

White Paper:

A Mentoring Program Maturity Model

by

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1. Why Should Organizations Provide Mentoring?

Mentoring has been the most time-proven way to develop talent throughout human history. In fact, it was the only way until books, schooling and workforce training became common place. Today, 76% of the Top 25 Companies to Work For (according to a survey by this name), have implemented mentoring programs (source: January 10, 2000 *Fortune* magazine).

The U.S. Dept. of Labor's *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* asserts that mentoring is the most complex type of human interaction, being more complex than teaching, counseling, supervising or coaching. If one-on-one mentoring is so complex, even more complex is the planning and implementation of formalized mentoring programs which enroll groups of individuals, each of whom develops their unique capabilities to satisfy corporate purposes. For such programs to be successful, each individual must benefit and so must the group as a whole, as well as the sponsoring organization.

Below is an overview of key topics covered in the rest of this paper:

- My **5-Stage Mentoring Program Maturity Model** will enable you to plan and implement the kind of mentoring program its participants and the sponsoring organization require.
- How a web-based, multi-functional **Mentoring Management System®** manages the complexity of implementing mentoring programs at Stages 3, 4 and 5 of the Maturity Model.
- How a **New Mentoring Paradigm** enables mentors to (a) **equip** proteges with practical knowhow and wisdom and help them become welcomed members of the corporate family, and (b) **empower** what proteges want to do and become so they add value to the organization and prevent it from stagnating when change is necessary.
- How successful mentoring can produce **significant impacts** for individuals and their organization.

2. Gray's 5-Stage Mentoring Program Maturity Model:

My 5-Stage Mentoring Program Maturity Model provides a conceptual framework for understanding the kind of mentoring program your organization needs to provide to meet its business goals. You might only need a Stage 2 or 3 mentoring program, or you might need a more complex Stage 4 or 5 program. Each Stage requires different kinds of planning and implementation to foster different levels of engagement and learning that produce different performance outcomes. In other words, if your organization wants Stage 5 results, you won't produce this with Stage 2 planning and implementation.

Although the focus is primarily on mentoring, there is also some discussion about performance coaching because many mentors provide such coaching when proteges need to develop specific behavioral skills to im-

prove performance. As mentioned previously, mentoring is much more complex than performance coaching, and lasts longer.

The Mentoring Program Maturity Model is based on my 28 years of experience helping over 150 organizations plan and implement formalized mentoring programs, where key Components are formalized (systematized, structured, planned) in different ways to meet individual needs and goals as well as those of the sponsoring organization. I have also adapted some of the ideas of Christopher Moore, Chief Technology Officer for THINQ Learning Solutions Inc., from his 2002 paper entitled "Learning Management Maturity Model: 5 Stages of Learning Maturity within the Enterprise."

In my 5-Stage Mentoring Program Maturity Model, there are **9 Components** (these are listed along the left side of the next page). None of these Components is evident in **Stage 1 Ad hoc non-Programs** because mentoring occurs ad hoc and informally around the water cooler, on elevators, etc. In these non-Programs there is no way of knowing who is mentoring or coaching whom, what is being taught and learned, or when it happens. When leaders verbally encourage such irregular, informal mentoring, without ensuring that it is actually occurring, employee turnover occurs at a 35% rate, compared to 16% turnover when regularly-provided mentoring occurs, according to a 1999 Emerging Workforce Study.

What does this mean? If it costs \$50,000 to replace an employee, in an organization of 1,000 employees, without regular mentoring, 350 employees (35%) will turnover, costing \$17.5 million annually to replace them. In marked contrast, only 160 employees (or 16%) will leave when regular mentoring is provided, costing \$8 million annually to replace them. This means that regular mentoring saves \$9.5 million annually in employee replacement costs. This savings will more than pay for Stage 2, 3, 4 or 5 mentoring. In fact, reducing turnover is the main reason for starting mentoring programs, according to survey findings by Modis Professional Services (1999).

Over the past 28 years, I would estimate that about 70% of all formalized mentoring programs begin as **Stage 2 Basic Mentoring Programs**, usually developed in-house, most likely by benchmarking what other organizations are doing, and then transplanting a particular program. Unfortunately, these transplants seldom work because each situation requires a customized mentoring program that meets all the unique requirements of that specific situation. In these Basic Mentoring Programs, only three of the nine Components are partially happening. There is some Program Design to decide who can participate, which role (mentor or protegee) they will fulfill as partners when they get together to Collaborate, and what Content they will focus on (typically they discuss topics of mutual interest; seldom do they actually develop usable competencies). These Basic Programs are typically provided for a targeted group of participants, for the same designated time period (3-6 months) as the benchmarked program. There are few, if any, truly appropriate program expectations or guidelines to be fulfilled, so participants tend to "do their own thing," thereby producing a wide variety of outcomes. There is much less management or monitoring of the mentoring experience than occurs in more mature Stages/Programs, and Measurement of intended outcomes is seldom planned so metrics can be obtained to measure actual results.

If there is a perception that the Basic Mentoring Program (a) can be enhanced (b) to produce better intended outcomes, a decision is often made to do this, before abandoning mentoring as a failure. Most of the contracts we get today come from organizations that need our mentoring expertise to improve both the mentoring process and the resulting outcomes, because one without the other will not happen. The Mentoring Solutions we provide will enhance a Stage 2 program (or can result in a Stage 3 program; see below). If the program remains small (20-50 participants), we employ a paper-based approach with a 28 year track record to publicize program expectations and guidelines, register participants, match partners, monitor mentoring activity, and evaluate outcomes -- as key components of a customized program. For some clients -- e.g., Kaiser Permanente, Florida Power & Light, Hewlett Packard -- we have used a 2-Phase Partner Matching+Training Process that saves time and money:

On Day 1 (1-5pm), mentors and proteges do a series of group activities that enable them to get to know potential partners; each person nominates individuals they are willing to work with; the mentoring committee or coordinator and I then match partners.

On Day 2 (9am - noon), partners do a series of Mentoring for Results™ partner activities together to learn about each other, and to learn how to use 4 Mentoring Styles and a 6-Step Mentoring Process that efficiently and effectively produces results. Partners actually engage in mentoring during this session. This jump starts their relationship by 2-6 months, based on feedback from mentors, because of what they discuss and do together and the comfort level they reach.

For larger Stage 2 programs, we provide a web-based Mentoring Management System (described below) to register participants and improve the matching of partners on Topics for Discussion (e.g., career guidance, work-life balance), without monitoring or evaluating what occurs thereafter, because there is no strong business case for doing this.

Stage 3 Competency-Based Mentoring Programs are carefully planned to identify the Content (core competencies to be developed) and the Collaboration roles (e.g., skill coaching and/or mentoring) to be employed by all targeted participants. For example, during Program Planning at **Pacific Bell** and **Pillsbury**, the managers of the targeted proteges agreed to support the mentoring program only if mentors did no skill coaching, but instead referred proteges to the managers to provide this (because the managers had been trained to provide performance coaching as one of their key functions). Because the target group is typically small (usually less than 100 participants), most program Components are only partially happening (just for the targeted group), such as: Competency Management, Knowledge Management, Performance Management, Measurement, Change Agent Leadership, and linking mentoring/coaching to the organization's Learning Management System. These small Stage 3 programs can be implemented while using a paper-based approach, but this is labor-intensive. For example, the **Coca-Cola Company** spent 480 people-hours manually matching 100 mentoring partners before deciding to use our online mentoring system to match best-fit partners faster and more objectively, and to fulfill other essential Coordinator tasks.

Only a web-based Mentoring Management System [MMS] enables a coordinator to oversee full Content Management of which proteges need to develop which competencies and who has existing expertise to share as a mentor, and then match these best-fit partners, and systematically monitor how competency development is being done by individuals and by the group as a whole, and evaluate individual and group outcomes. Only a MMS enables partners to create online Coaching Plans to develop specific skills and Mentoring Action Plans to develop more complex competencies, such as leadership capability. Trained Coordinators use the MMS to oversee and facilitate all aspects of such programs, from registering participants to evaluating benefits gained.

Since 2002, **Ernst & Young** has used our online system to develop core competencies in its accountants. The results are very impressive: the percentage of female partners has increased from 5 to 13%, and annual turnover of female partners has significantly decreased, saving the firm \$10 million annually in replacement costs (source: *Training* magazine, August 2005).

Another client, the **Air National Guard** [ANG] is currently implementing a Stage 3 Competency-Based Mentoring Program at 25 of its 150 Wings/Units throughout the USA. The goal is to have a nation-wide program in which veteran Guardsmen, before they retire, systematically help proteges develop the U.S. Air Force's 16 Enduring Leadership Competencies along a Tactical-Operational-Strategic continuum. At the Tactical Level, mentoring partners create and carry out online Mentoring Action Plans that enable proteges to develop personal leadership competencies; at the Operational Level, they develop competencies for leading teams and groups; at the Strategic Level, they develop competencies for leading the organization. In addition, ANG plans to develop specific occupational skills by using the online Coaching Plans in the Colaboro® Mentoring Management System™. When all Units/Wings are participating, the result will be a Stage 4 Institutionalized Mentoring and Coaching Program nation-wide, which develops leadership competencies and occupational skills to ensure that Force Development is fully occurring -- to protect the USA, its Constitution and its citizens.

Stage 4 Institutionalized Mentoring Programs occur when there is active executive support, funding and participation that provides role modeling of what is expected. Properly trained and highly committed Coordina-

tors market the program and assist large numbers of participants throughout the organization to properly use key functions of an online Mentoring Management System™, and then monitor individual and group usage of these functions. The MMS permits users in different types of Mentoring Pools to be matched with best-fit partners, and to work on different things (unique sets of competencies or discussion topics). For example, some users will create an online Coaching Plan to learn a specific skill to improve occupational performance; they will carry out the Plan and report progress on it. Other users will create, carry out and report progress on an online Mentoring Action Plan that keeps them on track as they accomplish a complex goal (e.g., transitioning from manager to leader, or from task-oriented computer programmer to people-oriented supervisor). Coordinators will monitor such mentoring activity to ensure it is fulfilling organizational purposes. Other mentoring participants will use the MMS to find their own mentoring partners for Self-Directed Mentoring Initiatives™ -- to do whatever they mutually decide to do, including engaging in reciprocal mentoring to help one another.

All nine Components of the Mentoring Program Maturity Model are fully happening at Stage 4 because mentoring is an executive-backed strategy that occurs throughout the organization and because trained/committed Coordinators use an enterprise-level Mentoring Management System™ to manage and monitor all aspects of the mentoring (and coaching) process, such as: registering participants, matching best-fit partners, monitoring individual and group progress, and evaluating results. In other words, Coordinators inspect what executives expect, to ensure it is fully happening throughout the organization.

All nine Components of the Mentoring Program Maturity Model are also fully happening in a **Stage 5 Mentoring Culture** throughout the organization. At this Stage, everyone feels comfortable providing and seeking out Just-in-Time Mentoring™ (and coaching) that is cross-functional, cross-gender, cross-cultural, etc. The entire diversified workforce from top to bottom will use an enterprise-level Mentoring Management System to engage in a wide variety of Self-Directed Mentoring Initiatives™. The system enables anyone, anytime, anywhere to find and match up with best-fit partners, to develop behavioral skills or complex competencies or discuss topics of mutual interest. Trained Coordinators use the MMS to oversee this Just-in-Time Mentoring™ to ensure that individuals are getting the mentoring (and coaching) they need. Specially targeted groups are also participating in different kinds of formally coordinated mentoring that is started for specific business purposes, such as orienting new hires or developing future leaders in the Talent Management Group.

Three points must be emphasized: (1) A Stage 5 Mentoring Culture cannot happen unless an organization-wide Stage 4 Institutionalized Mentoring Program is operating first. (2) Unless committed Coordinators continue to market, manage and monitor what is happening, a Mentoring Culture will eventually disappear because of pressures to do one's work instead of mentoring or coaching. (3) None of this will be possible unless a web-based, enterprise-level, multi-functional Mentoring Management System™ is used to reduce overall costs and coordination time for the large numbers of participants.

3. Using a web-based Mentoring Management System™ [MMS]:

As indicated above, a multi-functional, web-based MMS must be used to have Stage 3, 4 or 5 Mentoring Programs (and may be used for partner matching in Stage 2 programs). This MMS should be **scalable** to accommodate increasing numbers of users from Stage 3 to 4 to 5. It must be **stable** and **highly secure** to protect user privacy and all data stored in the MMS database. It should have an User-friendly Interface with Help links, both for users and for trained Coordinators.

For the more mature Stages 5 and 6, this MMS must be **enterprise-level** with functions and features that can be **easily configured** (activated or deactivated) to meet requirements for each different Mentoring Pool (group). It should be easy to install a client's logo and colors or a client's competency set or discussion topics, or change "protege" to "mentee" if this terminology is preferred.

For competency-based mentoring programs, the MMS should **identify competency gaps and strengths** as

participant-users answer a Needs-Expertise Inventory™ that can be easily modified to include specific competencies that are pertinent to each Mentoring Pool of users. Trained Coordinator(s) should be able to view these ratings for the entire Pool and for individuals within that Pool. This permits Knowledge/Competency Management by providing information that allows Coordinators (who are usually Human Resource Development providers) to plan how commonly occurring Needs will be addressed (e.g., via classroom courses, computer-based training, Learning Management System courses, mentoring, coaching, blended learning). The MMS should permit Performance Management as needs become competencies through mentoring and coaching activity.

Because Needs-Expertise matches are essential if individual needs are to be met, the MMS should be able to use the competency-based Needs-Expertise Inventory ratings to **match best-fit partners** for mentoring or coaching initiatives. For longer-term mentoring success, compatible interpersonal relationships are essential so partners will not clash, but work well together. Sometimes, a participant might prefer certain characteristics in a partner (e.g., a female protege might prefer a female mentor to help with Work-Life Balance). So, the MMS should be capable of matching partners who are compatible, and meet desired partner preferences. (Our Colaboro® Mentoring Management System™ uses three style indicators to do compatibility matching, and allows users to indicate partner preferences, and does Needs-Expertise matching. Each of these three functions enhances best-fit matching.)

To ensure that everyone who wants to participate in mentoring or coaching actually gets a partner, the MMS should facilitate partner matching in these ways:

- The Coordinator matches mentors with proteges (or vice versa) in formal coordinated programs
- Users find their own partners when they need them in self-directed programs (the Coordinator matches users who cannot find a partner so everyone in the database can engage in mentoring)

To enhance outcomes (goal attainment, competency development), participants should be able to create (a) **online Mentoring Action Plans** [MAPs] to schedule activities for achieving complex goals over 3-6 months and (b) **online Coaching Plans** for learning behavioral skills, and (c) report progress carrying out these Plans, and finally (d) evaluate the benefits gained. Mentors should be able to create MAPs that attract a group of interested proteges so **group mentoring** can be provided. Similarly, coaches should be able to create a Coaching Plan that attracts learners with a common skill gap so **group coaching** can be provided.

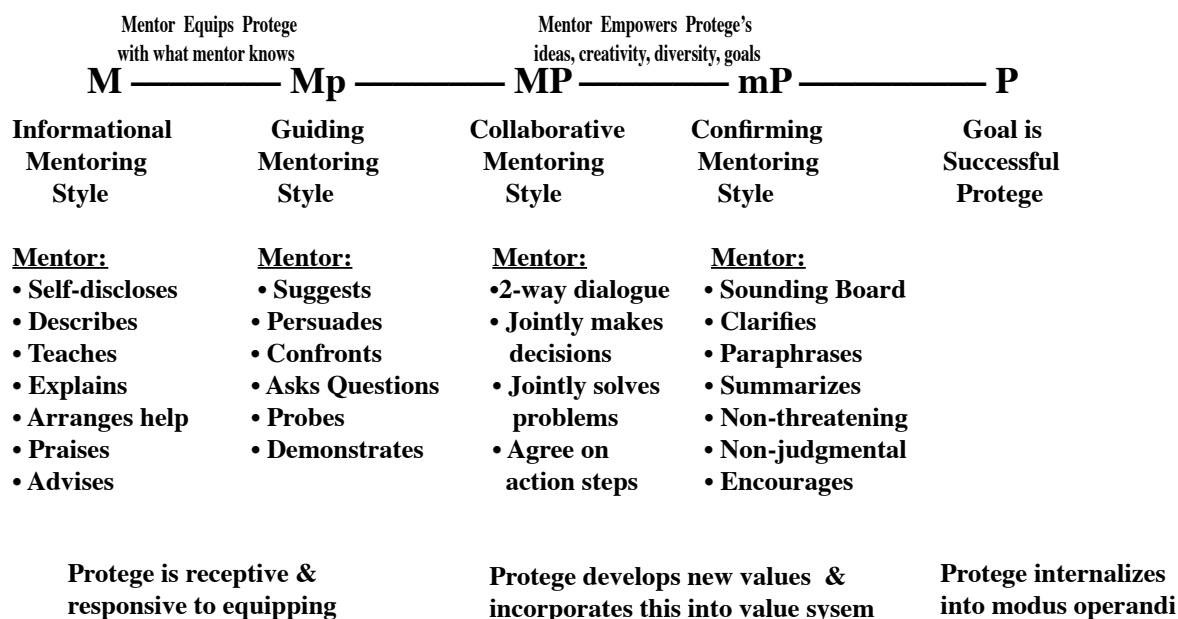
Coordinators should be able to view **online reports** on all the various activities from beginning to end of a mentoring or coaching program, both for the entire Mentoring Pool and for individuals in it. These metrics permit continuous inspection of which online functions in the MMS are being used, by whom, and how well, so that Coordinator interventions can be provided, if necessary, to enhance usage and ultimate success. Doing these things makes the more mature Mentoring Program Stages 4 and 5 possible.

4. Implement a New Mentoring Paradigm:

Throughout human history mentors have **equipped** proteges by passing on what they know from many years of experience and hard lessons learned, such as: wisdom, practical knowhow, unwritten rules, tricks of the trade, competencies. In fact, this is the classical concept of mentoring when mentoring was the primary, and often only, way of learning (before formal schooling or textbooks became common place). Today's better educated, more talented proteges still need such equipping. And, they also need mentors to **empower** what they want to do and become by empowering the protege's ideas, creativity, uniqueness, diversity, passions, dreams.

Gray's **Mentoring Relationship Model** portrays a **New Mentoring Paradigm** where effective mentors **equip** and **empower** proteges by using 4 Mentoring Styles and associated behaviors. Equipping helps proteges

Gray's Mentoring Relationship Model (© 1984 William A. Gray)



fit existing protocols and become members of the team, enabling them to get up to speed and making them feel like they belong in the bigger organization. Empowering enables proteges to add value to the organization and prevent it from stagnating when change is necessary. Over time, both equipping and empowering are needed. For example, if proteges are only equipped, they will act like everyone else and feel personally stifled at some point. If proteges are only empowered to do what they wish, they might fail because they lack the awareness of all the critical factors as well as lack needed capability, which equipping could have provided.

The Informational and Guiding Mentoring Styles **equip** proteges with what the mentor knows from greater experience. Mentors use the Informational Style to impart practical knowhow and wisdom to a receptive protege. Mentors use the Guiding Style to guide interactions with a responsive protege. These Mentoring Styles are most appropriately used when a protege is unaware of what to do in a given situation (or perhaps has some awareness), but lacks the competence to handle the situation successfully. This is why proteges need to be equipped with what the mentor knows.

In contrast, the Collaborative and Confirming Mentoring Styles **empower** what proteges want to do and become, and are most appropriately used when the protege is aware of the important factors in a given situation and has the necessary competence to handle that situation successfully. When the Collaborative Style is used, no one dominates; instead both the mentor and protege contribute useful ideas while engaging in two-way dialogue and jointly make decisions and solve problems. When the protege proposes a workable idea or action, the mentor uses the Confirming Style to listen to and encourage what is said, even blessing the protege's long-held "dreams," while being non-threatening and non-judgmental.

The two equipping Mentoring Styles get proteges up to speed, help them learn the ropes, enable them to "fit

in” and become a member of the team, make them feel welcome and able to function in accordance with the rules and protocols (including the unwritten rules). Unless the protege is equipped to function in these ways, anarchy could result where individuals “do their own thing” to the detriment of the larger whole. Several equipping mentoring behaviors are especially helpful to proteges. When mentors **self-disclose** how they handled a situation similar to the protege’s, this provides an opportunity to share hard lessons learned; because proteges can identify with the mentor’s experience, they will usually accept, take to heart and utilize these lessons learned. When a protege needs specific help the mentor cannot provide, the mentor can **arrange help** from others, and prepare the protege to work effectively with these secondary mentors for brief periods. When there are discrepancies in what a protege says or indecisiveness in taking action, the mentor can **confront** this to force the protege to be decisive, take action, change an unhelpful attitude, etc. (“I heard you say you wanted to make a decision to proceed, now you’re saying you don’t want to. What do you really want to do?”).

The two empowering Mentoring Styles enable individuals to develop their unique talents, use their creativity and diversity as assets, get a hearing for their ideas, and pursue their goals and dreams. Not only does this empower proteges to “Be All You Can Be” - to quote the well-received motto of the U.S. Army - but such empowering prevents the organization from stagnating and becoming outdated. Several empowering mentoring behaviors are especially helpful to proteges. Being **non-threatening/non-judgmental** empowers the protege to talk candidly about real and important issues. The three **listening** behaviors (clarify, paraphrase, summarize) reflect back what the protege says so that the protege understands this even better while the mentor serves as a **sounding board** for the protege’s ideas.

Why are equipping and empowering both necessary? If only equipping occurs, there is the very real danger of cloning proteges to be like their mentors. This occurs even more when proteges greatly admire their mentors and want to emulate them. If only empowering occurs, proteges might not know what to do or how to do it, and needless mistakes will inevitably result.

5. From Mentoring Success to Significant Impact:

As indicated above, regularly-provided mentoring can help proteges achieve desired goals and develop needed competencies. When this happens, mentoring is said to be successful. In addition, mentoring can have a **significant impact** on an individual protege as well as on the larger organization. Here’s how.

Suppose the protege wants to develop a new Leadership Competency, namely, driving performance through shared vision, values and accountability (instead of simply telling others what to do using a top-down style). After listening to why the protege thinks he wants to make this radical change, the mentor could self-disclose and explain how to lead in this new way, with the protege being receptive to this. The mentor could give an actual demonstration to a responsive protege who is going to implement what he/she observes. During collaborative interactions, the protege develops a strong positive value for this new leadership competency, and then incorporates this into his/her value system as the new preferred leadership style. It eventually becomes internalized when it is consistently used instead of the former leadership style. Not only will the protege function much differently as a leader, but this will have a significant impact on how others follow and contribute.

Equipping and empowering a protege while carrying out a Mentoring Action Plan will result in goal attainment by the protege, but it could also result in something that has a far more significant impact on the organization. Here are two actual examples: In **Varian Associates Radiation Division**, there was much animosity between veterans (who did not know how to use the latest software) and new hires (who knew how). Veterans believed their practical knowhow was superior; new hires believed their software prowess was superior. So, we planned a reciprocal mentoring program and carefully matched veterans with new hires to share practical knowhow and software prowess. This was successful. More importantly, it was significant at the individual level and for

the organization, because it replaced widespread “generation gap” mentality with cooperation that overflowed into daily working relationships, making them more satisfying and productive. Reciprocal mentoring at **CSX Transportation** also had a significant impact: it broke down entrenched silos, which fostered improved working relationships, which increased stock value for shareholders over time. For this to happen, we carefully planned and matched partners from different departments, from management and labor, from diverse backgrounds. For example, a person in Sales (with a “Go, Go, Go” style) was matched with a person from Finance (with a “Whoa, we can’t make money promising that” style). After they understood each other’s role and value to the company, they spent time in each other’s department helping them understand “what we do over there.”

It is becoming well known that regular mentoring produces individual success (e.g., learning new competencies, attaining desired goals, earning a promotion, getting a higher salary) and organizational success (e.g., employee retention, succession planning, better performance). Stage 3, 4 and 5 mentoring programs can also produce **significant impacts** for individuals and organization. Stage 4 Institutionalized Mentoring Programs can do this on a wide-scale basis, as can a Stage 5 Mentoring Culture where everyone provides and seeks out mentoring throughout the diversified workforce when it is needed, so that individuals and the organization benefit, and the Mentoring Culture continues.

If you have found this White Paper to be useful, please let me know. You can contact me by toll-free telephone (**1-877-955-0314**) or by phoning (250) 652-0324 or by email (**wgray@mentoring-solutions.com**). I would be happy to show you a **Demo** of our Colaboro® Mentoring Management System™.

You are also invited to visit our website (**www.mentoring-solutions.com**).