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Artículos Científicos

La mentoría como estrategia de identidad en la BUAP

Mentoring as an identity strategy in BUAP

Mentoria como estratégia de identidade na BUAP

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Resumen

En el presente trabajo se procura entender el significado de la mentoría y analizar la experiencia en torno a ella como una herramienta para el desarrollo de la identidad en la Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, por lo que se refiere el cambio e impacto generado en esta comunidad universitaria. Asimismo, se examina la repercusión de la actividad de mentoría en los *mentees* (alumnos sujetos a la mentoría) y sus percepciones sobre la utilidad de las actividades que se desprenden de ella. Cabe mencionar que el diseño de la mentoría en la BUAP y las actividades llevadas a cabo han sido analizados por especialistas. Para ello, se tomaron en cuenta las necesidades y características de la comunidad estudiantil de la referida casa de estudios. Este texto da cuenta, según los resultados, de cómo la mentoría tiene un papel social claramente desarrollado a favor de la población.

Palabras clave: BUAP, estrategias, identidad, mentoría, teoría de la identidad.

Abstract

This work seeks to understand the definition of what mentoring is as well as the experience that has given when it has been used as a tool to develop the identity in the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla. We must mention that importance that the mentoring process has taken place in BUAP and how it has generated a change and has imprinted an impact in the university community. At the same time such impact will be analyzed on the mentees and their perceptions on the usefulness of the activities that come from it. It is worth mentioning that specialists, as well as the activities carried out, have already analyzed the design of the mentoring at BUAP. Said analysis takes into account the needs and characteristics of the University's student community. This text shows, according to the results, how mentoring has a clearly developed social role in favor of the population

Keywords: BUAP, strategies, identity, mentoring, identity theory.





Resumo

Neste artigo, procuramos compreender o significado da mentoria e analisar a experiência em torno dela como ferramenta para o desenvolvimento da identidade na Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, no que diz respeito à mudança e ao impacto gerado nesta comunidade. Da mesma forma, é examinado o impacto da atividade de mentoring nos pupilos (alunos sujeitos a mentoring) e as suas percepções sobre a utilidade das atividades que dela decorrem. Vale ressaltar que o desenho da mentoria na BUAP e as atividades realizadas foram analisadas por especialistas. Para tanto, foram consideradas as necessidades e características da comunidade estudantil da citada casa de estudos. Este texto mostra, de acordo com os resultados, como a mentoria tem um papel social claramente desenvolvido a favor da população.

Palavras-chave: BUAP, estratégias, identidade, mentoria, teoria da identidade.

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Introduction

To understand the meaning of the word mentoring, one must inquire into its origin, which has its beginnings in studies in medicine, specifically in surgery. This can be seen in the early 19th century, specifically in 1889, at Johns Hopkins University (Sadideen and Kneebone, 2012). In this sense, Halsted revolutionized the training of surgeons in the United States by introducing a German structure where responsibility was aligned to certain criteria, which are still taken into account. At that time, education was carried out through experiential learning and collective knowledge sharing with colleagues at higher levels, this hierarchical structure that remains a mainstay in medical education today.

In the history of medicine, mentoring has taken on a more professional than academic role, since it has focused on supporting mentees (that is, who receives the support of a mentor) in the acquisition of knowledge, jobs and tasks and even create work networks. In the words of Ortega-Miranda (2019), "mentoring is a process in which a person advises, guides and gives professional and personal support" (p. 58).





Over time, the role of mentoring has expanded and has become an integral part of university life, just as other academic forms have developed. However, mentoring had to evolve from the saying "see, do, teach", since it is an exclusive method.

It is important to say that Mexico is not a country that embraces this type of strategy because support and teamwork are not the strengths of its citizens; However, different mentoring strategies have been applied with very specific objectives and with goals that have been achieved, that is, identity. According to Capello (2015), identity is the result of a complex psychosocial process through which the attributes that characterize a group are assimilated and internalized by the individual.

For this reason, it is important to analyze the general characteristics of mentoring and the steps that have been taken to achieve, in the case of the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (BUAP), identity in its students, since these results have been achieved other goals linked, for example, to reducing dropout rates.

Method

This project not only included designers, students and mentees, but also teachers and mentoring coordinators from each school and faculty that make up the university in order to understand the development of the identity of each person involved. This merited the design, evaluation and feedback of strategies developed by the people dedicated to the construction of identity with BUAP. Today's students cannot only immerse themselves in university student life, as they must also take advantage of the experience of mentors who have gone through similar situations, which has generated new knowledge.

In this sense, identity theory has been applied to close the mentoring circle and seek specific results. There is a lack of diversity in the university in the different disciplines, so students look for mentors to feel connected to the campus where they study.

For this reason, this article proposes a mentoring model that has merged identity theory with mentoring. In this sense, the reflection is more linked to the critical analysis of the phenomenon presented.





Results

Observed the phenomenon, we realize that mentors do not have the role of teaching basic subjects of the degree being studied, but rather adapt to the changes in structure and the objectives that BUAP proposes. For the mentoring to be successful and the mentees to benefit, both figures are supported by the institution from the most basic level to the highest spheres so that this mentoring culture manages to permeate all those involved, making them feel part of the BUAP from the beginning to the end of his career.

According to Tsen et al. (2012), mentoring provides the opportunity to share the experience so that new students can complement their learning from the experience of their mentors. We believe that new students can absorb anecdotally based real life experience, as well as from the knowledge gained and from the mentor's experience. In fact, although teaching forms do not allow communication or personalization of education, due to the number of students per classroom, mentors can identify and focus on identified needs. This personalization becomes very important, since it is taken as a learning supplement that complements the unique experience of the student.

Therefore, mentoring can be defined as an effective educational tool, which has been identified by some students as one of the most important aspects of formal education. In this sense, Sambunjak, Straus and Marusić (2006) mention that mentoring is directly associated with the improvement of professional satisfaction, since those students who have mentors achieve better results.

Steele (2013), for his part, he showed that the experience of a relationship with a mentor leads to a better level of retention. Despite its inherent value, mentoring is far less abundant and even available than it should be. Steele (2013) reports that an analysis by a respected academic institution showed that the majority of new students wanted mentors from higher levels; however, there were no upper semester students and even in some departments it was reported that only 19% of mentors were available.

In the case of the UK, it was shown that 8% did not have a mentor. The numbers of mentors and mentees in Latin America are not at all encouraging due to the paternalistic culture that both Mexico and the rest of Latin America have. However, mentoring programs have gained popularity in recent years, which generated the need to identify and prepare good mentors, develop a good mentoring program and, above all, establish the specific





objectives of said program, which should be measurable even when they take on a qualitative aspect.

Applied mentoring at BUAP

From a previous analysis, the characteristics and needs of the student community were detected to build identity and, as a collateral effect, to increase school retention, which became a strategy in the social sphere much more than in the academic one. In this sense, teachers will continue to be academic mentors, providing students with the necessary support for their performance in the specific area; however, the Directorate of University Accompaniment (DAU), which is an essential part of support at BUAP, is turned over to design and implement the non-academic mentoring program.

The analysis shows us that as a proposal each faculty will have a mentor coordinator, who knows the mentor candidates. All mentors are volunteers, who are in the third semester and support the different activities and dynamics that the institution, through DAU, decides to apply.

Mentors are trained to know what are the activities to be carried out and the limits of their activity. At the beginning, the training of the student mentors is carried out in person at the DAU facilities, and over time the way in which they support the program is updated, so that the figure of a wolf-mentor can be created.

The wolf-mentor area seeks to support people who do not know the place, the culture and the processes of the university as some important elements of the same city. Finally, the training provided to the wolf-mentors is uploaded to a platform to expedite the training and condition the entry to the mentoring program to complete the online program.

Next, the necessary characteristics of a mentor are analyzed, which should be covered by higher level students of the BUAP.

Discussion

Based on developed theory, specifically the experiences of different teachers, certain characteristics or qualities that a mentor must have in order to effectively support their mentees can be mentioned. A mentor agrees to be. Even though the wolf mentors are students with an age range of 19 to 23 years, and commitment is not a strong point for them, those wolf mentors tend to be highly committed to carry out the support activities to





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help the children. students under his tutelage (mentees) and they find in the success of their task a reward for their work. Wolf-mentors come to and complete activities, understanding the value of persistence and following up on assigned mentees.

This commitment comes naturally, as wolf mentors know what they can do and how important it is in the life of another. This belief is not based on what they believe it is to be a mentor, but is anchored in the knowledge that mentoring can become a complicated task, which requires a significant investment of time and energy. All of this is achieved through formal training of the wolf-mentor, which becomes a prerequisite. The program should then provide specific descriptions of the role and responsibilities of the wolf-mentor.

Finally, the mentoring program requires mentors to keep some kind of notes or notes on conferences or other professional development activities from both themselves and their mentees; however, such notes should protect the confidentiality of the relationship between the wolf-mentor and the mentee. Even when wolf mentors carry out their activities without having any type of compensation, the relationship between compensation and commitment should not be forgotten. It is a proven fact that programs that provide the mentor with some form of salary, time off, or career growth opportunities speak to the true value of the work that wolf-mentors have and the impact their work has on the student community.

As a noteworthy aspect in the delimitation of the mentor is the acceptance of her role as a teacher-type support not with the characteristics of a teacher-student relationship, but seeking to develop a relationship based on empathy. In this regard, Rogers (1998) explains that empathy means accepting a person without judging him, for which he must put aside (even temporarily) personal beliefs and values. The mentor must then recognize the power of accepting mentees as individuals in both personal and professional development. This requires mentors not to judge or reject mentees for their unpreparedness, naivety, or other characteristics of a newcomer to college life.

Mentors should see these characteristics as challenges to overcome and focus their efforts on supporting mentees in these areas. This should be taught in the training program that captures prospects by recognizing those qualities by becoming effective support; this characteristic should be a good starting point in the selection process of the next mentors. All this can be found in the work of Rogers (1998) and Combs (1999), where it is mentioned that the level of awareness about the importance of these attributes can be increased. It is equally significant within the training to help future wolf-mentors to





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understand the problems and concerns of the mentees (Fuller, 1969; Veenman, 1994), as well as to analyze possible scenarios and develop development activities (Loevinger, 1996; Sprinthall and Thies-Sprinthall, 1981). This means that it is recommended to carry out training exercises for the wolf-mentors to analyze their own experiences, with which they have a willingness to accept the mentees more, regardless of the age difference.

Mentors, therefore, must have skills to facilitate instructional support, that is, to support mentees in their academic performance regardless of their level. Although this topic may seem obvious, many mentors do not see the importance of providing quality instructional support. Among other factors that contribute to this problem is the school culture, which does not tend to encourage teachers to observe their peers developing in the class (which serves to understand which aspects need support), since this could be associated that something is being done incorrectly. For this reason, spaces should be promoted for wolf-mentors to share their experience because dialogue can support and initiate discussions based on similar experiences.

Such experiences can take different forms: wolf-mentors and their mentees can do team activities, mentees can observe their wolf-mentors, wolf-mentors can observe mentees, or both can observe other groups and even teachers. Regardless of the nature of the experience, the purpose is to promote collegial dialogue focused on improving the performance of both the teacher and the wolf-mentor to optimize the learning of the mentee. This raises questions about what can be done to prepare wolf mentors to provide instructional support.

The quality of the instructional support that a wolf-mentor can offer is influenced by the degree of knowledge he has and the support he had. Therefore, it is proposed that the training problem provide the wolf-mentors with knowledge, skills and prerequisites so that they can carry out effective coaching. Such training helps wolf mentors to assess the description and interpretation of the coaching process, thereby developing different support methods as well as feedback skills. Finally, the mentor wolf and their minds need to be given the time and opportunity to participate in conferences, classes, and support activities. The wolf-mentor is effective in different interpersonal contexts, since he takes into account that each relationship with his mentees is unique. Many times the wolf-mentor will meet resistance from his mentee and will encounter different attitudes towards the wolf-mentor; however, with time and work, this type of attitude changes. This is an aspect that should be





anticipated when assigning wolf-mentors with mentees, since the relationship will not only be maintained in one or two semesters, but even throughout the student life (Rowley and Hart, 1984).

A very vital aspect to develop in wolf mentors is the ability to communicate optimism and hope. According to Lasley (1996), one of the characteristics of mentors is the ability to communicate the belief that a person is capable of transcending challenges and achieving great achievements in the future. This aspect has no less value than the previous ones, as it helps to capitalize on the opportunities to reaffirm the human potential in their minds. This can be done in private conversations and in public places. Mentors seen as "good" share their own struggles and frustrations and how they overcame them, which is genuinely perceived and builds trust in mentees.

The value of the mentee

In addition to the characteristics mentioned above, there are different components that make a wolf-mentor very valuable. A mentor is an active guide, but the wolf-mentor must have a valuable product or experience that he can give in return. This experience may consist of pure academic knowledge, technical experience, or professional standing and contacts.

The respective value of each of these categories increases within the new educational reality. Due to the lack of experience of the mentee, the experience of the wolfmentor himself, as well as the knowledge of him become the most significant link in learning. The wolf-mentor must know the value of mentoring, as well as its place in the educational environment, as it allows better integration in the development of the mentee.

However, a large portion of students do not appreciate the effect and influence on students. In a study conducted in the United States, approximately 26% of medical students lose interest and 10% of resident positions have not been filled in recent years (Sadideen and Kneebone, 2012). This means that not only mentoring should be valued, but also understanding how mentoring differs from its past role within a new emphasis on academic foundations.

The mentee should be involved in face-to-face discussions, as well as debating which bridges should be built in educating the mentees to arrive at the required knowledge. By understanding that the mentee lacks real-world technical expertise, an opportunity is





found to integrate mentoring into education. A large literature can be found that suggests a prominent role of the mentor and the acquisition of technical skills, since a mentor can provide information according to the environment. Although learning is best accomplished by doing it and repeating it, the hands-on volume does not ensure a skill level (Sadideen y Kneebone, 2012).

The demand for a mentor-supported education has increased as a substitute for what has been previously learned. This shift to the emphasis on mentor responsibilities does not remove the classic focus on research and teamwork. Regardless of the level of training and academic advancement, the experience of a mentor is so important in promoting the mentee's career and developing their understanding of college culture.

A successful mentor, then, has positive personality attributes and provides insight, but he or she must interact cooperatively with the mentee for any of the previous attributes to have value. The specific goals of a mentor-mentee relationship vary greatly depending on the level of training the mentors have, as well as the personalities of each individual. It is clear, however, that more positive and satisfying relationships can be established if these goals are established early in the relationship, discussed, and reviewed from time to time. The goals of mentoring as well as your responsibilities are particularly important in a multimentor network.

The structure of a wolf-mentor and mentee relationship

The relationship of a wolf-mentor and a mentee is a malleable structure that must be personalized based on its members. Steele (2012) highlights that there is no consensus preference for formal educational meetings or for ad hoc discussions. There was also no agreement with the mentee as to how mentoring relationships should be established by administrators or coordinators, or by members of the relationship itself (Fleming, Burnham & Huskins, 2012). Some mentees prefer mentors their own age, while others prefer seniors. Still, it goes without saying that no matter what characteristics are desired in a mentoring relationship, everyone involved must be clear about their preferences and have an agreement on what is expected to be done. This verbal contact allows better communication, less misunderstandings regarding the role of each member and improves the integration of the relationship.





As previously described, the goal of mentoring is to increase the framework of education; However, that does not mean that each mentor should do everything that is asked of him, since the educational paradigm shift happens in the part of the mentee, not of the wolf-mentor. A mentee will likely need to rely on mentoring for a large part of their academic life, which can be accomplished through multiple mentors or the creation of a mentoring network. There is emerging evidence to suggest that multiple mentors significantly benefit mentee education (Cross, 2011). A network approach allows for the integration of different educational spheres and the development of multiple unique facets of the mentee's career.

Training is important for all mentors, although such a requirement is often ignored by institutions (Tsen et al., 2012). Regardless of mentoring experience, some types of situations are always potentially difficult to deal with. Mentor education allows for different topics such as gender, race and age to be addressed, and even the most difficult topics to deal with can be reviewed in an atmosphere where options and experiences can be shared openly. The mentor's confidence and comfort increase with discussion and practice. Tsen et al. (2012) show that after completing a training program, mentors feel able to support mentees outside of their specialty areas and have a better understanding of the academic resources that are at their fingertips.

The identity

According to Alderfer (1994), communication that crosses any border - through differences in values, culture, language, ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion or ability - involves intergroup relations and unconscious parallel processes, which they govern the quality of the interaction. Every transaction between people depends on the personalities. The only way to overcome these boundaries is to recognize intergroup relationships, the parallel processes of internalized messages, and use dynamics to forge a new understanding. Without this recognition, diversity is ignored, underestimated or, worse still, stereotyping.

The role of mentoring is to engage students with the institution, an academic discipline, and a profession (Smith & Davidson, 1992). So a question arises: how can higher education institutions increase the retention of diverse students? A model for mentoring different students should be predicated on an understanding of mentoring and an





understanding of developing topics for different people. According to Berry (1994), one of the most prominent themes is the development of identity.

Mentoring models with the aim of retaining students are described in different activities described by various authors (Bennetts, 1995; Blunt, 1995; Burgess, 1994). From the perspective of Borman and Colson (1984), some of them are:

- a) Encourage the mentee to have a positive attitude.
- b) Establish personal values and objectives with the mentee.
- c) Keep an open mind to new ideas.
- d) Interactions should be one of exchange of ideas and knowledge, empathic.
- e) Encourage the mentee to use creative processes for problem solving.
- f) Encourage the mentee to listen carefully and ask assertive questions.
- g) Encourage the mentee to be an independent thinker.
- h) Recognize your individual strengths and those characteristics that make you unique to work on.
- i) Support the mentee to develop self-confidence
- j) Help the mentee to be aware of the environment and its differences.
- k) Be more intuitive, cooperative and active (participant in school life).
- Encourage the mentee to be flexible and adaptable in terms of their attitudes and actions, looking for alternatives.

Incorporating identity theory and making mentoring a tool that is more sensitive to different aspects (such as culture, socioeconomic status, and diversity) takes the best of traditional mentoring theory and grows by integrating identity issues and integration. This model involves building a relationship inside and outside the classroom, where schools and faculties are sensitized to the stages of identity development that affect the mentoring relationship between students, establishing a meaningful dialogue about their learning and personal goals.

Faculty, students, institutions, and professions all benefit from this model, but rather than training the faculty to develop an identity, the purpose should be to assist or help them create specific social contexts, for example, relationships. mentoring (which can facilitate mutual understanding), as well as appreciation consistent with ecological pragmatism (Kelly, Azelton, Burzette, and Mock 1994).





Simply put, the goal of mentoring is the empowerment of the mentee. Hawks and Muha (1991) recommend that the university help with the career empowerment of the mentee and thus mentor different people. This generates intrinsic motivation in the students by emphasizing the knowledge generated by the student and the faculty pays for the student to see the problems as the result of a system rather than a failure of the student himself.

Therefore, mentors need to change rather than reflect on the values of society and see poor educational and occupational performance in terms of the diversity of student relationships with the institution rather than lack of skill or inspiration. Developing that sensitivity to identity development issues - empowering students to find their own answers within the discipline they are studying and supporting them at all times - should be the mentor's primary goal, thus preventing the mentee from Give up on your educational career, but instead look for different ways to face challenges and rely on mentors to keep going.

Conclusions

Based on the topics discussed above and the situation that develops at BUAP, we can conclude that students need to find reasons not only to enroll in a higher education institution, but mainly to re-enroll and complete a university degree, which can be easier when they feel valued and part of an institution.

In this sense, and due to the nature of BUAP, we find foreign students who miss their home and their culture, so they feel out of context. However, through mentoring, the faculty can find a tool to contribute to the success of the students, which offers a social benefit, since it increases the diversity of the professions.

However, it is worth noting that mentoring requires both an economic and social investment that not all institutions are willing to pay. Even so, several public universities take up this challenge for the benefit it provides to the student community. The challenge for BUAP, therefore, is to maintain and even increase its mentoring program so that as a public university it can be socially active in the lives of students and in the training of future professionals.





Future lines of research

Working with the idea of mentoring in Latin America is a challenge because there is no research that addresses the problems faced by any university, both public and private. Increasing mentoring programs in universities will generate research on how to train more and better professionals who have the certainty of their career choice. Future inquiries, therefore, should focus on the upper secondary level that each public and private university has. The challenge is to examine whether such a program can have a positive impact on college-bound students. We think so, but we need to implement these models to evaluate their performance.

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