

# Our Mentoring Experience

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# Mentoring partnership

Mentoring is widely recognised today as an extremely beneficial career development tool.

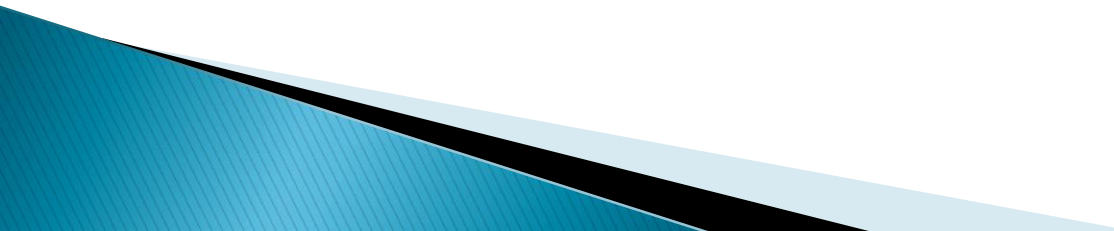
(Rhodes, C. and Fletcher, S., 2013)



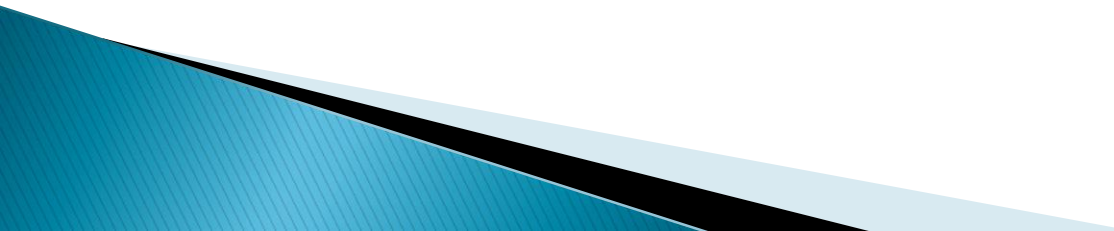
# Mentor of newly promoted Head teachers –a program of the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute.

- ▶ First thoughts and reactions of participants.
  - Apprehension
  - Asked for more information about the program
  - Inquired about the obligations of participants
- ▶ **Participants are informed about the program**
  - From the Pedagogical Institute during various meetings. It was an innovation. The mentor program was implemented for the first time.

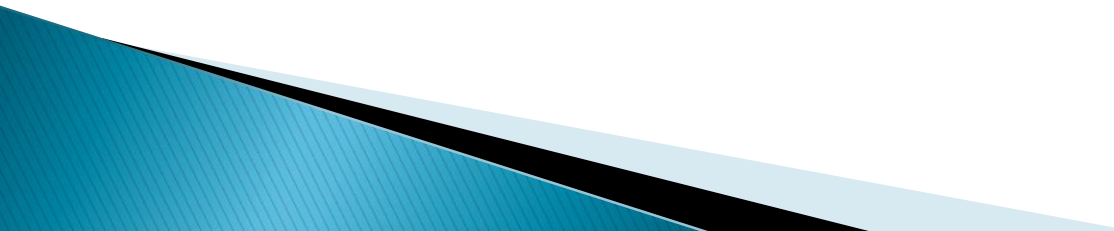
# Mentor of newly promoted Head teachers –a program of the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute.

- ▶ First thoughts and reactions of participants.
    - Apprehension
    - Asked for more information about the program
    - Asked about the obligations of participants ( both mentor and mentees)
    - Satisfaction: The program will contribute to our career through real world experience (and not only theory).
    - Expectation: We can benefit from the experiences of someone who has withstood the trial and could help us avoid mistakes.
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# Seminar preparing the mentors

- ▶ Information about the aims, objectives and content of the program
  - ▶ Obligations of the participants (both mentor and mentees)
  - ▶ Skills of the mentor
  - ▶ Mentor–mentees relations
  - ▶ Stages of relationship development
  - ▶ Participants professional growth
  - ▶ Mentoring challenges
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# How newly promoted Head teachers were prepared for the program?

- ▶ Having the agenda of the issues we were going to discuss
  - ▶ Preparing questions of the issues that worried us more, challenges, difficulties and problems we had faced at the beginning of our new career
  - ▶ Ask information about the mentor, her school
  - ▶ Found out our obligations for the program
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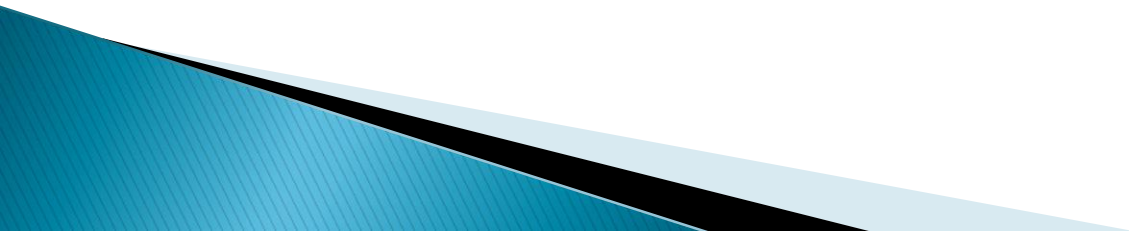
# The Goal of Mentoring

The primary goal of mentoring should be clear and unambiguous: to provide new principals with the knowledge, skills and courage to become leaders of change who put teaching and learning first in their schools. Wallace Foundation.

Getting Principal Mentoring Right: Lessons from the Field.  
2007



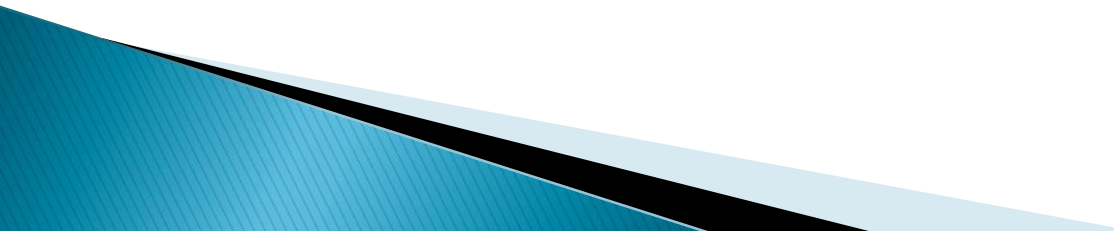
MENTORING  
IS A  
PARTNERHIP






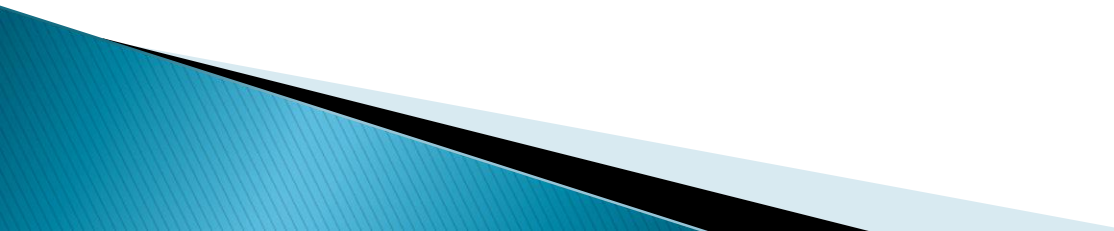
# How I interpreted my role as a mentor

As a mentor, I saw my primary role :

- To structure the agenda of the day so that it responds to the preferences of my colleagues and the guidelines of the Pedagogical Institute.
  - To share my experiences /practices and about what has worked for me.
  - To identify and discuss school-based problems and dilemmas in co-operation with colleagues.
  - To support and advocate for my colleagues.
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# Our expectations from the mentoring program

- ▶ Ready to listen and share ideas
  - ▶ Make a personal connection based on trust and mutual respect
  - ▶ Express our personal needs and concerns
  - ▶ Be helped to define career goals and get the opportunity to attain these goals
  - ▶ Gain knowledge, skills, wisdom and experiences
  - ▶ However, we didn't expect all our problems to be solved
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- ▶ Get support
  - ▶ Receive information and advices
  - ▶ Observe how our experienced mentor acts in her school
  - ▶ Receive constructive feedback on our actions
  - ▶ Gain knowledge not only from theory but also from experience/practice
  - ▶ Build an honest relationship with our mentor and be able to ask for help in the future
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# First meeting

## ▶ Main issues

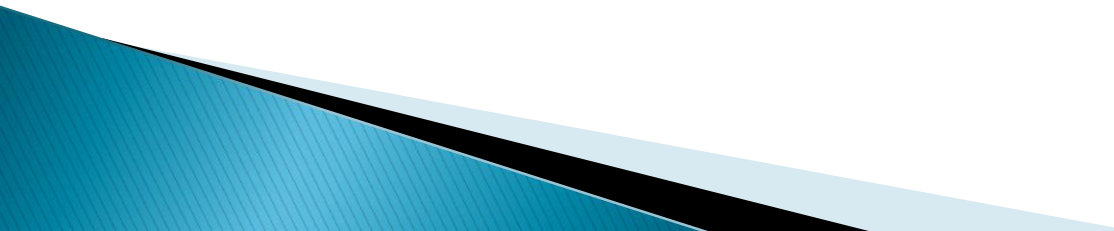
- Development of school improvement action plan
- Management and economic resources
- Relations with School Boards

## ▶ Preparation

- ▶ How the discussion was structured
  - ▶ Evaluation of the first meeting
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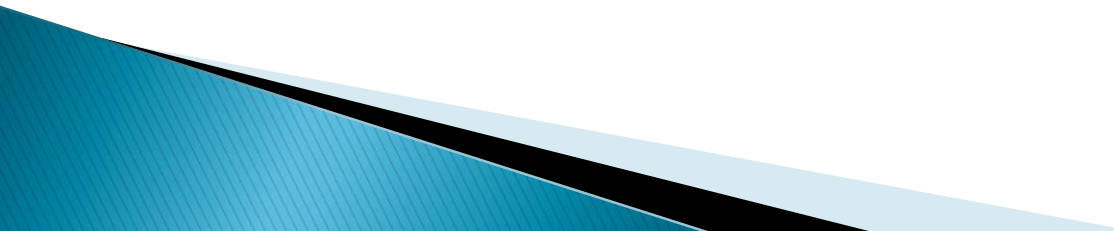
# First meeting

(impressions, feelings evaluation of the experience)

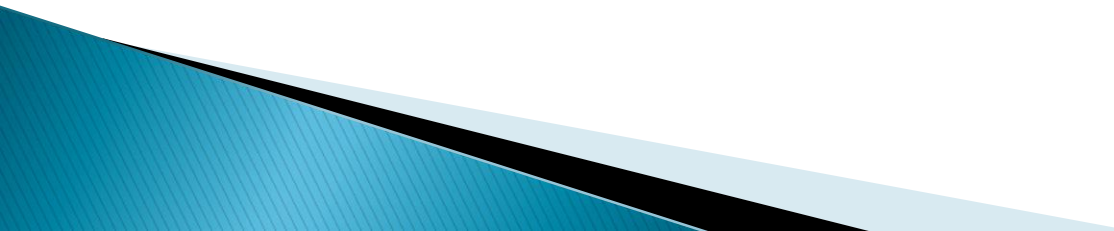
- ▶ Hesitant at first, more confident at the end
  - ▶ We have an honest and skillful mentor, who made us feel comfortable
  - ▶ We felt comfortable to express our concerns and ideas, without the fear of judgment
  - ▶ Together we clearly set the goals and objectives of the program
  - ▶ We could easily express our worries and concerns
  - ▶ Realized that there were other people/ Head teachers facing the same problems – We were not alone
  - ▶ At the end of the first meeting we felt that we found not only a mentor, but also a friend
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# The following three meetings

## ► Issues

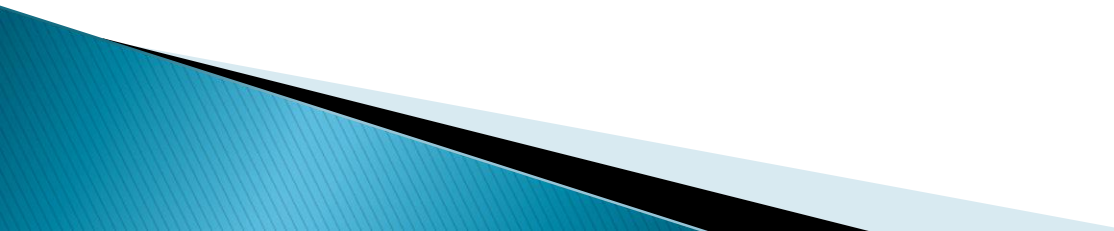
- Development of school improvement action plan
  - Climate and culture of the school
  - Developing communication within schools
  - School Administration and Management
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# Stages of mentoring relationship development

- Preparing– cultivating trust
  - Implementation of the learning relationship; feedback, longest and most complex phase, Partners work to maintain trust level to achieve goals, build quality of relationship & promote learning; open communication essential. Mentees guide the relationship
  - Closing–Natural end to a relationship
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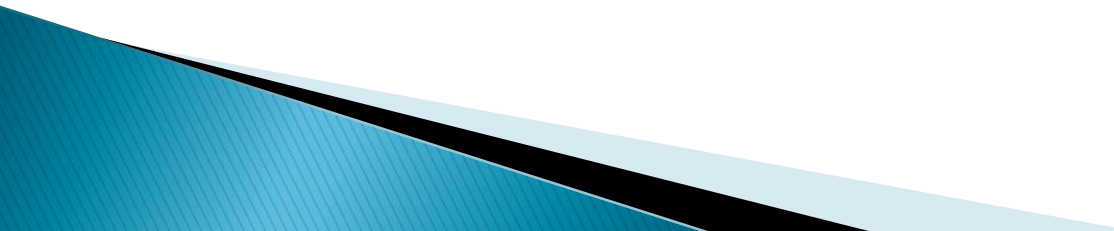
# During the whole interaction with my colleagues

I tried to:


- ▶ Consult (supply information)
  - ▶ Collaborate (co-develop ideas and analyze situations)
  - ▶ Coach (my colleagues produced information and analysis for several problems we all faced)
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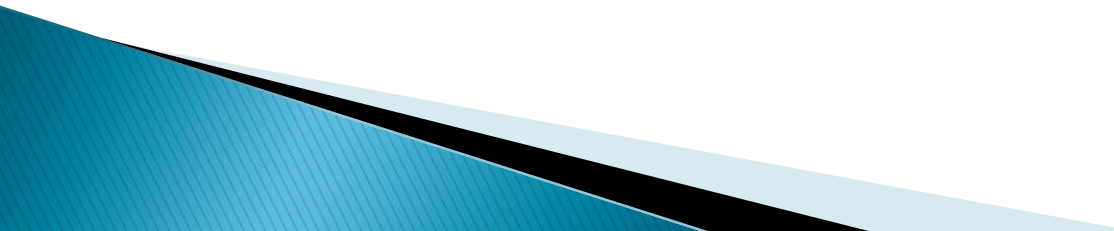
# During the whole interaction we tried to:

- ▶ Share responsibility (Success of program also our responsibility)
  - ▶ Be committed and attend all the meetings
  - ▶ Prepare before the meeting for the important issues and be focus on them
  - ▶ Share experiences
  - ▶ Keep expectations realistic
  - ▶ Be ourselves
  - ▶ Be willing to talk, ask, argue and discuss
  - ▶ Promote open communication among all the partners
  - ▶ Be available for future consultation by phone or e-mail
  - ▶ Became a student for a while
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# How do we evaluate the mentoring experience?

- ▶ Enjoyed being able to work closely with colleagues (collective work)
  - ▶ Shared ideas and plans
  - ▶ We had the chance to look at our own practices more critically and realized that there were so many different ways that we could lead our school, solve problems, make decisions
  - ▶ The experience contributed to professional growth and enhanced professional reflection
  - ▶ Developed our self confidence as a Head teachers
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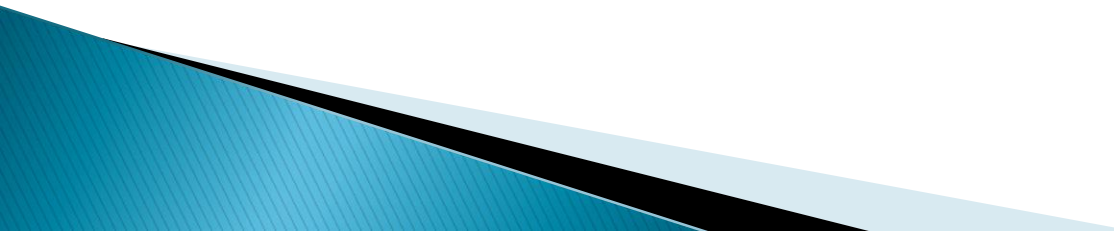
# How do we evaluate the mentoring experience?

- ▶ Learned new things about ourselves
  - ▶ Utilized our strengths and expanded our limits
  - ▶ Felt better: when we did something right but understood that we all make mistakes
  - ▶ Realized that all the Head teachers, more or less, face the same problems – we are not the only ones!
  - ▶ Shared knowledge and professional skills
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- ▶ Got valuable advice
- ▶ Obtained useful experience
- ▶ Discussed different approaches in dealing with school problems

We gained a mentor and a friend for the rest of our careers – A strong friendship among all the members of the group!

# Suggestions for improving the program

- ▶ The program should start the year before the newly qualified principals undertake their new post.
  - ▶ Mentees should choose their mentors from a list of names.
  - ▶ Mentees should choose the issues they want to discuss, according to their personal needs or their schools' needs
  - ▶ Expand the meetings and focus on more practical issues
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- ▶ Mentoring should give an emphasis on the first days of the opening of the school and the last days of the school year
- ▶ The meetings should also take place in our schools

**Thank you!**

