
Workplace mentors: demands and benefits

Stephen Billett

The author

Stephen Billett is an Associate Professor in the School of Vocational, Technology and Arts Education, Griffith University, Nathan, Australia.

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Abstract

As there is a growing interest in experienced workers mentoring co-workers in workplace settings, it is necessary to understand its impact on those who are nominated as mentors. Here, data from eight mentors who participated in a year-long trial of guided learning in a workplace are used to illuminate the demands upon and benefits for workplace mentors. In the study, all mentors noted the efficacy of guiding learning in the workplace. However, guiding the learning of others made considerable demands on these individuals. Finding time for mentoring and the low level of support by management were reported as making the mentors' work intense. Moreover, although workplace mentoring was found to have the capacity to improve learning, much of that improvement was centred on the mentors' actions and energies. For some mentors, it was a worthwhile and enriching experience. For others, the demands were not adequately offset by benefits that they experience in assisting co-workers to learn.

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Mentoring at work

There is increased interest in and demand for workplace-based mentoring that can secure both initial and on-going vocational development throughout working lives (Boud and Garrick, 1999). Some of the increased demand for workplace mentoring arises from locating vocational education programs in workplaces. Interest in workplace mentoring may also arise from reductions in training budgets and from shifts of responsibilities for vocational development from training personnel to staff in the workplace (Newton, 2002). Other sources of interest include enterprise-specific learning arrangements focussing on particular specialisations, or with skill-linked increases in pay or movement through work classifications. However, one outcome of this change is that experienced workers are now more likely to be asked to assist less experienced workers learn the requirements for work. Workplace mentors might also be asked to make judgments that will determine co-workers' level of remuneration and career advancement. In the UK, for instance, changes have occurred in the initial preparation of schoolteachers. Student teachers' practicum experiences have been extended to resemble apprenticeship-type arrangements, with lengthy periods of time being spent working in schools while being supported and supervised by more experienced teachers (Woodd, 1997). There is evidence to suggest that learners benefit from workplace mentoring. This includes the learning of long-standing practices of the trades and major professions in the workplace and providing assistance for learning knowledge that would otherwise not be learnt alone (Billett, 2001).

Most of the literature on mentoring focuses on the learners, which leaves the impact of mentoring on those who act as mentors less understood. Published studies often describe and evaluate approaches to mentoring and, in particular, the impact of mentoring on the learners, mentees, or protégés (Allen *et al.*, 1997). Yet there is less emphasis given to mentors, except in studies that focus on the desirable qualities of mentors (e.g. Gay, 1994) and the difficulties of cross-gender mentoring, specifically when female staff mentor males, which often leads to workplace innuendo and gossip (e.g. Hurley, 1996). However, questions about whether the



mentoring role represents a welcome opportunity to assist the learning of less experienced co-workers or an unwelcome addition to their work life are largely unanswered. So it remains to be understood in what ways mentoring might be seen as an intensification of work roles or as a welcome opportunity to develop the capacities of co-workers. There is also the question of whether the sharing of workers' knowledge is a reasonable part of their paid role or merely serves as a means of extracting greater value from these workers. For instance, in Japanese corporations, more experienced workers are expected to assist the development of junior staff. However, this expectation is supported by arrangements that prevent the mentors from being displaced by those whom they have mentored (Dore and Sako, 1989). These arrangements are unlikely to exist in workplaces in other countries.

This paper describes and discusses the mentoring of less experienced workers in the workplace from the perspective of eight workplace mentors who participated in a year-long trial of guided workplace learning. To consider the relative demands of and outcomes for workplace mentors, some of the different kinds of mentoring and their expectations are discussed first. This is followed by an account of the procedures and of the findings of the study of workplace mentoring from the mentors' perspectives. Data of the demands upon the mentors and the implications for workplace mentoring are then described and discussed. It is concluded that, if enterprises want to enrich learning experiences in the workplace through the activities of workplace mentors, appropriate support for this demanding role will be required, as well as some acknowledgement of their contributions.

Different mentoring, different demands, different outcomes

A range of conceptions and approaches to mentoring exists that places different demands upon and offers different benefits to the mentor. Commonly referred to as a "wise advisor" (Garvey, 1994), the work of the mentor can take quite diverse forms. Some mentoring is conducted in the form of guidance throughout career, with a more experienced peer advising and guiding the

career trajectory of another throughout a working life (Gay, 1994). For instance, university professors may continue to guide the career of their doctoral students long after they graduate. Senior women public servants or executives might form relationships with younger women to advise them on work choices and difficult career decisions to assist their career development (e.g. Arnold and Davidson, 1990; Vincent and Seymour, 1994). Mentoring can also comprise more experienced workers taking some responsibilities for the wellbeing of younger and less experienced co-workers. For instance, in some sports teams, junior players are assigned a more senior player who acts as a mentor. This mentoring may include assisting junior players avoid incautious actions, such as the frivolous disposal of their salaries and substance abuse (Gay, 1994). Then, there is the role of mentoring that primarily focuses on the development of skills, such as in a tradesperson assisting an apprentice, a registrar assisting a hospital intern, and a solicitor assisting an articled clerk.

These different kinds of mentoring have distinct goals and processes, and also likely make different kinds of demands on mentors. Some are voluntary and enthusiastically joined, because the mentors view this role as an important obligation which they are pleased to discharge. Some kinds of work might carry obligations to assist others', especially novices', learning. For instance, as tradespersons, doctors and lawyers have all benefited from being supported in their vocational preparation, they may feel obliged to assist their apprentices, interns and articled clerks. Such an obligation may be easier to discharge when mentors have no fear of being directly displaced by those whom they are mentoring. Anthropological studies provide examples of structured instances of more experienced community members assisting novices learn (Pelissier, 1991). In these studies, often the basis for this mentoring is a shared goal associated with the continuity of the community or group. Hence, there is a common goal to be achieved and consensual participation by the more experienced partners. However, this may not be the case in many contemporary workplaces. Experienced workers may be concerned about displacement (e.g. Bernhardt, 1999) or about engaging with co-workers in ways that carry

the prospect of conflicts and suspicions about the intents of that engagement (e.g. it is only being enacted because it is in the enterprises' interest) (Billett, 2000). In considering why individuals engage in and might benefit from mentoring, Scandura *et al.* (1996) claim that individuals may participate in mentoring to secure future allies who are compliant to their needs, with the aim of developing a network of supportive subordinates. These authors also refer to crucial subordinates who are willing to put their superiors' needs ahead of their own careers. These authors and others (e.g. Allen *et al.*, 1997) also identify more benign reasons for mentoring, including those associated with the benefits of status and acknowledgement that may flow from being asked to mentor junior staff.

In an earlier study of guided learning across five workplaces (Billett, 2000), stories of mentors' experiences were gathered incidentally. These stories provided diverse accounts of their willingness to be involved, competence in and experiences with the mentoring role, and perceptions of their contributions. While some volunteered for the mentoring role, others were selected without consultation, thereby raising suspicions about the purpose of the mentoring and bases for their selection as mentors. Although the same preparation was provided for all participating mentors, some found the task more demanding than others. The capacity for competence in mentoring was identified as being attributable to:

- previous experience;
- depth of and confidence in the knowledge of the work in which they were mentoring; and
- the ability to develop mentoring skills in a supportive environment.

Over the six-month period and across the five workplaces that comprised this earlier study, some mentors withdrew from the program; however, most persisted. Some faced belligerence from those whom they were mentoring. Others may well have been sources of hostile relations with co-workers. Some excelled in the mentoring role. In one workplace, as well as supporting his own mentee, one mentor took over the responsibilities for mentoring another worker after her mentor withdrew. Both mentees reported the powerful learning experiences provided by their willing mentor. They also

commented that his efforts constituted the sole instance that anybody in their workplace had spent time elaborating their work role and assisting with its development. However, other mentees resisted or were affronted by the mentoring process, claiming to be more knowledgeable than their assigned mentors. Even the same workplaces provided different mentoring outcomes. In one workplace, despite a highly demarcated, suspicion-laden work environment and where the learning outcomes was reported as being lower than in the other workplaces, the aforementioned willing mentor provided high levels of guidance to two less experienced workers. In another workplace that had reported otherwise successful mentoring experiences, one mentor faced a level of belligerence and disdain from his mentee that rendered the mentoring role impossible. What is evident from the diversity of experiences and outcomes featured in these stories is that different kinds of demands were placed on the mentors. For some, the requirements of the role, including being under-prepared for it, made the mentoring role highly demanding and unwelcome. For others, the task built upon what they had done previously or was seen as a welcome opportunity to assist others and to gain recognition of their expertise. So the demands and benefits of mentoring played out in different ways in these workplaces. The findings from this earlier study identified the need to learn more about mentors' workplace experiences and the benefits and demands of that role. In a subsequent study of workplace learning, specific data were gathered from mentors about their experiences

Methodology

The investigation, from which the data discussed below are drawn, was of a year-long study of mentoring in a large manufacturing plant. During the year, data were gathered in three of the plant's work areas (client relations, packaging, and manufacturing). The study focused on how mentoring proceeded in these work areas and on its perceived effectiveness. A total of eight individuals were selected, prepared for and acted as mentors in these work areas. Their selection was premised on their technical knowledge and on their predicted ability to

assist and support others' learning. Their preparation comprised two three-hour sessions that aimed to provide an orientation to mentoring and the guided learning techniques to be used (i.e. modeling, coaching, questioning, diagrams, and explanations), the modeling of those techniques, and then an opportunity to practise them in workplace settings. The guided learning strategies were selected as being those most likely to augment the learning that occurs through everyday learning in the workplace (Billett, 2001). That is, to assist the learning of knowledge that would be hard-to-learn solely through participation in everyday activities in the workplace. Some strategies were selected to assist the development of procedures that require the assistance of more experienced workers. These strategies were modeling and coaching that have been long used in the development of skills in workplaces. Moreover, as earlier research had identified a difficulty of developing conceptual knowledge through everyday work activities, some strategies were specifically directed to that end. These comprised the use of questioning, diagrams, and explanations. The preparation period for the mentors was intended to be of greater duration than the two three-hour sessions. However, these short sessions were the only periods that the enterprise would release the eight workers from their work duties. After their preparation, the mentors commenced using the strategies as part of their work practice. Mid-way through the project, some additional preparation was provided to introduce the mentors to further strategies (i.e. group discussion, extended questioning). In each work area, a number of workplace learners were also identified to act as informants throughout the investigation to provide data about the effectiveness of the mentoring process and each of the guided learning strategies used by the mentors. These workers were the main data source for the project, whose focus was on the efficacy of a model of guided workplace learning (Billett and Boud, 2001).

Throughout the year, five rounds of critical incident interviews were conducted with the learner-workers. These interviews were used primarily to gather grounded data about the efficacy of the guided learning strategies and other contributions to learning in terms of their utility for learning workplace tasks,

including new tasks and the novel application of what has been learnt. These data comprised quantitative measures and qualitative data on the effectiveness of the learning strategies, the frequency of their use, and other contributions to learning through participation in workplace activities. The data were gathered in the following way. During the critical incident interviews the learners were asked to identify particular workplace experiences where:

- new tasks had been undertaken with success;
- additional assistance was required; and
- the learners had been frustrated in their attempts to do something new.

After the workers described these incidents, they were asked to rate the contributions to their learning during those interludes from a range of sources, including the guided strategies. They were also asked to identify the particular qualities of these contributions to their learning. Other data about the overall efficacy of the mentoring program were gathered during progress and summative interviews with the learner-workers. Progress interviews were conducted after a period of six months and summative interviews were conducted with the mentors at the completion of the project. These interviews provided data on the mentors' perceptions of the efficacy of the mentoring role and the guided learning strategies and identified factors that assisted or hindered their mentoring role in the workplace. The findings discussed in the following section are drawn from the progress and summative interviews with the mentors. More detailed analyses of the efficacy of the guided learning strategies are reported elsewhere (Billett and Boud, 2001).

Findings

The findings reported here are those providing accounts and analyses of the mentors' perceptions of the efficacy of the mentoring, the demands made upon them, and the kinds of benefits that they accrued as mentors. The data used were gathered during the progress and summative interviews. Data were tabulated and categorised on the basis of the responses. That is, responses that were common were aggregated and those that were

atypical were used to form separate categories. These tabulated data were then used to propose the findings that are advanced below. In overview, mentors' responses suggest they believed the mentoring approach to be effective, and the evidence of its efficacy and the contributions of their role encouraged them to persist with its use. However, they also reported unanimously that the mentoring task rendered their work more demanding and intense, and that the mentoring was conducted with little or no support or acknowledgement from workplace management. Importantly, it was held that the degree of success was dependent on the mentors' efforts alone, rather than on any additional support provided to the mentors and learners.

Effectiveness of mentoring

In the summative interviews at the end of the study, all eight mentors concluded that the mentoring approach was effective. They claimed this approach to learning was applicable to workplaces, relevant to the skills to be learnt and provided a method that was accepted as being effective in the workplace. They were able to identify key attributes of each of the guided learning strategies and requirements for their use. However, some of their attitudes toward mentoring had evolved over the period of the project. At the progress interviews, six months into the project, the mentors were asked to compare their initial and current attitude towards their role. If there had been any change they were asked to identify the source of that change. Initially, some mentors viewed the strategies positively whereas others were unsure, apprehensive or sceptical. Some scepticism derived from initial concerns about the company's intent with the scheme, and the basis for their selection as mentors. The uncertainty and apprehension seemed to be derived from particular concerns about these individuals' capacities to perform well in the role. However, after six months, the mentors' attitudes were more positive than when they commenced using the guided learning strategies. Three of the mentors, who had earlier expressed reservations, were now more positive about the mentoring task. In two cases, the process associated with coming to understand better their co-workers' needs as learners was given as a reason for the change in sentiment. Two mentors remained

uncertain, although one reported efficacy in assisting learning and the use of his time in providing that assistance. Those who had expressed initial support continued to do so, although one noted the difficulties in finding time to perform the role adequately. So, there was some change in attitudes towards the use of mentoring in the workplace, and also a more informed view that was derived from practice. Yet, for at least one mentor, this practice had drawn attention to the demands of time required for their use. These views were reinforced in the responses to a direct question in the progress interviews about the overall efficacy of the guided learning strategies. This efficacy was reported in terms of the kinds of structure it provides for learning at work, the kinds of experiences the learners have, and the quality of support being offered to the learners to assist their learning. However, some mentors were careful to indicate that, while effective, there were factors that inhibited their role. Issues associated with time, production flow, managing learners' interest and their readiness were identified.

At the conclusion of the 12-month project, all mentors assessed the efficacy of the mentoring approach positively. They endorsed its:

- capacity to understand and meet individuals' needs;
- relevance to the workplace context; and
- supportive approach to assist co-workers' learning.

These views and perceptions are helpful in considering the utility of mentoring as a workplace learning strategy. They also identified some benefits that might accrue to the mentors. That is, the kinds of positive changes in their learner that mentors might experience and from which they could derive gratification. However, while reassuring, these findings are less helpful in understanding the requirements and demands placed upon these workplace mentors. The next section discusses factors that illuminate these demands.

Demands of mentoring

The demands placed upon the mentors were those requiring them to learn and use the guided learning strategies in the workplace. The preparation process required developing the capacity to use these strategies as part of

everyday work duties. Initially, this meant understanding their purpose and having the opportunity for some practice prior to utilising these strategies in the workplace. Beyond the preparation, throughout the project, the key demand for the mentors was to use the strategies in and as part of their everyday work activities. The mentors were all senior members of their work teams and could legitimately undertake this role as part of their work.

At the progress interview, the mentors were first asked about factors assisting and inhibiting strategy use over the previous six months. The responses are presented in Table I. The left column presents a synthesis of factors the participants reported assisted their use of the strategies, whereas the right column reports those that inhibited strategy use. In each column, the mentors are identified with the letter prefixing the alpha character denoting the informant's work area. (i.e. C – client servicing; M – manufacturing, P – packaging). Each mentor also has a unique number from one to eight. There were two mentors in the client servicing area (i.e. C1 and C2), and three each in the manufacturing (i.e. M3, M4, M5) and packaging areas (i.e. P6, P7, P8), where there was a mentor on each of the three shifts in these two work areas. There was some similarity in the responses across the three work areas. Assistance was provided through the training and in use of the guided learning strategies, yet frustration was reported in the lack of time and opportunity to use the strategies (across all three work areas), given the demands and continuity of production. For some mentors, other workers were seen to be supportive, but the attitudes of both learners and mentors were held, by one informant, to be a constraint. Overall, the time required to use the strategies and the support the mentors received were central to the enactment of mentoring. But workplace factors (i.e. production demands, lack of time, attitude of learners) often inhibited the use of the guided learning strategies.

In sum, these data suggest that for the strategies to be used effectively, the mentors – although having received some support – had to work around the constraints of a lack of time and opportunities to use the strategies and, in some instances, contend with the negativity of co-workers. In the progress interviews, the mentors were also asked about how the use of mentoring could be improved and also how could they have been more adequately prepared for their role. The responses are reported in Table II, with those referring to the more effective use being aggregated in the left column and those pertaining to preparation in the right column. The suggested bases for more effective use largely refer to qualities that are lacking in the workplace. These comprise a specific allocation of time for strategy use and additional support from the workplace.

One respondent reported the need for a greater personal commitment to their use. So the issues of time and support emerge as key issues. In the aggregated responses about improving preparation, time was again referred to as being a requirement for both preparation and the opportunity to practice. Other bases for improvement were previous experience with these strategies and getting to understand more about the learners prior to implementing the strategies. These data emphasize that preparation for the mentoring role needs to be thorough. In all, these data suggest that for the enactment of guided learning to be effective, there has to be adequate initial preparation and ongoing support for the conduct of the workplace mentoring tasks.

In the summative interviews, where the mentors referred to the overall efficacy of the mentoring approach, they again were asked to identify factors that assisted or constrained the enactment their role in the workplace. As represented in Table III, the mentors were able to identify clearly those factors that assisted and inhibited their mentoring role. The most frequently mentioned form of assistance was from supportive colleagues,

Table I Factors assisting and inhibiting strategy use

Strategy use assisted by	Strategy use inhibited by
Training and practice (C1, C2, M3, P6)	Production demands (C2, M4, P7)
Support from other workers (M4, M5, P7)	Irregularities in production (M2, M5)
Experience using strategies (M5)	Time constraints (M4, P7)
Observing and understanding learners' requirements (P8)	Attitude of trainees and guides (P8)

Table II Requirements for more effective use and improvements to preparation

More effective use requires	Preparation improved by
More time for one-on-one interactions (C1, M5)	More time to prepare and practise (C1, M4)
Support in workplace and practice (C2, M4)	More opportunity to practise before implementation (C2, M4)
Need to concentrate on them more (M3)	Prior experience (M3)
Support from management (M4)	Getting to know trainees (P7)
More time-specific allocation (M4, M5, P6, P7)	

from other workers, and from the preparation. Against these, were the factors that inhibited the role:

- a lack of time to undertake the role;
- a demanding workload; and
- insufficient opportunities because of production considerations and low staffing levels.

So workplace factors associated with the intensity of the existing workload, shortage of staff, the demands on other workers were again consistently reported by the mentors as being the key constraints to the greater use of the guided learning strategies. These factors also played out differently across the three work areas, with the consumer advice area being seen as the most supportive, while the manufacturing area was reported as being particularly affected by fluctuations in workloads and uncertainty about its future. These factors influenced the ease of implementing mentoring, the efficacy of mentoring, and the benefits that flowed to the mentors. That is, there was evidence, albeit limited (yet also reflected in the mentees' data), to suggest that the more supportive the workplace environment, the greater the

prospect of positive benefits and ease of enacting the mentoring.

Discussion

All mentors reported believing the mentoring approach to assisting learning in the workplace was effective, and for some it also constituted a worthwhile and enriching experience. However, the difficulty of being able to secure time for the task was reported consistently. Overall, the support of or acknowledgement by management for the mentoring role was reported as being low. So while there was evidence of its overall utility as an approach to learning and as having some benefits for those responsible for its enactment, the mentoring role rendered the mentors' work more intense and demanding. Yet this more intensive work was not supported by or acknowledged in the workplace. So it is reasonable to propose that the success of the guided learning approach was premised on the mentors' efforts and energies. The provision of additional support for the mentors may have addressed concerns

Table III Factors assisting and inhibiting guided learning role

Assisting	Inhibiting
C1 The training was excellent, but no time given to put into practice. I followed the guidelines when showing staff members new tasks	Time, time, time – none was given
C2 Donna (C1) was great – she reminded me to stop and get the person to think before just telling them the answer	Pressures of the job make it difficult – if the phone is ringing it has to be answered and you cannot just stop and work out where you are up to
M4 I had two learners and their attitude had a lot to do with how often I used the strategies	The workload – there was insufficient work to run the line on a regular basis, therefore training was very limited
M5 The training and fellow workers	The amount of time that the line actually runs is insufficient to allow for training on a regular basis
P6 The training and team meeting have been effective in problem solving and passing on information	Insufficient people on the line and as a replacement for the trainee to concentrate on training
P7 Support from management and fellow work mates getting in and assisting	Crew reductions and changed paperwork that increases workload and reduces supervision and guidance
P8 Fellow workers because they were trained at the beginning and I just supported them	Having no trainees

about their role and made it easier and more rewarding. Similarly, some support (even mentoring) and acknowledgement might have made the task of mentoring easier, more focused and more rewarding. The findings here are similar to those of Allen *et al.* (1997) who also identified workplace (organizational) factors that assisted or inhibited mentoring. Those factors assisting mentoring were categorised as:

- organisational support;
- company training programs;
- manager/co-worker support;
- team approach to work;
- mentor empowerment;
- comfortable work environment; and
- structured environment.

Those organizational factors inhibiting mentoring comprised:

- time and work demands;
- organisational structure;
- competitive environment; and
- unclear expectations of company.

These categories have strong resonance with the findings of the smaller study reported here. However, whereas Allen *et al.*'s (1997) study referred to "informal" mentoring, the activities of the mentors in the present study were probably more demanding, requiring daily or, at least weekly, engagement with the learners through the use of the kinds of guided learning strategies required to develop robust vocational knowledge.

These data underscore the importance of support for mentoring: promises of support made to the mentors were largely unfulfilled during the one-year trial of the mentoring program. The mentors' work was promised to be supported by regular meetings, by shared opportunities to discuss experiences and issues of relevance, and by ongoing support from the human resource development unit. Unfortunately, none of this eventuated. There was also a faltering attempt (initiated and facilitated by the researchers) to inform the workers in the three work areas about the strategies and their purposes. This was undertaken to allay their concerns and to engage them in the learning process. The concern here was to inform and overcome learner reservations about interactions with mentors, as previously this had been identified as an impediment. For instance, in the earlier study, the use of questioning in one workplace (Billett, 2000) led to concerns that

workers were being questioned to ascertain how little they knew. But the workplace sponsors did not follow up this initiative undertaken by the researchers. This particular workplace was comparatively well disposed to workplace learning initiatives. It has a history of supporting workplace learning initiatives. There is a human resource development unit staffed by qualified teachers (who also seemed pressed for time), part of whose purpose was to support the mentoring tasks. So in some ways, this workplace represents a situation that might be able to afford appropriate levels of support. Yet this was not forthcoming. Instead, mentors reported gaining their support from colleagues and co-workers, who presumably were as equally pressed for time. Nevertheless, for the potential of the mentoring process to be more effectively realised it cannot be carried solely on the efforts and good intentions of the mentors. In their study of individuals who mentored others, Allen *et al.* (1997) concluded that the benefits outweighed the demands of the mentoring tasks. However, their mentors appear not to have been intensely engaged as the eight mentors in this study, given the intentional use of the guided learning strategies. While they reported some benefits of their role, the mentors in the current study overwhelmingly referred to the demands it placed upon them, given their already busy work schedules. So there is some room for pessimism here about the kinds of affordances that will be advanced to workplace mentoring arrangements where interventions in the form of particular guided strategies are enacted.

As foreshadowed, there is a range of different kinds of mentoring. Those that are regularly exercised as part of everyday work activities, as with the use of guided learning strategies, may well make the most demands on mentors, and potentially secure the greatest benefits to learners. However, there are also potential costs. Beyond increasing the demands of work, there is also the concern of exploiting the knowledge of mentors. As with the Japanese experience (Dore and Sako, 1989), it may be easier for the mentor when their efforts are acknowledged and they are secured from being displaced by those whose learning they have assisted.

In conclusion, the evidence points to the potential efficacy of mentoring in this workplace to develop the kinds of outcomes required to improve their workplace

capacities. This mentoring, and its guided learning strategies, is intended to occur as a part of everyday work activities, as it is through these that rich bases for learning for work can be secured (Billett, 2001). However, the findings suggest some additional considerations for mentoring to be an easier and more fulfilling role for the mentors. These considerations largely comprise greater workplace affordances including:

- informing the learners about the mentoring process in order to allay concerns about interactions with mentors;
- adequate preparation time for mentors;
- provision of time to conduct the role;
- support in its conduct; and
- acknowledgement of the mentors' role and contribution.

Of course, there will always be other priorities and demands than assisting learning in the workplace. However, there is potential for enhancing capacities through the provision of mentoring in the workplace. It seems unreasonable that securing this potential be largely a product of mentors' efforts and energies when they are denied assistance and acknowledgement for their role that only adds to the demands and intensity of their work.

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