expected to pass a professional work assessment exam at the end of the year, is that the mentor can become too protective and starts an intense process of preparation for the exam. The level of protection that the mentor provides here depends on the pre-preparation of the mentee.

Launching occupies the last three months of internship, and this phase is characterized by the mentee gaining experience in real settings and the mentor providing encouragement based on professional closeness and evaluation. In order to strengthen the mentee's professional competence, the mentor encourages him/her to undertake further education. The mentor may also be available for discussions of work strategies and the monitoring of work performed by other colleagues, and this can help the mentee to gain alternative perspectives on a problem and recognize new strategies to solve it. At the same time the mentor can undertake various activities (attending conferences, preparing articles, and so on) that foster professional closeness, while also giving and receiving regular feedback about goals, achievements, and possible obstacles to the mentee's progress. Formal evaluation is carried out all through this time, by the mentor and those who are most frequently involved with the mentee, while the mentor also carries out self-evaluation.

Finally, the relationship does not end with the conclusion of the internship, but can be further maintained by the mentor and mentee. This enables the mentee to revive their professional role, while the mentor can follow the mentee's development and his/her progress in the workplace.

Zachary (2012) defines four predictable phases of mentoring and its progress: preparing, negotiation, enabling growth, and coming to closure. These phases together shape a developmental sequence whose duration differs with each relationship. This model is different from the previously described model presented in Kram (1983), in

that the phases focus more on the behaviours required to progress through them. However, although the phases are predictable and sequential, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between them. The mentor and mentee should recognize the importance of each phase as it can help them maintain their relationship, and this relationship will not develop if one phase is missing. The mentor and the mentee thus need to separately and in partnership *prepare* for the relationship. Congruence plays a great part in this, as well as the initial attractiveness. Each party learns how to prepare for the relationship through attending mentoring programmes which train them to implement the mentoring process. First, the mentor takes care for his/her own preparation where he/she checks his/her motivation and willingness to take up mentoring. The resulting assessment of the mentor's own skills helps him/her recognize the areas for learning and development. It is equally important that the mentee explores his/her motivation and uses self-reflection to define his/her expectations with regard to the mentoring relationship. The mentee thus recognizes what he/she wants to learn and the easiest ways to do so, ensuring that he/she will be well prepared to achieve clear and well-specified goals. Clarity of expectations and roles help in defining effective and healthy mentoring relationship, and this is followed by the relationship preparation phases. This is why the initial conversation is important, when the mentor and the mentee explore the reciprocity of their interests and needs. In this way, it is easier for the mentor to estimate whether or not he/she can work with the mentee.

Negotiation follows the first phase, and includes agreeing on the learning goals, contents and mentoring process. The establishment of reciprocal understanding with regard to any problems, expectations, goals, and needs is of high importance. Moreover, the mentoring pair also discusses issues related to confidentiality, boundaries and limits, and agree on when, where, and how often they will meet. An important part of such discussions includes details of responsibilities, effectiveness measures, and the manner of concluding the relationship. There is also the possibility of a formal agreement where all this can be written down.

The phase of *enabling growth* then follows, and this is longer than the initial two phases because it includes the realization of the mentoring relationship. It offers the most possibilities for education and development, and can be a very sensitive period when difficulties in the relationship can occur. However, even if the mentor and mentee have set clear goals, defined the process very well and identified the timeframe within which their activities will take place, difficulties can occur. It is thus important to maintain a sufficient level of trust, as this has a stimulating impact on the learning process.

During the preparation phase, the mentor and mentee should already have agreed on how to conduct the *conclusion* of the relationship. During training they should get to know each other very well, and recognize their own needs and expectations, making it easier for them to conclude the relationship. The phase of closure is relatively short but it provides rich opportunities for growth and consideration, regardless of whether the relationship is positive or not. This is an opportunity for the mentor

and mentee to look back and evaluate the outcomes of mentoring. They assess the learning process and confirm the progress. A successful concluding strategy has four components: conclusion of learning and integration of the acquired knowledge, some celebration of the successful outcome, a discussion on the re-definition of the relationship, and the closing of the relationship, or the establishment of a new one.

In the literature there are many descriptions of the mentoring relationship, both theoretical and empirically confirmed. The three models examined in this article were selected by the author because the description provided by Kram (1983) was one of the first in which the phases were empirically researched. Most descriptions include four phases, so this article also presents a six-phase model (Lamb et al., 1986) to enable readers to judge whether or not the differences between the models are significant or important. A description of the model in Zachary (2012) is included because of her comprehensive manuals for developing the mentoring relationship. Table 5 shows the differences between the three descriptions.

Table 5. *Comparison of the phases of the mentoring relationship shown in different models*

Model by Kram (1983)	Model by Lamb et al. (1986)	Model by Zachary (2012)
4 phases	6 phases	4 phases
1. Initiation – establishing a relationship; awareness of the role of mentor; the mentee feels supported. 2. Cultivation – maintaining the relationship; professional and psycho-social dimensions of the relationship; arrangements and expectations are tried in practice. 3. Separation – the need for the mentor's support is reduced; unpleasant emotions. 4. Redefinition – redefining the relationship; conclusion or a new relationship.	1. Courting – building rapport; going outside the work environment; exploring expectations. 2. Bonding – establishing a relationship; becoming familiar with the workplace. 3. Rapprochement – openness; independence and autonomy of the mentee; professional identity; first conflicts. 4. Mentoring – new challenges, conversations regarding expectations and goals. 5. Launching – independent beginnings; experiences in the real environment; professional closeness; evaluation. 6. Reunion – conclusion or a new relationship (new context).	1. Preparing – harmony in the relationship; personal preparation; relational preparation. 2. Negotiation – making agreements about the learning goals, content, and course; clear expectations and goals, trust, responsibility. 3. Enabling growth – training, possibilities of learning and development; open, stimulating climate. 4. Coming to closure – conclusion of learning; process of integration of new knowledge; celebrating success; redefining the relationship; conclusion of the relationship.

Regardless of the fact that these descriptions of the mentoring relationship evolved in different periods, it can be concluded that the models are very similar, and it is assumed that the findings would be the same in other descriptions of phases. While the number of phases is different, as are the names they are given, a thorough analyses of the contents shows strong similarities. The beginning of the relationship is marked by the parties introducing themselves, which can take place in or outside of a work setting. At this stage an awareness of roles and shaping of expectations are present. If the model consists of several phases, the initial one is devoted to establishment of relationship, without setting work-related goals. If the model consists of fewer phases, the establishment of the relationship includes goal setting and the formation of individual tasks. Then, as a rule, the implementation follows, which encompasses realization of the previous agreements in practice and conclusion of the relationship. The authors link the implementation of the relationship with various factors, such as conflicts, realization of agreements, or learning and development. In the concluding part of the relationship the authors emphasize proper closing of the relationship, which includes the evaluation of the achieved goals and a possibility for the establishment of a new relationship under different conditions.

The authors emphasize that while the phases can be distinguished they sometimes overlap. This is a consequence of the different dynamics of various mentoring relationships, and it is important to recognize this and to respond properly to the situations that occur in a particular phase.

One place where the models' descriptions of mentoring relationships differ is with regard to their focus, i.e. whether they describe the process and its features, or behaviours typical for a certain phase. The latter is typical of the model in Zachary (2012), which is thus easily transferred into practice.

Mentoring and Transformational Learning

As has been already shown in the chapter *Importance of the Mentoring and Supervision of Early Career Psychologists*, there are obvious differences between traditional and modern conceptualizations of mentoring. Modern conceptualizations refer to mentoring as a reciprocal and collaborative relationship, where the mentor and the mentee collaborate in order to achieve mutual goals, and develop the mentee's skills, abilities, knowledge, and thinking. The mentee is an active participant of this relationship, as he/she shares accountability for planning and achieving the goals, and for the implementation of activities and learning. The mentor stimulates and develops his/her own reflection and the mentee's self-regulation of learning.

Zachary (2012) presents a paradigm for learning with regard to directive mentoring which has seven key characteristics: reciprocity, learning, relationship, partnership, collaboration, mutually defined goals, and development. She understands

mentoring as a continual learning process. It is true that mentoring pays more attention to the mentee, but the mentor, too, gains new experiences and knowledge with every mentoring relationship. Mentoring thus brings specific outcomes for both the mentor and mentee, as described in the chapter *Importance of the Mentoring and Supervision of Early Career Psychologists*.

Reciprocity and mutuality in the mentoring relationship contribute to both parties gaining something in the mentoring relationship, and simultaneously contributing to its development. *Learning* is a necessary process in every mentoring relationship, as the mentor and the mentee learn from each other. Every mentor thus needs to be familiar with the process of learning in order to encourage and direct the learning of the mentee. At the same time, the mentor himself/herself remains open to learning. A strong *relationship* between the mentor and mentee motivates, triggers enthusiasm, and stimulates learning and development. However, effective mentoring requires enough time so that the relationship can properly develop and grow, and it is not possible to accelerate this process, since as each assignment and goal needs sufficient time to complete. Mutual respect, trust, and appreciation of each other's particularities must be established at the beginning of the relationship, with both parties contributing to its establishment, maintenance, and strengthening. *Partnership* has its basis in a good relationship. Provided the mentor and the mentee have succeeded in establishing a relationship of mutual respect and recognition of each other's needs, trust will also be present. With a firm partnership the mentor and mentee can strengthen the relationship and feel safe enough to achieve the set goals. By working in partnership the mentor and mentee *collaborate*, as they together build up the relationship, share knowledge and agree on the goals, which are then more easily attainable. *Mutually defined goals* are a logical result of all the characteristics of the mentoring relationship. At beginning of the process both the mentor and mentee need to clearly specify what the goals are and adjust or change them during the course of mentoring if it becomes necessary to do so. Clear and open communication in this process is very important, including the skills of listening, asking questions, and clear argumentation in setting important goals. The mentor has to clearly present the mentee's *development*, which is always future-oriented. The mentor's role is to support the mentee and direct his/her activities in the direction of planned development. All this enables the development of skills, knowledge, abilities and thinking, and raises the probability of successful outcomes.

In order for mentoring to evolve as described above it is important to take into consideration the characteristics of adult education, due to particularities of the participants' already acquired experiences and knowledge. In general, it can be said that the education of adults can be more active, self-regulatory and practice-oriented. The next part of this chapter presents the paradigm of education-oriented mentoring in relation to the characteristics of adult learning, as shown in Figure 4.
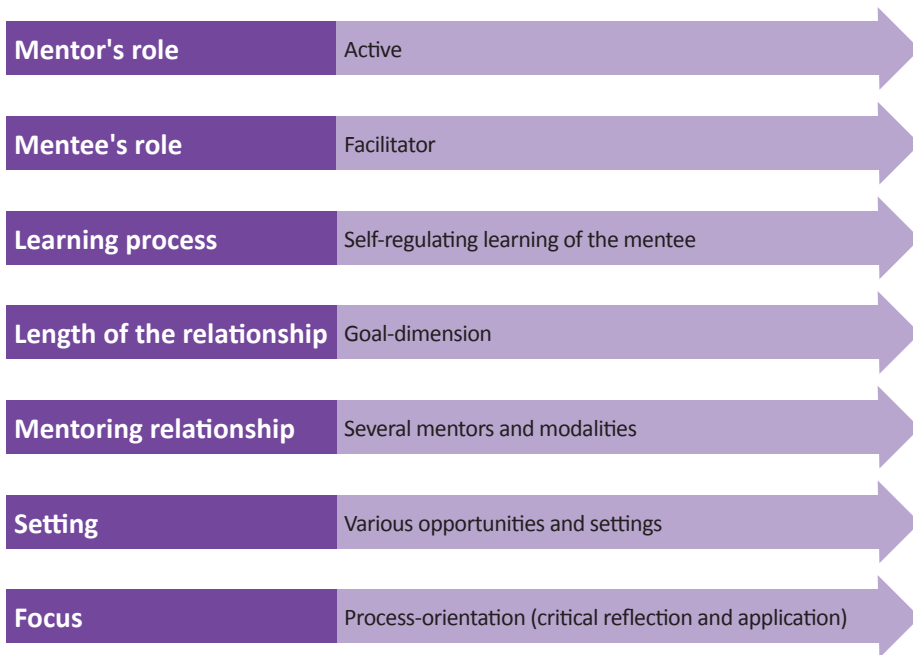
Mentor's role	Active
Mentee's role	Facilitator
Learning process	Self-regulating learning of the mentee
Length of the relationship	Goal-dimension
Mentoring relationship	Several mentors and modalities
Setting	Various opportunities and settings
Focus	Process-orientation (critical reflection and application)

Figure 4. Characteristics of the mentoring relationship, taking into account the paradigm of education-oriented mentoring.

The requirements for adult learning (such as participation in the entire process of learning, a stimulating climate for learning, self-regulating learning, acquirement of specific knowledge, experience as a primary source of learning, knowledge application, and intrinsic motivation) enable the conversion from transactional into transformational learning. Transactional learning is the process where knowledge is transferred from one person to another, and where the roles are clearly defined, with the aim of creating knowledge and experiences. Transformative learning emphasizes openness for critical judgment and reflection on the experiences obtained (Zachary, 2012). Mezirow (1991), as a pioneer of the transformative learning theory, emphasizes that adult learning is instrumental and communication-based. Instrumental teaching is carried out by means of directed problem solving and explanation of causal relations. Communication-based learning includes expressing one's emotions, needs, and desires. The central concept in this theory is a structure which includes meaning schemes and perspectives. The meaning schemes are constructed by means of reflection on the content, process and starting points of learning. Learning can thus include elaboration of the existing meaning schemes, their changing, and learning of new schemes, their transformation or transformation of perspectives. The process of mentoring is transformative as the mentor enables the mentee to become aware of his/her beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour.

Mentoring is collaborative and reciprocal, so both insights and learning are also acquired by the mentor.

It is expected that the mentor and mentee bring different experiences and different levels of competence development to the relationship. It is thus important that learning in the mentoring relationship includes four steps: from unconscious incompetence to conscious incompetence, and from conscious competence to unconscious competence. The level of *unconscious incompetence* is one at which "we do not know what we do not know," and this can lead to being overconfident. The level of *conscious incompetence* opens up gaps of ignorance. At this level the mentor and mentee can recognize what they need to learn. The level of *conscious competence* enables us to learn what we do not yet know by being persistent and goal-oriented. The more we experiment, the more competent we feel. At the level of *unconscious competence* we apply skills and knowledge which we have acquired without needing to think about it, and thus achieving tasks is much easier.

The level of learning specifies the role of the mentor. At the level of *unconscious incompetence* the mentor is supposed to eliminate blind spots and encourage discovering what the mentee needs. When learning enters the level of *conscious incompetence* and the mentee is aware of what he/she does not know, the mentor is supposed to help the mentee understand his/her mistakes, enhance reflective practice and encourage thinking by asking questions, and this stimulates the development of knowledge and skills. At the level of *conscious competence* the mentee becomes more self-confident and increases his/her self-esteem, the mentor creates opportunities for exploring and experimenting, and provides effective feedback. At the level of *unconscious competence* the mentor encourages reflection and a tendency to continue improving.

Mentoring in a Multicultural Context

Mentoring can be implemented in different cultural contexts, if the mentor and mentee come from different cultures. It is thus important that the mentor has developed a multicultural competence, which includes understanding of cultural differences and effective communication with people who come from another cultural environment (Zachary, 2012). To be more precise, multicultural competence includes: cultural self-awareness, a sincere desire for learning about different cultures, harmony with other cultures, and development of a flexible attitude towards other cultures.

Cultural self-awareness in the context of mentoring means that the mentor has to be aware of the differences between the related cultures, understand them and accept them. It is important that the mentor becomes aware of beliefs and presuppositions which affect him/her in a multicultural setting. For instance, in certain cultures it is disrespectful to ask the teacher questions. In other cultures, conversations about

emotions, problems and fears is a sign of weakness. Therefore, a *sincere desire for learning* and the acquisition of knowledge about other cultures is very important. The new perspectives thus gained can also enrich one's attitude towards one's own culture. The mentor is expected to listen to the mentee, non-judgmentally, and to ask questions when he/she needs additional explanations, in particular when the mentee's behaviour differs from what is expected. In this context, it is good to examine habitual thinking patterns and open new possibilities for learning. When the mentor expresses a sincere desire for education, the mentee will recognize this and the mentor will become a good role model for learning.

Cultural attunement means that we understand behaviour and know what is happening by simply observing the context and non-verbal communication. To achieve this, the mentor and the mentee can promptly check the understanding that each has, and if they have different interpretations they further clarification will be needed. Different understandings of an event are caused by different values developed within a culture. For instance, some cultures do not find humour between a man and woman acceptable, other cultures need a longer period of time to make a decision, yet other cultures find it inappropriate to question the teacher.

Development of a *flexible perception of the other culture* encompasses several activities, such as preparation, memorizing, observation, and demonstration. During preparation, the mentor checks on the mentee's cultural origin before they meet, clarifies what he/she expects from the mentoring relationship, and specifies its goals. The mentor should memorize as much as possible of what the mentee expresses or talks about. The skills needed for this are active listening, expressing interest, paying attention, and being empathetic. The mentor should respect learning distinctions, devote time to questions and different expressions, while judgments should be avoided. The mentor checks his/her own understanding all the time, especially when he/she wants to round up a thought, conversation, or assignment. The mentor stimulates reflection and should be patient and tolerant. He/she should be aware of his/her beliefs, doubts, and stereotypes. The mentor analyses his/her values, in particular in relation to those of another culture. The mentor should recognize discomfort, disconnection, and present emotions. Most importantly, the mentor shows respect, reliability, knowledge, and is oriented towards mentoring.

Mentoring in an Intergenerational Context

Being knowledgeable and understanding of the intergenerational context plays a key role in successful mentoring. If we understand mentoring as the transfer of knowledge, skills, and experience from a more experienced person to a less experienced one, then it is obvious that we will often encounter intergenerational differences, because in most cases the knowledge is transferred from an older person to a younger one. The next few paragraphs discuss some of the differences among generations,

although it should be noted that these were written with America in mind, and thus there may be a slight time lag in Europe. According to Zachary (2012), there are three generations on interest in this context: baby boomers, generation X, and generation Y, as shown in Table 6 along with the mentor's tasks.

The generation of baby boomers were born after the World War II and up to 1964, and grew up during a difficult economic period with traditional values still in place (Zachary, 2012). This is seen as an idealistic generation with a desire for status and wealth. Boomers are optimistic, competitive, and goal-oriented. They evaluate their quality in relation to their achievements, and in particular to work-related accomplishments. They are sincerely devoted to their careers and dedicate a lot of time to work, which brings them luxury, recognition, and other rewards. They are self-reliant, independent thinkers who seek new challenges. Younger generations regard boomers as workaholics. As mentors, they are sought after due to their experience, knowledge, wit, and devotion. By mentoring they want to reimburse what the organization has invested in them. Moreover, they support lifelong learning and seek new challenges, with mentoring being one of these. They are thus willing to take up new tasks and new roles. The mentors encourage the boomers by creating challenges, recognizing their achievements, expressing interest and respect, and engaging in proper communication with them.

Generation X was born in the period from 1965 to 1979, is also known as the "I" generation, and such individuals are seen as industrious, successful, cynical, and sceptical (Zachary, 2012). For them it is important that their needs are met, that they take responsibility for themselves, are included and that people trust them. People from generation X want competent, directive, and less formal mentors. They want their mentors to help them see the big picture, define career expectations, and create a career path. It is reasonable to encourage their creativity and initiative. The mentor is expected to specify clear expectations with well-defined success indicators so that the mentees can monitor their own learning process. The mentees desire ongoing communication, including prompt and clear feedback which enables them to progress towards their goals. They value trusting relationships, and the mentees need to be allowed to be accountable and solve their problems without the mentor's interference. Instead of interfering, the mentor can stimulate reflection on the mentee's experience.

Generation Y was born in the period from 1980 to 1995, and is the largest after the boomers, often being called the net generation, iPod generation, digital generation, or "we" generation (Zachary, 2012). This generation seeks mentors who offer opportunities for problem-solving, which is good for their development. They like positive, collaborative, achievement-oriented mentors who take them seriously. They give priority to development, and that is why they want to be mentored. On the other hand, they want to feel equal in a relationship, and so the mentor should ask questions and listen carefully to their answers. Such relationships are personal, cheerful,

pleasant, and informal. The mentor is supposed to offer the mentee a great deal of challenges and various opportunities for learning. Goals should be smaller and more short term than with older mentees, and come with realistic time frames. The mentor helps by providing the resources and information required for accomplishing the set goals. Technology is a key tool, feedback is vital, and generation Y needs a sense of reward and acknowledgment.

Table 6. *Generational distinctions and mentor's performance*

Generation	Features	Mentor's performance
Boomers	Idealistic Desire for status and wealth Competitive Goal-oriented Independent thinking, autonomy Need for challenges	Opportunities for challenges Recognition of achievements Sincere interest and respect Proper communication Encouraging lifelong learning
X	Industrious, successful, cynic and sceptical Needs should be met Self-accountability Need for inclusion Need for trust	Competent Directive Less formal Assistance in career path Encouraging creativity and initiative Clear expectations and success indicators Prompt feedback Enhancing reflectivity
Y	Importance of development Equality in relationship Use of technology Desire for acknowledgment and rewards	Opportunities for problem-solving Asking questions Active listening Various opportunities for learning Positive, collaborative and achievement-oriented

Mentoring Skills

A great deal has been written about mentoring skills, and therefore it would be difficult to lay out a unique set of skills exhibited by an effective and experienced mentor. There are skills which are related to developmental phases of mentoring (e.g., the skill of presenting expectations regarding the mentoring relationship, or that of closing the relationship with a form of performance evaluation). There are also skills which are related to the relationship between the mentor and the mentee, such as those of empathy, respect, and building trust. And there are skills which emphasize the goals of mentoring, such as specifying goals, reflecting on experience, and encouraging development. The authors are not unanimous with regard to the number of skills needed for effective mentoring. Some of them assert a lower

number of skills, others a higher one; some of them specify complex skills (e.g., in relation to the phases of the mentoring relationship) which can be partitioned into primary ones; some of them expose general communication skills built up with specific mentoring skills, such as asking questions, which can be divided into asking open and closed questions. Some authors emphasize relational skills (e.g., the skill of establishing good relationships) which can be divided into more specific and operational ones (e.g., skills of building trust, empathy). Ramaswami and Dreher (2007) single out the mentor's encouragement of development as a key skill which is partially built up by behavioural descriptions. Allen et al. (2009) emphasize the skill of career and professional development planning, which is a complex skill but can be divided into simpler ones, such as goal setting, goal attainment and evaluation of achievements. Even these simpler skills can be defined more operationally, such as setting SMART goals. The vast majority of authors state that the mentor's key skill is listening (Mentoring Guide, 2003). Additionally, they find the skills of building trust, specifying goals, developing capabilities, encouraging, motivating, and inspiration to be very important for an effective mentor. Bird (2001) lists the following attributes of an effective mentor: experience, insight into performance, enthusiasm, positive regard, a sense of humour, and a feeling for communicating delicate topics. Moreover, an effective mentor will have high standards and expectations, be willing to share time, and work hard, tolerate the diversity of mentees, encourage multiple approaches and various forms of thinking, and be open-minded, i.e. receptive to new ideas, suggestions, and considerations.

According to Zachary (2012) the most important skill for mentoring is *establishing connections*, which means that through his/her own social connections the mentor introduces the mentee to people and resources which will help in accomplishing the mentoring and learning goals. Another skill is *establishing and maintaining relations* – the mentor should know how to commence, encourage and cultivate the focal relationship. Mentoring by means of *coaching* with regard to the planned and systematic development of specific skills is important. A skill of *communicating* means that communication needs to be authentic, including active listening and checking for understanding, and being clear and unambiguous. A skill of *encouraging* connects future orientation, positive regard, and clear vision. Encouragement can be expressed by building trust, gentle persuasion, critical friendship, enthusiasm and motivation. A skill of *enabling*, which relates to mutual learning, reflective practice, and insight into the mentee, is also important, as it enables people to overcome challenges with regard to learning, growth, and development. *Goal setting* is connected to the specification of clear, well-structured and realistic goals. An effective mentor *directs* the mentee towards accomplishing the goal, enables learning, and monitors the goal attainment. The mentor also directs with modelling behaviour, and thus makes the learning easier. The mentor is focused on the mentee all the time, and helps him/her make sense of every situation. A well-developed skill of *listening* harmonizes sending messages and receiving messages, while engaged listening is a prerequisite

for meaningful reflection. *Managing conflict* is yet another skill of open and focused communication which takes into consideration different perspectives, although it should be noted that conflict managing does not eliminate conflicts, but trains the mentee to manage those that arise. A skill of *problem-solving* is efficient when it includes asking questions and enabling reflection. *Feedback* should be prompt, constructive, and keep the receiver on track towards the set goals. A skill of *reflective practice* enables the mentee to gain an insight into his/her thinking patterns and behaviour, and thus stimulates the learning process. There are distinctions in the mentoring process between the mentor and the mentee, and these differences need to be *evaluated*. Diversity can relate to age, ethnicity, status, experience, and gender. The mentor is a *role model* of professional and personal conduct for the mentee.