

Developing through mentoring or being mentored: ALDinHE's new mentoring scheme and certified mentor recognition

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Presentation abstract

ALDinHE is launching its new mentoring scheme and mentorship recognition to acknowledge, promote and recognise the importance of mentoring for LD as a field that does not offer an official route into the profession. This Professional Development session introduced the mentoring scheme, explaining how to get involved, what support mentors and mentees can receive from ALDinHE and what benefits both sides can get from mentoring or being mentored. If you're new to LD or keen to develop more experience in a specific area with the help of a mentor, the mentoring scheme will offer you a brilliant framework to broaden your expertise. If you're an experienced Learning Developer or have specific expertise you could share, find out how you could become recognised as a Certified Mentor (CeM) in LD by ALDinHE.

Keywords: mentoring; peer-support; professional development; values-based LD; professional recognition.

Community response

Two key points came across in the community response to this session:

- The clear and positive vision established by the mentoring working group, which built on pre-existing successes to create an organised, supportive and positive group.
- Excitement at involvement or potential involvement, where the session had encouraged and clarified.

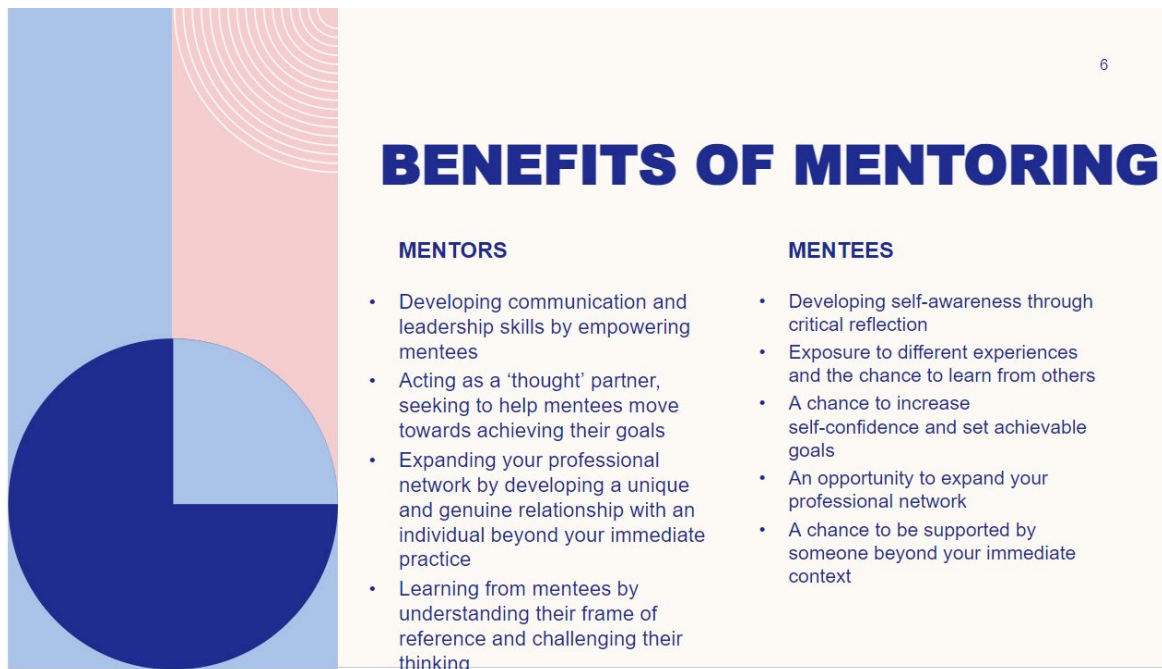
Delegates appreciated the clarity offered by the session, explaining and demonstrating the process and materials. It also captured the existing enthusiasm and interest in the scheme. For those who were already, or were perhaps considering being, part of the process, the session bolstered this and gave a space for excitement for individuals, whilst recognising the collaborative community aspect: 'I am pleased that ALDinHE has considered a way in which mentoring within the community could be recognised. I enjoyed the session and I am excited to be part of the scheme'; 'a great session that laid out clearly and accessibly the aims and scope of the scheme. As above, genuinely excited at the prospect of being involved'.

For others though, the session enabled them to focus less on their own individual involvement in the scheme, and more on mentoring in general, exploring their own position. It enabled delegates to consider their experiences of both mentoring and being mentored:

An opportunity not only to learn about the CeM but also to reflect on mentoring as an experience. This was useful as it helped us see where we fit with mentoring. As someone who has been involved in mentoring but is not intending to become immediately involved in the CeM, I benefited from hearing about others' relationships with LD mentoring, without considering how this related to my own intentions. The atmosphere in the room was supportive and positive. It was interesting to hear about the origins of the programme, and useful to see the workings of the resources for organising and managing the process, which has clearly been carefully thought through.

Next steps and additional questions

Image 1. Slide 6 from the working group's presentation.



Was the mentoring working group encouraged by the positivity and enthusiasm in the room? Was there already an awareness of this prior to the conference or was this an insight into the community's connection with the programme?

The list of benefits (see Slide 6, above), and the responses on the Padlet added to within the session, created a wealth of useful language around mentoring – might there be some way of collecting and harnessing this language for the participants to use? Perhaps it could form a useful resource for those who are considering applying for recognition with CeP or CeLP, or become a list of words and phrases to guide mentors and mentees in their journey.

Author's reflection

The session allowed the mentoring group members to showcase the journey we have undertaken, from the rationale of the project to evaluating the pilot and formally launching the scheme. The room was filled with enthusiasm, which allowed us to gauge future engagement with the mentoring scheme.

It was interesting that some of those present had had the chance to be part of the pilot, either as mentors or mentees, and were able to express the positive outcomes of the participation. In fact, some of the above reflections also demonstrate this point.

Reading the reflection from someone whose interest was in mentoring more generally, rather than a specific interest in joining the scheme was particularly encouraging, as it confirmed our view that mentoring, in whatever form or shape, can play an important part in developing Learning Developers and Learning Development. It was a timely reminder that offering a specific path through the mentoring scheme is an important part of our work on this, but that we need to remain mindful of and open to other ways in which we can contribute to this, perhaps by making our materials more widely available or thinking about ways to share the insights we gain from running the scheme in the future.

Apart from having the opportunity to formally launch this initiative, the session allowed us to connect with potential mentees and mentors. It is indeed encouraging that many of those who registered their interest are currently being paired with a mentor or mentee to begin the mentoring journey. Above all, the scheme aims to expand participants' professional networks by developing a genuine relationship with an individual beyond their immediate practice. This relationship is meant to be driven by the core principles of partnership, reciprocal learning and trust. It is our ambition to foster mutually beneficial professional connections and bring compassion and generosity into our working environments. We are grateful that the session gave us a chance to highlight these aims to those present, and encourage more learning developers to join in.

Acknowledgments

Thank you to all the contributors who shared their reflections and enriched our insight into this conference presentation and its impact on the audience.

The authors did not use generative AI technologies in the creation of this manuscript.

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Jane McKay is a Senior Lecturer and Learning Developer at Glasgow Caledonian University. Her PhD and early career as a sport psychologist explored the need to support athletes as people rather than performers, a theme she now brings to working with students through nurturing self-understanding and developing learning in holistic ways. Her research and practice interests include understanding psychological barriers to student success (most notably perfectionism), and how these can be addressed. Jane is a Senior Fellow of Advance HE and an ALDinHE Certified Lead Practitioner.

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