

Mentored soldiers – soldier mentors

Abstract

The question of how to preserve the quality of education and upbringing and how to broaden the interpersonal relationship between mentors and students still remains actual. From the point of view of how to take care and further develop the talented ones, this question has become even more significant. Difficulties may arise from the fact that sometimes the person who helps in job socialisation and the one who deals with the scientific development is not the same person. The development that took place since ancient times has not excluded those circumstances which have played the role that cannot be substituted with anything else in the passing knowledge from generation to generation.

Absztrakt

Az oktatás és nevelés minőség biztosításának kérdése, illetve az a probléma, hogy hogyan lehet kiszélesíteni az oktató –hallgató kapcsolatot napjainkban is aktuális. Jelenleg különösen fontos a tehetséggondozás, tehetség fejlesztés kérdése. A nehézség gyakran abból adódik, hogy az a személy, aki a pályaszocializációban eredményesen segíthet, nem azonos azzal, aki alkalmas a tehetségfejlesztésre. A történelmi hagyományokra is építő tevékenység minden korban fontos szerepe játszott a tudás átadásában.

Introduction

One of the consequences that the distribution of work in the society has been developing so rapidly is that the notion of weaponry usage has undergone significant changes, military readiness integrates different skills and knowledge, including whole spectrums of scientific areas. Basically, these factors transform military training systems, and the main focus moves on to higher education, which is not the privilege of a certain narrow layer of the society any more, but it can be compared to a broad fishing net of well established educational centers, where knowledge is distributed in mass proportions, and this fact, as it will be further demonstrated, requires an immediate need for mentoring.

Recently the notion of mentoring has become popular again in those areas where mass information consumption has appeared and became widespread. Basically, this comes from the simple fact that mass education dominates, and it cannot deal with those who give up, either because of their social status or of other reasons, and on the other hand, with those, who have excellent chances, their social, genetic and other attributes raise them high above the average.

For educational establishments, including military educational ones where a considerable number of teaching staff is employed, it seems more and more fruitless to fight against these controversies within the frames of existing mechanisms. Having discovered and analysed these circumstances, the psychology of education prepared the ground for modern mentoring in two dimensions. On the one hand, for those who have to cease their studies because of their social circumstances, and on the other hand, for those who cannot bear and, consequently, refuse leveling, although there can be potential overachievers.

The modern world, including all events since the end of the Middle Age, establishes communication, together with many other things, governmental and mass education, devices, ranging from Gutenberg's Galaxy to microchips, which make it possible to orientate and study without interpersonal communication. In spite of considerable advantages, it has the disadvantage that the control of education becomes massed.

The reassessment of the relationship of mentors and students

In earlier times it was different. It is enough to mention that Plato in the 5th century BC who was freed from slavery by one of his devotees, gave him money to buy an estate and establish a school there, and with the opening of the famous academy, he performed the most important act of the ancient times. The academy had existed for almost thousand years.

Aristotle, who most effectively summarized the theoretical achievements of the ancient times, established new branches of science. He was characterized by analytical thinking, empirical methods, and intentional speculation. In 335, in Athens, he established his school, called Lyceum, where he taught by the so-called peripatetic method, walking in circles with his students surrounding him.

Heracleides joined Aristotle's peripatetic school. He was the first thinker who, instead of rotating the skies around the Earth, declared that the skies are static and it is the Earth that moves around its axis. Xenocrates had been listening to Plato since his early childhood. He spent most of his time at the academy. According to the records made by Diogenes, when Xenocrates went to town, porters and a screaming mob avoided him. It is also known from Diogenes that he was considered so reliable that he was the only one in Athens who did not have to take an oath when he was witnessing.

Societies of the ancient times were literally minute. Every free citizen had a place on the Agora, so people knew each other personally. Showing an example could not be ignored, educators, even if they wanted to, could not hide their rank. Students were literally within the reach of the hand from their mentors. The ideals of the ancient times were not statues on their pedestals or stars pictured on the covers of magazines, but those who were seen every day, and in this direct democracy mentors and educators were the same person.

It should be stressed that masters of old times not only educated their students, but literally, they lived with their students. In modern times this kind of natural relationship ceased to exist, and the new need

for this kind of old relationship has appeared. This replacement needs special attention, organization and effort.

Partiality as a positive action

In the case of those who under-achieve due to their social circumstances we speak about traditional mentoring, however, in the case of those who have difficulties and resist leveling but are able to over-achieve, we use the term of scientifically centered mentoring. Note this activity is classified as tutoring in some special literature or tutoring. The essence of this term is summarized in the blog of the institute of art theory and media research.

Source: mmilik.blog.hu

Due to the accepted assignment taking care of and developing the talented ones needs special preparation because this segment is less analysed, it touches the entire student population, and it may be necessary to deal with bad habits, like the harmfulness of exceptionalism or its anti-social character.

The liberal thinking of the 19th century put the idea of equality on its flag, which later became enriched with certain social elements, but one way or another, these ideas got a primary role in placing equality in the centre of the everyday social consciousness. No doubt that even today this system of ideas has its beneficial effects, but this period of time arrived at the stage when it is necessary to stand against the kind of levelling, which opposes the support of the most excellent. In other words, with the exceptionalism of the most talented.

The reassessment of interpersonal relations

While step by step the relationship of goods-money-market made it possible to start mass education, at the same time interpersonal education became elite and overvalued, with higher and higher costs. Even today this tendency has been counterbalanced by redistribution of governmental means, by social and congregational organisations in different regions, with different methods and results.

However, the question of how to preserve the quality of education and upbringing and how to broaden the interpersonal relationship between mentors and students still remains actual. From the point of view of how to take care and further develop the talented ones, this question has become even more significant. Because those times when those few students could sit around their mentors are long gone, new ways had to be and still have to be developed.

Besides many other solutions, the new ones were directed towards supplementing mass education with some kind of „intimacy“, which means that besides lecturing in auditoriums and the free flow of electronic information, there is a need for establishing an interpersonal relationship, which originates from a person from the epic of Homer, Odyssey, and after this person it was called mentoring.¹

Theoretical and practical questions of mentor preparation

The choice of who should be a mentor, their preparation, the analysis of their needs is based on the involvement of those people who are experienced in their occupation, respected by the society and who have an insight into their future profession. of their students The involvement of these people in mentoring certainly gives , on the one hand, status, proved by a certificate, on the other hand, this job, can provide service for the organisation, where the age and the actual activities of the doer do not matter.

Preparation of mentors can be performed by an educator with a Phd degree. This person can be chosen by the university management. This educator can ask the mentor not only to perform the task, but by cooperating they can make a plan of how to do the task and the methods of control.

To fulfill the necessity to reinvent and refresh mentorship, it is important for the university educators to cooperate in the future in an organised way, to choose their leadership, who, in close cooperation with the management, would cooperate on how to increase the quality of mentorship. Together with the Mentors Organisation, they should make suggestions for the university management, aimed at raising the university prestige and the development of cooperation. The Mentors Organisation can control the work of mentors, they can establish contacts with local establishments and with the ones abroad.

Difficulties may arise from the fact that sometimes the person who helps in job socialisation and the one who deals with the scientific development is not the same person. In the present application documents, the most important criteria is not the Phd degree, but , quite rightly , the military experience. We need to realise that the so-called „successful“ job socialisation – interiorisation of the successful commandment or leadership model, or a successful science career - support in achieving a Phd degree - often needs a mentor with different methods or different occupational or personal characteristics.

To avoid the problems mentioned above, pairing of mentors and students is arranged by the following principles

1. The professional, educational and scientific work performed by the mentor should be close to the interests of the student.
2. Their scientific areas of interest, their professional attitude, their motivation should possibly coincide.
3. Similarity of known or spoken languages.
4. Similarity of free time interests.
5. Common parameters of keeping contact, acceptable distance, time and occupation.
6. Compatibility of communication characteristics, personal compatibility.

In the present time when military education faces important challenges, it is extremely important to apply old, and at the same time new values, which make the bureaucratic, overregulated life of establishments more colourful, not to mention cognitive - effective intellectual supplement, which can make the process of learning unique and enjoyable, both for the mentor and the student.

The initiative is two - sided. Both the mentor and the student have possibilities, and of course limits in their activities but due to the assymetric nature of the relationship, the bigger responsibility is that of the mentor.

Some psychological aspects of mentorship

There are several tasks that mentors must perform, such as, education, psychological and emotional support, help with administrative matters, as well as financial and moral support. Relation support mentorship between two specialists is a professional relationship where the mentor gives intellectual, moral and possibly financial support to enhance his or hers protege's professional carrier. There are several definitions to explain the notion of mentorship. Generally they agree that mentorship is a process where a person with bigger experience, with higher rank or position helps a younger person, with less experience in his or her development, giving advice in their carrier modelling and sponsoring this person.¹ Generally this process can be quite simple and it includes simple elements, but at the same time it can be complicated. It can be official and unofficial. In some places it is called upbringing or preparation for the carrier, however, in practice the content and the process is basically the same.

At the same time at the Zrinyi Mitklós National Defence University the system of mentorship has certain difficulties from the point of view of psychological aspects. The memory of past events in the post-communist countries, including ours, is quite diverse. In Hungary there was not enough time yet to overcome the idea of the two comparatively near, from the time aspect changes of political systems. The difference between personal motivation brings some people into uncertain situation, those who do not have personal experiences but learned them from family members, relatives of from secondary social groups.

Pre -conditions necessary for the success of selection

1. The difference in the general relationship between mentors and students quite often we have to mention the generation gap, since in many cases they do not have any common experiences besides their common task. Their common memories and history is loose, rooted in the secondary, mostly differently interpreted historical and cultural memories.
2. Their common interest orientation is a motivation aspect that can be certified during their common work. Before they start working together they possibly do not have any expectations toward each other, since they do not have enough information about each other.
3. Their personally dependent relationship may stall on the level of institutional responsibilities, but it may become successful through common consultations and in best case it is possible that a relationship will develop in spite of the generation gap, which would result in a long professional friendship.

The first steps of relationship establishment can seriously influence further cooperation. Establishment of mutual trust requires responsible, and from certain points of view, carefully examined behaviour from both parts. If any of them has the feeling that the approach of the other half is not sincere, it would be very difficult to correct it in the future. The establishment of relationship between two adults is always unique, it cannot happen according to rules, but certain factors of experience can be applied to the following:

1. Both sides can approach but it is better if the mentor is the one who takes the first step because it can be seen as a gesture, which from the psychological point of view, can diminish the possible negative aspect of keeping distance.
2. Similarly to the above - mentined factors it is advisable to use the English system of the impersonal addressig system of „you” rather than the rigorous Prussian model.
3. It is usually advisable if they mutually introduce the main areas of their professional interest, this way they make it easier their future dialogues.
4. It may also be necessary if they inform each other about their time schedules, so that they can arrange their meetings faster.

It is also necessary to mention the main everyday characteristics of the sources of possible everyday conflicts, since experiences show that their handling poses the main difficulty for even well-prepared mentors. Analysis done so far in this area has established the following conclusions

1. If one of them does not appear at the arranged consultation, according to the rules of general human contacts, patience can be expected and an explanation for absence is presented.
2. It is a mistake not only from the mentor but also from the mentored if the meeting is cancelled due to the above-mentioned reasons, and if no explanation is given, if one of them suggests that nothing serious happened and the other person had things to spend time with anyway. This is the kind of behaviour that degrades one of the most essential values, i.e punctuality.
3. The mentor must expect his partner to take his professional advice seriously, but it cannot be expected to integrate it in cases when it contradicts with his beliefs, since in the culture of science behaviour there is no place for orders.
4. It can be a basis for serious conflicts if the mentored considers ignorance as his assigned role, or

on the other hand, if the mentor behaves, due to his or her role, as if he or she knows everything better than the student. These are kinds of behaviour that make successful cooperation impossible, and they may result in the reassessment of the entire relationship.

5. It is also important to mention that sharing knowledge does not necessarily mean sharing lexical knowledge, but it also includes different ways and methods of acquiring knowledge.
6. From the above - mentioned it can be derived that if the mentor gets a question he or she cannot answer immediately, the best solution would be if he or she offers the mentored to find the answer together.

The duration of successful mentorship is variable. In the best case it is not finished with the end of the institutional relations but it transforms into an interpersonal relationship without institutionalism, since it is substituted by friendship. Even if this kind of relationship is not established, it is expected to thank each other for their common work, which should be not a mere formality, but the expression of mutual appreciation of the common work. It is also necessary to mention here that it tells a lot if they stay on the level of thanking or if they continue to work on keeping an informal relationship.

From the point of view of the personal psychology both parties should realise the importance of the mutual appreciation of their common work, that the information given to others should be synchronised. It should not happen in any case that they assess their work differently, either with each other or with others. From a closer psychological point of view to satisfy this requirement can bring such important results for both parties practising and developing moral socialisation, which is even more important than mentorship.

As it can be seen, the majority of surveyed lacked the educational and professional information, which shows serious discrepancies even in traditional mentorship, but it would deprive a science-centered support from its basic sense. Consequently, it is extremely important to pay special attention to scientific orientation when selecting mentors.

In our view, it does not mean that the mentor should be up to date in all aspects of the chosen topic of the person mentored, but he should be able to provide proper help on how to approach necessary materials, how to organise personal research plans how to find a proper mentor, how to organise, assess, use and summarise gathered information. Of course, this kind of help can be expected only from a supporter who is also experienced in research and research planning and the application of results.

Some psychological research specifically refers to the fact that mentorship is an important value, both for mentor and mentored. Maslow-5 Source [http://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham Maslow](http://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham_Maslow) - who is a world - famous American psychologist of Russian origin, stresses not only the fact that the need for a mentor is a human need, but the need for teaching is also that. It is a very important statement, knowing this it would be worth while to think over the stereotypical consideration of mentorship as some kind of sacrifice. As a matter of fact, seriously taken and convincing educational mentorship is self-development at the same time.

To summarise the above, we can conclude that the development that took place since ancient times has not excluded those circumstances which have played the role that cannot be substituted with anything else in the passing knowledge from generation to generation. The available information that was considered immense earlier has not only diminished, but on the contrary, raised the social need for direct intellectual guiding, since it became clear that the way out of confusion of too-much. Too-little knowledge can be solved with interpersonal education.

Lastly, it is necessary to mention that the special Hungarian literature in connection with this topic is vast. Background studies are only a small part of the literature that is on the internet (there are a lot of materials on the websites of some more important secondary and higher educational establishments) and I considered it important that English language literature would also be easily accessible study development and for practical activities.

References:

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¹ www.wikipedia.org/wiki/mentor

² Background study of János Krizbai