



EDUCATION NEWS

Betty J. Horton, CRNA DNSc
Tower Hill, Illinois

THE IMPORTANCE OF MENTORING IN RECRUITING AND RETAINING JUNIOR FACULTY

Mentoring of junior faculty was the theme of the February 2003 Assembly of School Faculty in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. This column is adapted from the keynote speech entitled, "The Role of the Educator as a Mentor of Junior Faculty." The objectives of the speech were to: (1) Describe the characteristics of an educator as an effective mentor to junior faculty members, (2) discuss the importance of educators becoming

effective mentors to junior faculty members, and (3) identify how effective as well as ineffective mentoring of junior faculty members has an impact on the nurse anesthesia profession.

Key words: Benefits of mentoring; Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists; mentoring, effective and ineffective; mentoring faculty, recruitment and retention of faculty.

Need for faculty

At a time when there is a critical need for Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs), it is imperative to have a stable supply of qualified faculty to prepare nurse anesthesia students for the delivery of high quality patient care. Maintaining sufficient numbers of faculty is of great concern in our programs where the high turnover of nurse anesthesia directors and assistant directors has been well documented over the past decade. Faculty members have been lost to retirement, promotions within anesthesia, promotions outside of anesthesia, and clinical jobs that pay better than those in academia. Although there is no one method to guarantee an adequate supply of faculty, mentoring can be very helpful to recruit, retain, and support the development of junior faculty.

Mentoring a new generation

It is very likely that seasoned educators realize by now that mentoring for a new generation of students and junior faculty needs a different approach than for past generations.

Many people think that members of the new generation have no loyalty to their employers and are unwilling to work hard and sacrifice for their jobs or careers.¹ A nurse anesthesia program director expressed concern that her students were accepting scholarships from future employers but "jumped ship" to other higher paying employers at graduation.² She cannot believe that students have no loyalty to an organization that invested in their education and fears that future employers will discontinue scholarship programs if they do not see a relationship to recruiting nurse anesthetists.

How many of us have heard a statement similar to this?

Our youth love luxury. They have bad manners, contempt for authority; they show disrespect for their elders. ...They no longer rise when elders enter the room. They contradict their parents, chatter before company, gobble up their food and tyrannize their teachers.

You might think this is a comment from a contemporary teacher, but it is actually a quote from Socrates in 5 BC.¹

Socrates' view of youth shows that elders have been critical of

younger generations for centuries. Comments by some current senior faculty and administrators are no exception. They say that the younger generation is different than the older generation. Respect for longstanding values such as loyalty, hard work, and personal sacrifice is gone. They wonder why younger faculty members are not willing to "pay their dues?"¹

As a result, educators are reluctant to invest heavily in orienting members of the new generation as junior faculty. One senior faculty member questioned the value of mentoring junior faculty by asking, "Why should I mentor them when they learn all they can from me and then go to work for someone else?"¹

According to Weston,¹ much of this behavior stems from changes that occurred as young people from generation X (Americans born from 1965 to 1978) were starting their careers. Members of this generation entered the workforce when companies were downsizing and reengineering. Long-time loyal employees were laid off. The new generation learned that neither loyalty nor per-

sonal sacrifice for their employers was rewarded. In the new environment they learned that it was up to the individual to remain employable. Sacrifice and seniority clearly did not guarantee employment. Instead, competency, flexibility, and marketability were the keys to career success. As a result, members of the new generation see no value in being loyal to one employer. Instead, they are loyal to their profession and keeping their skills up to date. They learned that compromising one's personal life for one's career did not guarantee career or personal success.¹

Action plan

Junior faculty members, who are part of generation X, know they need to grow professionally if they are to remain marketable. As much as they look for financial compensation they look for positions offering continuing education and the acquisition of new skills. Administrators who recognize that junior faculty are searching for workplaces that allow them to develop skills, as well as to balance their personal and professional lives, are more successful in attracting and retaining faculty.¹ Remember that if career growth and development as an educator is at the expense of their personal lives, faculty members from generation X are not interested. They want to grow and learn in a pleasant environment where they have some control over their work schedules.

Wise administrators will implement a mentoring plan to coach new faculty members. As part of the mentoring plan, senior faculty can assist junior faculty in identifying their learning needs and facilitate experiences that allow them to obtain new knowledge. Orientation programs should be supplemented with later opportunities for junior faculty to learn

advanced skills and participate in activities that will strengthen their curriculum vitae. These efforts can help retain nurse anesthetists as educators and decrease the rate of faculty turnover.

In the near future, generation X will become part of the older generation when members of the baby boomer generation (Americans born from 1946 to 1964) near retirement. This means that future nurse anesthesia students and their anesthesia faculty will come from another generation, generation Y or the millennial generation (Americans born from 1979 to 1994). It is expected that members of generation Y also will be looking for coaching, mentoring, professional growth, and balance between their careers and personal lives.¹ Mentoring models are expected to be valuable in meeting the certain challenges of generation Y students, faculty, and the future of nurse anesthesia programs.

Mentoring relationships

- *Mentors.* To prepare for a mentoring relationship, one needs to know the difference between educators, preceptors, mentors, and mentees. Table 1 defines these terms. Interestingly, it is possible to be a teacher and never be a mentor because a mentor is more than a teacher. A mentor can affect all areas of a mentee's career. Mentoring implies a long-term nurturing relationship between the experienced professional, a mentor, and an aspiring mentee or protégé.⁵ Effective mentoring relationships result in the growth of both parties.³ In this article, senior faculty members are referred to as the mentors and junior faculty members as the mentees.

There are 2 types of mentoring—informal and formal. Both types of mentoring are complex, dynamic processes that can vary in

purpose, intensity, and duration. Until the 1970s, mentoring was for males in businesses and older professions. A mentor handpicked his mentee, took the novice under his wing, and provided “reflected power” to help the mentee become established.⁶ The role of a mentor in this type of traditional, informal mentoring relationship is similar to that of parent and child. A mentor provides an enabling relationship that facilitates another's personal growth and development. Informal mentoring relationships are not prearranged nor assigned within an organization.

In the late 1970s, mentoring became formalized as organizations included the process in staff development activities. In addition to providing learning experiences, these formal structured mentoring programs helped organizations meet affirmative action requirements by providing mentors for women and members of minority groups.²

- *Preceptors.* Faut-Callahan⁴ clarified the difference between traditional mentors and preceptors with this explanation:^{4(p249)}

Confusion sometimes exists when using the term mentor. Often it is confused with orientation or precepting...precepting involves more one-on-one teaching through examples. Mentoring is quite different. Mentors exude qualities of wisdom, teaching reliability, and caring within a strong personal and emotional relationship.

The preceptor's role is of a shorter duration and more focused on the specifics of the job. In contrast, the mentor's role includes assistance with personal, career, and professional development of a colleague. It goes beyond building skills.

Preceptors, such as clinical instructors, can experience conflict between the competing demands of providing patient care and fulfilling their precepting role. However, students say that the presence of an effective clinical instructor in

Table 1. Definitions^{3,4}

<p><i>Educator</i> – A teacher who imparts knowledge and/or skills to students through instruction. A teaching relationship ends when the novice is considered educated and able to perform independently.</p> <p><i>Mentee</i> – Student, advisee, novice, beginner, or junior faculty member. They are the beneficiaries of special relationships who are protected and supported by their mentors.</p> <p><i>Mentor</i> – Trusted guide, role model, counselor, supporter, confidante, advocate, or advisor. A mentor faithfully supports a mentee.</p> <p><i>Mentorship</i> – A one-on-one relationship that requires involvement and commitment from both a mentor and mentee. The length of a mentoring relationship may or may not be predetermined.</p> <p><i>Preceptor</i> – An individual, such as a clinical instructor, who has responsibility for facilitating a student's application of theory to practice and for assessing a student's progress. The preceptor's role is of a shorter duration than a mentor's and more focused on developing skills.</p>
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Table 2. Personal characteristics of effective mentors

Advocate
Attentive
Cognizant of personal weaknesses
Committed
Communicator
Empathetic
Enthusiastic
Ethical
Faithful
Knowledgeable
Nonthreatening
Nonjudgmental
Patient
Sense of humor
Tolerant
Problem solver

the practice area is an important influence on how they perceive their learning experiences.⁷ Preceptors are credited with helping students adapt successfully to their new roles.

- *Mentees.* Mentees have been described as protégés, students, advisees, novices, beginners, and junior faculty. They are the beneficiaries of special relationships who are protected and supported by their mentors. As a mentee, you are likely to have several dif-

ferent mentors at different points in time. According to Faut-Callahan⁴ you need to know when it is time to mentor and when it is time to be mentored.

Characteristics of mentors

A mentor is a role model, socializer, and educator.⁸ As a role model, the mentor assists the mentee by example. Senior faculty members model behavior by demonstrating how a competent educator performs his or her job. As a socializer, a senior faculty member actively integrates the junior faculty mentee into the social culture of the education program. This is accomplished by making the new educator feel welcome in faculty peer groups and throughout the organization. As an educator, the senior faculty mentor assists the mentee in assessing learning needs, planning learning experiences, and implementing assignments.

There are numerous personal characteristics that a mentor needs to function in the role (Table 2). Various combinations of these characteristics are needed for different mentoring situations and individual mentees. Thus, all characteristics attributed to mentors are not present all of the time.⁶ It is always helpful, however, if mentors are willing to share personal

stories of successes as well as failures. An honest relationship results in a learning experience for both the mentor and mentee.

Darling⁹ described the principal functions of a mentor as inspirer, investor, and supporter. These 3 functions require a mentor to be an energizer, standard prodder, teacher, feedback giver, eye opener, door opener, idea bouncer, problem solver, career counselor, and challenger. A mentor is not a peer or a pal to the mentee, although there is a mutual respect and friendliness in the relationship.⁶

Importance of mentoring to mentees and mentors

In 2002, Ehrich et al² published a literature review of 159 pieces of empirical literature on mentoring in educational settings.^{2(p260)}

While the findings confirmed that mentoring is far from a panacea for society's educational ills, our review confirmed that it would appear to offer numerous, far-reaching benefits. Many of the reviewed studies indicated, that for beginning teachers in particular, mentoring could provide unrivaled professional and emotional support, as well as career affirmation of teaching as a career.

Indeed, Greene and Puetzer⁸ reported that attrition rates were lower among new teachers who had been mentored. In addition to studies of civilian educators, a

study of military personnel found that mentoring helped those in the military to advance and be more satisfied with a desire to stay in the service.¹⁰

Mentors gain both personal and professional satisfaction from mentoring relationships. In educational settings, mentoring benefits senior faculty by causing them to reflect on their beliefs and teaching practices.² Senior faculty should encourage junior faculty to use reflection as a tool to develop their teaching skills. In fact, Wills and Kaiser¹¹ believe that reflection should continue to be used throughout an educator's career to improve his or her teaching. "A key investment in career development is to devote time to self-reflection and learning from each and every experience along the way."^{11(p65)}

Administrative support

Poor mentors break promises, lack knowledge and expertise, have poor teaching skills, have no structure in their teaching, and change their minds about things. They tend either to overprotect their mentees by allowing them to do very little or expect mentees to perform beyond their abilities. Mentees resent poor mentors who use them as unpaid laborers by delegating their unwanted jobs to them.⁷

Poor mentors may be the product of poor training as revealed by mentors who felt they were inadequately prepared.^{8,12} Lack of training left them feeling ineffective and overwhelmed by added responsibility. To correct this problem, training of mentors in formal mentoring programs is vital if they are to understand how to help mentees learn. Both mentors and mentees must understand the nature, purpose, and goals of a mentoring program.

In addition to training, mentors and clinical instructors should receive support and recognition for their contributions to mentoring programs from administration.⁸ When contributions to mentoring are officially recognized by administration, they are viewed favorably by faculty. As examples, the inclusion of mentoring in performance appraisals, monetary recognition through wage adjustments, titles, plus staffing and scheduling flexibility are ways to recognize contributions. Such incentives help retain faculty by showing appreciation for their commitment to education.

Effective mentoring

Formal mentoring programs facilitate relationships between junior and senior faculty, promote team building, and socialize junior faculty into the culture of their new roles.⁸ Socialization of junior faculty is a particularly important part of an effective mentoring program. No one wants to work in a place where they have no friends or feel they do not belong. Instilling a feeling of belonging and ownership in a nurse anesthesia program promotes the retention of junior faculty.³

In formal mentoring programs, senior faculty and junior faculty should be carefully matched in terms of professional expertise and personality. Some authors advocate voluntary participation of mentors. Others suggest that mentees should be allowed to select their own mentors. Overall, "Mentor matching usually is not as successful as relationships that grow out of commitment and belief in each other."^{4(p249)} However, cases where mutual selection occurs appear to be the exception rather than the rule.¹²

• *Factors in effective mentoring.* There are many factors that are

important to the effectiveness of formal mentoring programs and informal mentoring relationships.^{3,6} They are:

1. Effective programs recognize and use the knowledge and skills of didactic and clinical experts already on staff.

2. The mentor should know the policies and procedures of the educational program and give that information to the mentee. If the junior faculty member is not aware of the organization's expectations, his or her chance of success is diminished, as is the success of the mentoring relationship.

3. When learning a specific task is involved, the mentor should demonstrate skills so the mentee can observe an expert teacher in action. The mentor can then observe a return demonstration of the task by the mentee. Coaching the mentee and assessment of learning are inherent parts of this technique.

4. Mentors should expect some mistakes to be made as the junior faculty members learn their new roles. Alternative actions, options, and consequences should be explored. The way a senior faculty responds to a problem can expand the mentee's repertoire of behavior and avoid further problems.

5. The mentor and mentee should agree on time frames for goal achievement in the planning process.

6. A mentor should spend time with the mentee in addition to involving him or her in activities related to goal achievement.

7. Part of a mentor's responsibility is providing ongoing feedback to the mentee on his or her performance.

8. A mentor must recognize when the mentoring relationship is over. It is natural for mentees to gradually distance themselves

from their mentors as they become more self-confident and familiar with the task.^{7,8}

Ineffective mentoring

There are multiple reasons for ineffective mentoring relationships. Among the reasons are insufficient resources, mismatches, generational gaps, and insecure mentors.

- *Insufficient resources.* A lack of resources may definitely limit the availability of mentoring. A common problem is lack of time for both mentors and mentees. There may be only a limited number of senior level faculty members able and willing to devote time to mentoring junior faculty. Unfortunately, this will intensify as substantial proportions of the most senior level faculty retire from their academic careers.¹¹

- *Mismatches.* Ineffective mentoring relationships can result from a mismatch in expectations between mentor and mentee that is exaggerated when an inexperienced mentor cannot handle differences.⁶ Unrealistic expectations of a mentor set up both the mentee and mentor for frustration. Attempts to find a good match between mentor and mentee are worthwhile although it is rare for most people to find an ideal mentor.¹¹

- *Generational gaps.* Different norms and mores between generations can make integration of junior faculty challenging. "Nurses eat their young" is a phrase that indicates a lack of caring by members of an older generation who are overly critical of a younger generation. The phrase also indicates an unwillingness to help those who are in need. According to Tucker-Allen,¹³ this attitude could have to do with the authoritarian environment in which many senior faculty were educated. Students, for fear of being

expelled from school, did not question authority. Classes during the day, night shifts, and charge duty as students were part of the system where doing the work took priority over education. Educators saw high attrition rates as positive outcomes of a rigorous education.

Students enrolled in older rigid educational systems were usually not inspired to become educators.¹³ In order to attract today's young people into teaching careers, senior faculty must display caring behavior toward junior faculty to encourage them to remain in teaching. In addition, Tucker-Allen asserts that new teachers who have been nurtured are more likely to want to mentor others in the future.¹³

Cultures, values, and reward structures of an education program are so important that they will either impede or encourage faculty to realize their potential and make substantial contributions to the organization. Tension between nurse anesthetists of different generations should, therefore, be taken seriously since it can contribute significantly to problems associated with faculty development, retention, and recruitment.⁸

Fawcett³ reported that a lack of openness and flexibility was more apparent among older, more experienced teachers who were convinced of the superiority of their teaching style. As a result, they were reluctant to allow junior faculty any space to be creative and try new ideas. A mentor who is resistant to change also may give the mentee the same attitude. A stagnant environment causes people to become unhappy and look elsewhere for employment. Fortunately, the mentoring relationship has the potential to help transcend these generational differences.

- *Insecure mentors.* A mentoring relationship also can be ineffective if a mentor feels threatened by the questions and achievements of a mentee rather than being proud of the mentee's accomplishments. Alternatively, mentors should realize that it is their responsibility to encourage people they have mentored to surpass them in every way.⁶

Benefits for mentees and mentors

A mentee benefits from mentoring through discussions, sharing of ideas, solving problems, and obtaining advice from an expert. Mentoring is a source of feedback, positive reinforcement, support, empathy, encouragement, counseling, and friendship. Junior faculty can go to a mentor to receive help with teaching strategies, subject knowledge, and identifying resources. Importantly, a mentoring relationship has the potential to provide junior faculty with an increased level of self-confidence as a teacher and a commitment to education as a career.⁷

In education, mentors benefit from self-reflection, personal satisfaction, and retention of teachers. Senior faculty members grow professionally in mentorships by sharing ideas and knowledge as well as reflecting on their teaching. Mentors have said that reflection clarifies their educational priorities and the reasons why their teaching methods work for them. Personal satisfaction results from interpersonal skill development, enjoyment, stimulation, and challenge. According to Wills and Kaiser,¹¹ the biggest reward for a mentor is seeing a protégé be highly successful.

Senior faculty also benefit when mentoring programs decrease the attrition rate of junior faculty. When faculty members are lost it

creates additional operational costs in the recruitment and orientation of new staff. Vacancies have a negative impact on the morale of senior faculty who must do extra work and repeatedly train new faculty.^{2,8}

Benefits for the profession

A key issue facing nurse anesthesia educators is to educate an adequate number of students to meet the increasing demands for anesthesia services. Although nurse anesthesia programs have been admitting more students to meet a national need for manpower, the recruitment and retention of more qualified faculty are vital. Sufficient numbers of educators must be available to teach students what they need to know to deliver high-quality anesthesia care to patients.

The use of mentoring to recruit and retain faculty is, therefore, of the utmost importance if the profession is to meet an increasing demand for anesthesia services. In addition, sufficient faculty members are necessary to continue the professional culture where CRNAs are major players in providing anesthesia care and determining healthcare policy.

Conclusion

In early 2003, US President George W. Bush gave a State of the Union speech where he recognized the power of mentoring by saying that a mentor can change a person's life forever. Senior faculty in nurse anesthesia programs can use the power of mentoring to guide the development of new faculty as they encounter the stresses of meeting the expectations of students, the education system, work setting, and profession.⁶ By mentoring, seasoned faculty can share experiences with their inexperienced colleagues rather than forcing them to struggle alone.¹⁰ Wise counsel, nurturing, and guidance by a caring mentor

Table 3. Guidelines for mentors^{6,7}

Selecting a mentee:

You can have a mentoring relationship with a number of people. However, you cannot be a mentor to everyone with whom you have consistent contact.⁶

At the initial meeting:

1. Plan experiences that allow the mentee to be successful and grow in competency and self-esteem.
2. Discuss what is needed to achieve desired outcomes.
3. Identify what opportunities are available to meet desired learning outcomes.
4. Be sure that both parties are aware of each other's roles and expectations.
5. Explore the challenges involved in the projects being undertaken.
6. Encourage creativity.
7. Set a regular time to meet.

At subsequent meetings:

1. Regularly ask questions about progress to convey ongoing support.
2. Acknowledge the mentee's strengths.
3. Explore potential problems and assist in problem solving.
4. Help the mentee see beyond the constraints of a situation.
5. Provide support through difficult times.
6. Encourage the mentee to continue pursuing goals.
7. Suggest practical ideas, demonstrate behavior, and ways to approach a situation.
8. Assure the mentee that his or her work is valuable.
9. Do not give advice too quickly.
10. Avoid giving more information or assistance than needed.
11. Seek contacts, extra learning opportunities, or resources relevant to the mentee.
12. Provide feedback to develop the mentee's self-confidence.
13. Be objective in appraisals.
14. Encourage the mentee to be a mentor in the future.

will go a long way to ease the passage of junior faculty into the role of educator.

Senior faculty are urged to learn about the mentoring process, prepare for the role, and take advantage of the opportunity to mentor someone or many people into faculty roles throughout their professional lifetimes.⁸ Both junior and senior faculty should look for opportunities to grow professionally by being mentored throughout their own careers as educators. Guidelines for mentors (Table 3) and guidelines for mentees (Table

4) are included with this article for reference.

Importantly, maintaining a sufficient supply of CRNAs as faculty is vital to the provision of consistent numbers of CRNAs for the anesthesia workforce. Senior faculty should always be on the lookout for promising students and CRNAs who desire growth, a career commitment, and a professional vision to move nurse anesthesia forward. These are the individuals to recruit and mentor as junior faculty in order to retain them as career educators.

Table 4. Guidelines for mentees^{6,11,14}

Before beginning

1. Be able and willing to locate the mentoring that is needed.
2. Approach potential mentors based on an awareness of what the person has to offer.
3. Be prepared to articulate what you want from a mentorship.
4. Determine if a mentoring relationship can benefit both individuals.
5. Ensure that your time commitment is adequate to work with a mentor.
6. Plan the first meeting agenda.
7. Decide on whether there is a good match between mentor and mentee at the first meeting.

After beginning the relationship

1. Convey enthusiasm about working with an experienced person.
2. Be prepared with a list of items you want to discuss at each meeting.
3. Discuss the goals you want to achieve in a mentorship.
4. Determine if both parties can commit the time necessary to achieve goals.
5. Consider how frequently you would like to meet with your mentor.
6. Decide how you would prefer to interact and by what method.
7. Explore feelings and learn as much as possible.
8. Observe the mentor in different aspects of the role.
9. Ask questions and take advantage of the mentor's knowledge and experience.
10. Welcome suggestions and advice.
11. Implement recommendations whenever possible.
12. Be patient and forgiving of personal limits.
13. Be honest in sharing interests and abilities with the mentor.
14. Be willing to play an active role.
15. Be appreciative.

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AUTHOR

Betty J. Horton, CRNA, DNSc, is the former AANA director of Accreditation and Education. She continues to serve the Council on Accreditation as an educational consultant and member of its Task Force on International Issues. Currently, Horton is co-chair of the planning committee for the 10th anniversary of the Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors, in addition to being a member of the Nominations Committee for the Illinois Association of Nurse Anesthetists.