


Mentoring and Coaching - Behaviour - 23.1



**Postgraduate Diploma  
in  
Strategic Business Information Technology**

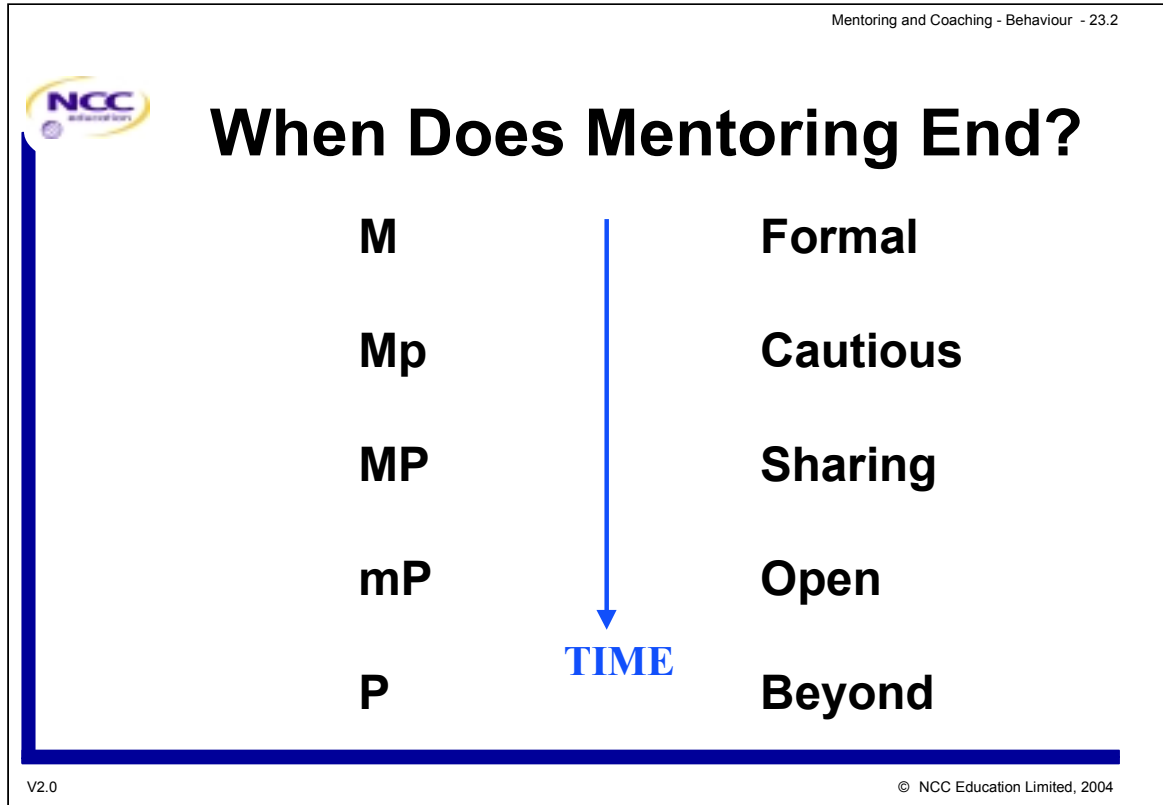
**Module 2  
Task Management**

**Lecture 23  
Mentoring and Coaching -  
Behaviour**

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This session looks at the positive and negative behaviours that may occur in a mentoring situation, and how they might best be handled. Also in this session, we take another look at listening skills – an ideal opportunity to revise some of the earlier material, in a specific context. For completeness, some material is duplicated from the Human Communications sessions.

Five exercises are included in this session – including one role play exercise. This role play should be performed in pairs, with a swap of roles – so every student has the opportunity to play both roles.



On this visual, the initials in the left hand column indicate the relationship between the mentor and the pupil (mentoree) – the capital letter indicating the balance of power in the relationship.

The natural life cycle of a mentoring process is likely to encounter one or more of these phases. How the relationship moves on through these changes is dependent upon the needs of the mentoree – each represents an important junction in a person’s life, and the mentor must be aware of the involvement required and when to back off.

*Do Exercise 14 – Moving On/Growth Influences.*

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# Listening - A Core Competence for Life



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As discussed in an earlier session – listening is one of the key core competencies – not only for the competent information systems professional, but for everyone throughout their life.

Providing a listening ear, without taking on the other person's problem, giving advice or joining them in the *isn't it awful* game can serve as a powerful aid to a mentoree. Many mentors believe that respectful listening is the premier mentoring art.

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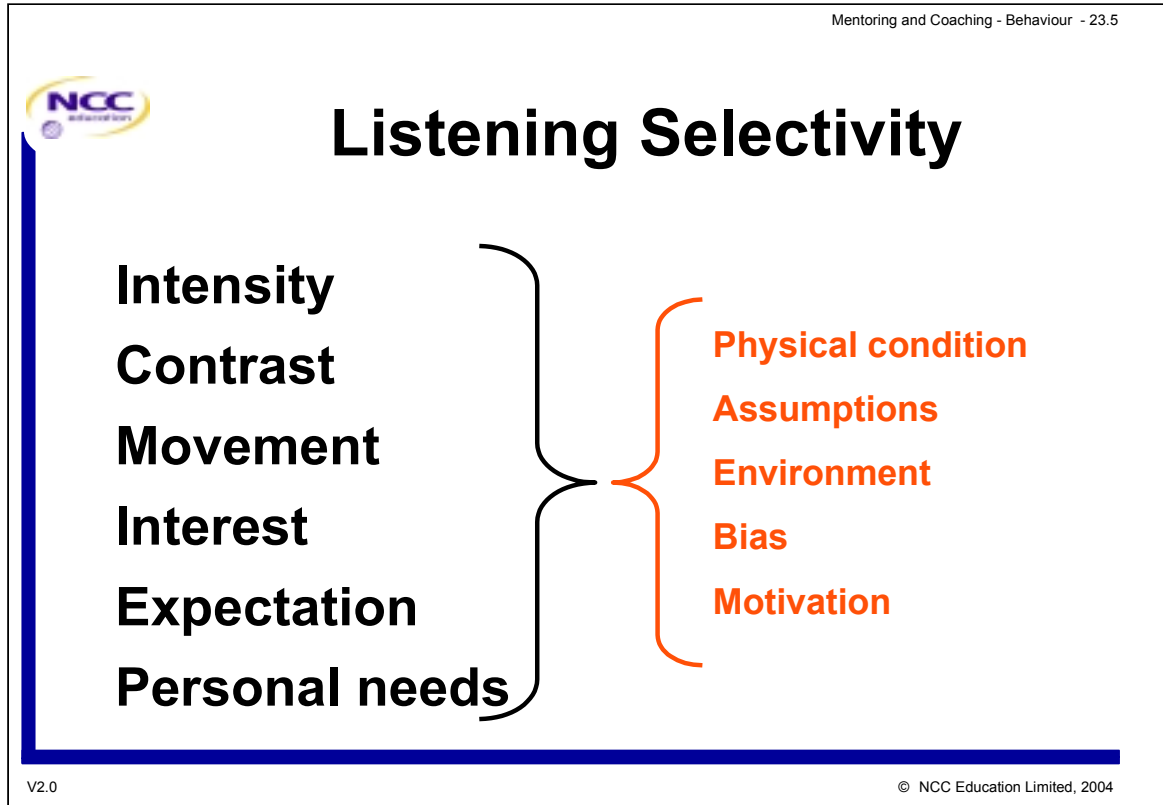
# Listening Styles

- **Comprehension**
- **Evaluative**
- **Empathic**
- **Appreciative**

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Can you remember the four main styles of listening?

- Comprehension listening is the kind of listening that people engage in when conducting fact-finding interviews or attending lectures. It involves listening to facts, ideas and themes that may be of future use.
- Evaluative listening is the kind of listening people engage in when trying to make judgements concerning the persuasive messages of others, such as sales persons and negotiators.
- Empathic listening is the kind of listening people engage in during counselling sessions, appraisal interviews and, more generally, when faced with someone who has a need to talk and be understood by another person. It involves the listener demonstrating a keenness to attend to and understand the thoughts, beliefs and feelings of the speaker.
- Appreciative listening is the kind of listening people engage in for pleasure. It might occur when listening to music, poetry or children playing. It involves the listener seeking out signals or messages that he/she wants to hear.



There are many competing demands for a listener's attention. An interviewer might be more interested in how the candidate is dressed – a mark on his tie, or the aura of tobacco smoke that surrounds him.

A colleague's loud voice might be a distraction, or the interviewer might only notice a hydraulic drill when it is switched off, or attention might be drawn if a person changes from a relaxed posture to bolt upright.

Background and culture might influence the meaning attributed to certain behaviours – being aware of one's own personal filters can help a person listen more effectively. An interviewer should prepare a checklist to help make sure that attention is paid to all the relevant messages, and that the effects of selectivity are minimised.

The message itself can influence how much is received. If it is bad news, or the listener does not want to know, then the tendency is often to *switch off* the listening process.

Auditory noise is only one of many environmental problems; the listener's attention might be drawn by an interesting poster, or an attractive view from a window.



## Speech Rates


<b>Normal speech rate</b>	<b>140 wpm</b>
<b>Preferred (more believable)</b>	<b>190 wpm</b>
<b>Upper limit</b>	<b>280 wpm</b>
<b>Lower limit</b>	<b>125 wpm</b>

The speech rate can significantly affect the listening ability of others. Normal speech is said to be around 140 words per minute – but it has been claimed that listeners prefer to listen and can comprehend better, and are more likely to believe the message that is presented at 190 words or more per minute.

Listening can be possible up to around 280 words per minute – but much higher than this and concentration begins to deteriorate. Although people can think at a rate considerably faster than this, they require a reasonable differential between speaking and thinking rates to process what they have heard.


Slower rates – below 125 words per minute can impair effective listening, just as much as excessively fast rates. The listener's capacity to process information is under-utilised, so attention begins to drift.

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# Active Listening

- **Attending**
- **Listening**
- **Empathy**
- **Probing**



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Attending – physically and psychologically.

Listening – receiving and understanding – verbal and non-verbal.

Empathy – within the speaker's frame of reference.

Probing – more concrete and specific.




# Listening Preparation

- **Timing**
- **Receptivity - single minded**
- **Environment**
- **Background knowledge**

The kind of preparation that the listener can engage in involves the following.

- Arranging important listening tasks for a time when he/she is least likely to be stressed or fatigued.
- Increasing his/her receptivity by making a conscious effort to put aside temporarily preoccupying concerns, such as a recent row with the boss or the need to book a holiday flight as quickly as possible.
- Arranging an environment that contains as few distractions as possible, thereby encouraging all parties to concentrate on communicating.
- Reviewing background material such as notes and reports or issues to be discussed. This kind of preparation can stimulate interest and help create the right mental attitude.

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# Attending


**S**quarely  
**O**pen  
**L**ean  
**E**ye contact  
**R**elaxed


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Remember the SOLER mnemonic:

- Face speaker **S**quarely.
- Adopt **O**pen posture.
- **L**ean upper part of body towards speaker.
- Maintain good **E**ye contact.
- Try to be **R**elaxed.

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 **Misunderstandings**




'Is it something I've done? Is it something I've not done? Is it something I've said? Is it something I haven't said, or is it the way I didn't say it?'

*W. Scully*

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Resolving misunderstandings, can be a very painful and difficult experience – if you believe that a misunderstanding has taken place – try and resolve it as soon as possible.

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# Following

- **Door openers**
- **Invitations**
- **Silence**
- **Attending**


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The listener can:

- encourage the speaker to talk;
- better concentrate on the task of listening;
- gently seek out more information to help promote a better understanding of the speaker's message;

by using door openers, minimal prompting, accents, statements, questions, attentive silences and a number of special concentration techniques.

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# Minimal Prompts

**Mmm...**  
**Yes...**  
**Right!**  
**Really!**  
**And?...**  
**Wow!**  
**And then?...**

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A door opener might be a description of body language:

- “You are not looking yourself today” or “you sound a bit low”

A minimal prompt might be:

- “mmm”, “really?” or “tell me more”


An accent is a restatement of one or two words and might be:

- Manager: “The report seems OK”
- Colleague: “*Seemed* OK?”
- Manager “Well, what I expected was .....

Infrequent questions; generally we ask too many questions. It is often only necessary to ask questions when we believe that the speaker has more to say, but does not know how to say it.

“Could you say a little more about why negotiations broke down?”

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# Accent

- **How** are you?
- How **are** you?
- How are **you**?

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*Say "how are you" three times, each time with the accent on a different word.  
How is the meaning of the question altered with the accent in each place?*

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# Questions or Statements

## Clarification or interrogation?



***Questions tend to relate more to the concerns of the listener***

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If the listener asks too many questions the speaker might end up feeling that he is being grilled. An alternative to some questions might be the kind of statement that makes a demand on the speaker to say more, to elaborate or clarify.

For example, the statement: *“What you have been saying seems to have made you very angry”* might encourage the speaker to talk about his feelings of anger without feeling that he is being quizzed.



## Concentration/Receptivity

- **Why am I being told this now?**
- **Am I paying attention?**
- **Am I focussing on the key words?**
- **What is this person really saying to me?**

The listener can improve his/her ability to follow what the speaker is saying by using one of a number of techniques that aid concentration. The listener concentrates on what the speaker is saying and heightens his/her receptivity by asking him/herself questions such as those shown on the visual.



# Reflecting

- **Paraphrase**
- **Reflecting back**
- **Summative reflection**


Reflective listening is the skill of mirroring back to a person, in your own words and manner, what someone is saying to you. This can be either through paraphrasing a message, reflecting feelings if there is a high emotional content to the message, or by trying to pick out hidden meanings if a speaker is having difficulty with an issue. It allows speakers to hear what they are saying, see what they are meaning and feel what is happening and, through this process, come to a better understanding of themselves and their situation.

Paraphrasing what the other has said also goes a long way towards preventing misunderstandings. We often think or feel that we understand what a person has said but this is just guesswork, unless we check our understanding out with the speaker.

In summary:

- Reflect the content of the message.
- Be short and to the point.
- Reflect only the essentials of the message.
- Use your own words.

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# Touch

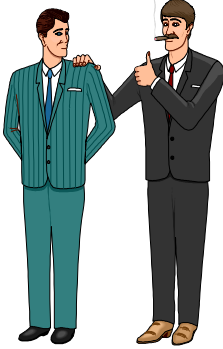
**Pat, slap, tickle, pinch, stroke, kiss, hold, kick, punch**

**Touch and release**

**Touch and hold**

**Touch and stroke**

*Intimacy level*



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Bodily contact and touching behaviour is the most basic way in which people can express such interpersonal attitudes as aggression and affiliation.

Children pat, slap, tickle, pinch, stroke, kiss, hold, kick and punch much more than adults do. Maturity tends to bring with it a considerable reduction in touching behaviour, many of the functions normally served by such behaviours being fulfilled by facial and gestural expressions.

Nonetheless, adults touch others to offer encouragement, express tenderness and show emotional support. They also touch others, but in different ways (slapping, punching, kicking) to express aggressive interpersonal relationships.

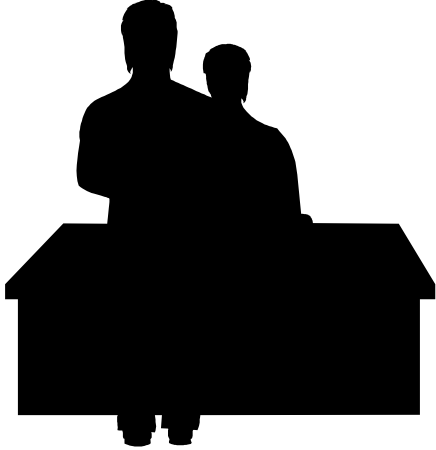
It is possible to plot touch behaviour along an intimacy continuum, ranging from touch and release (pat) being the least intimate, through touch and hold, to touch and stroke – the most intimate.

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# Furniture

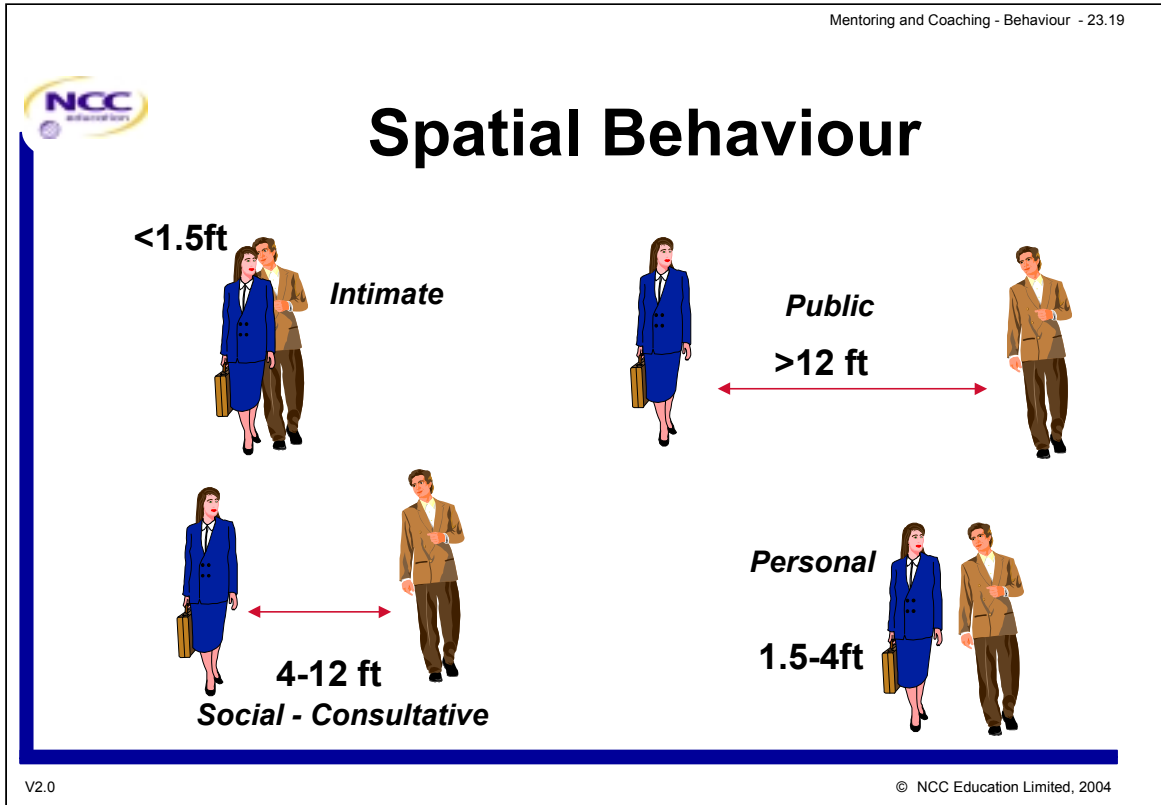
- Separators
- Lighting
- Height



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It has long been recognised that the shape of a table in a meeting room, the layout of chairs in a lecture room and the arrangement of furniture in a sitting room can have an important effect on the flow of communication. For example, people sitting along the same side of a long boardroom table may experience problems in communicating with each other because eye contact – apart from that with immediate neighbours is difficult.

Furniture can be used to key the climate for an interaction. Sitting behind a desk with your back to a window so that a visitor can only see a silhouette of your face deprives the other person of the opportunity to observe your facial expression. Experiments suggest that the silhouetted person is likely to be perceived as being more dominant, especially if the visitor is seated in a lower chair.



The distance between people when they are communicating, signals something about the nature of their relationship. Four proximity zones have been suggested for different kinds of relationship – as shown on the visual.

In the UK, friends or colleagues talking about agreeable matters tend to stand about 24 inches apart. Problems sometimes arise when people from different cultures, with different concepts of personal space, engage each other in conversation. One may feel comfortable standing close to the other, whereas the other may experience discomfort because he feels that his personal space has been invaded.



# Appearance

## Height - Weight - Dress - Hair - Body decoration

- **Know first, who you are; and then adorn yourself accordingly**

**Epictecus**

*(Nowadays - know where you are, and the image you wish to project)*


- **Never have your best trousers on when you turnout to fight for freedom and truth**

**Ibsen**

Appearance can convey messages about one person's attitude towards others. Certain kinds of clothes worn within a certain context might signal a person's sexual availability.

Respect for another might also be communicated through appearance. Arriving at a mentoring session in worn, dirty, casual clothes might give your mentoree the impression that he/she is not highly regarded or respected.


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# Believability

- **Autonomic**
- **Leg and foot signals**
- **Trunk signals**
- **Unidentified hand signals**
- **Identified hand signals**
- **Facial expression**
- **Verbalisation**

**Least controlled**



**Most controlled**

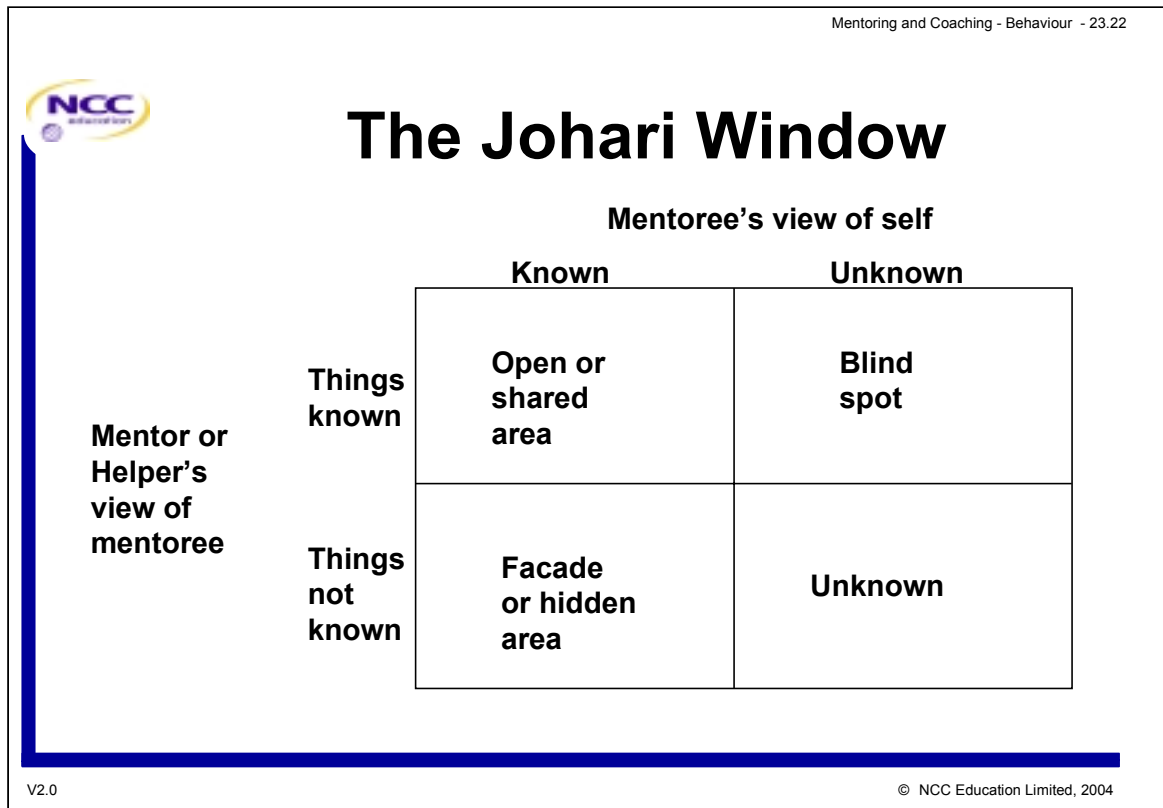
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What is the true meaning of the message if a red-faced man bangs the table with a clenched fist and declares that he is not angry?

Research evidence suggests that non-verbal behaviours generally offer the most reliable clues to what a person is really feeling, in spite of his denial that he is angry.

It appears that people are less likely to inhibit or manipulate certain signals. These tend to be those which they are least aware of, believe others pay little attention to or are beyond their control. In decreasing order of believability the following seven elements are proposed.

- *Autonomic signals* – such as perspiration, skin colour and respiratory patterns.
- *Leg and Foot signals* – such as tightening of leg muscles and jerky, aggressive foot actions.
- *Trunk signals* – such as muscular tonus of the whole body affecting posture.
- *Unidentified gesticulations* – such as assertive finger wagging, imploring palm-up hand gestures or hand chops.
- *Identified hand gestures* – such as thumbs up.
- *Facial expressions* – such as anger or surprise can be easily faked, but look out for the frozen smile hidden underneath!
- *Verbalisations* – people are able to exercise most control over the verbal messages – and therefore they are the least reliable guide to true feelings, when contradictory signals are observed.



This two dimensional matrix known as the Johari window – depicts a need to be aware that your mentoree is only going to make available selected information to you as mentor.



## “I” Messages

- **Tell the mentoree how you feel, but not how to behave**
  - **Part 1 - Neutral description of the intention**
  - **Part 2 - Statement of possible effects**
  - **Part 3 - Your feelings (I’m...)**
  
- **Never “I think you’re wrong”  
“I think you should... “**

Sometimes a mentor finds it important to confront the attitude, behaviour or plans of his mentoree. To criticise, threaten or pressure the mentoree to adopt another course may lower the mentoree’s self-esteem. It may be ineffective – the mentoree may retreat with her plans or actions. It may generate resistance or hurt the relationship.

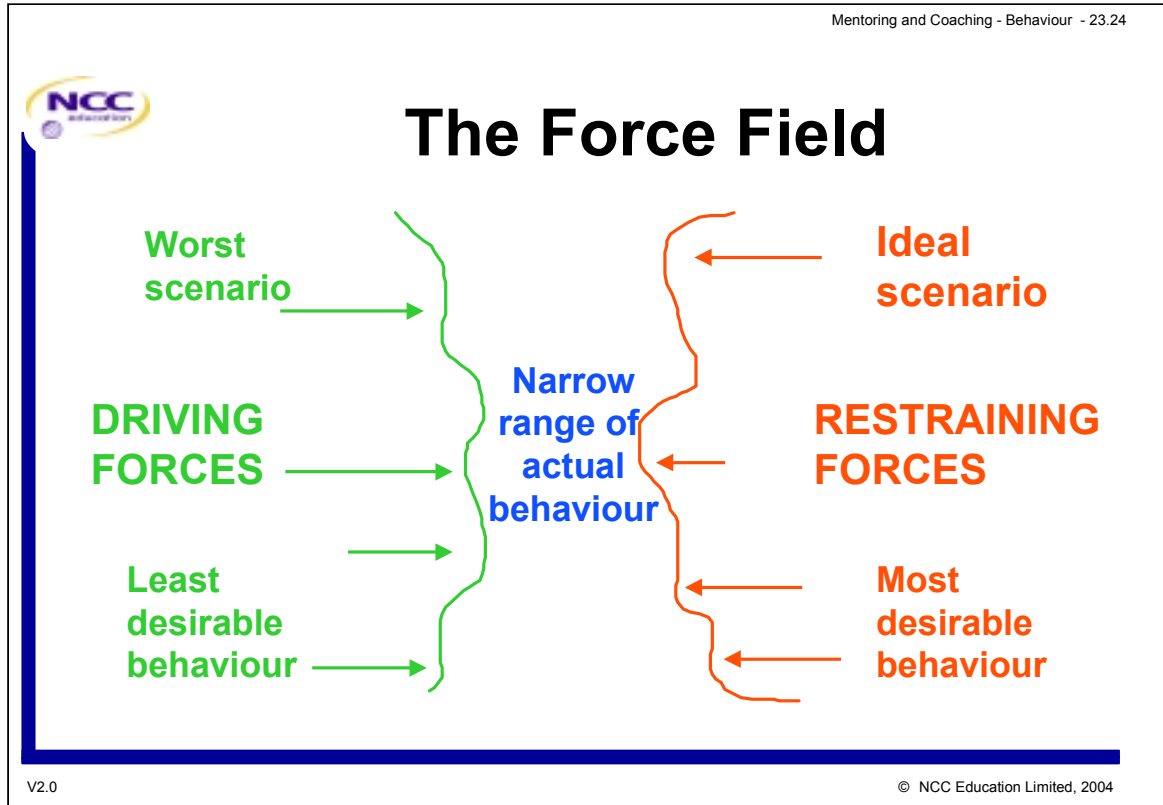
Communication specialists have found that an “I” message confrontation – an authentic message directly from the mentor – is the most effective way to bring about helpful change in the mentoree.

An “I” message generally contains three parts:

- A neutral description of what you perceive the mentoree intends.
- A statement of the possible negative effects on the mentoree or other people.
- The feelings or emotions you are having about the mentorees plan.

An “I” message works because it does not tell the mentoree how to behave. The mentoree makes the decision.


*Do Exercise 15 – “I” Messages.*



In any mentoring relationship there are likely to be driving and restraining forces where conflicts occur. Careful selection and management of behaviours can influence the long term effectiveness of your mentoring activity.

*Do Exercise 16 – Mentoring Conflicts – Role Play.*

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# Criticism

**Implies:**

- Judgement
- Complaint

**Leads to:**

- Low self-esteem
- Defensive blocking



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Most people do not take kindly to criticism – even when it is offered as *constructive criticism*. Criticism is evaluative and judgmental, no matter how we dress it up. When we offer constructive criticism, we want our message to be helpful to the person. But our intentions are undercut by the way that criticism damages self esteem, generates defensive blocking and drains the energy needed for constructive action.

Also if the person accepts the criticism, he acknowledges that he has been bad or wrong – something he is unlikely to do if he is doing wrong intentionally, and something he should not do if he has not been doing wrong at all.

The key to success is to take new, objective and creative approaches to encouraging beneficial change, rather than to repeat ourselves endlessly and negatively as critics tend to do.

*Do Exercise 17 – Constructive Criticism.*



# Advice

## Implies:

- Superior knowledge
- Insight
- Wisdom

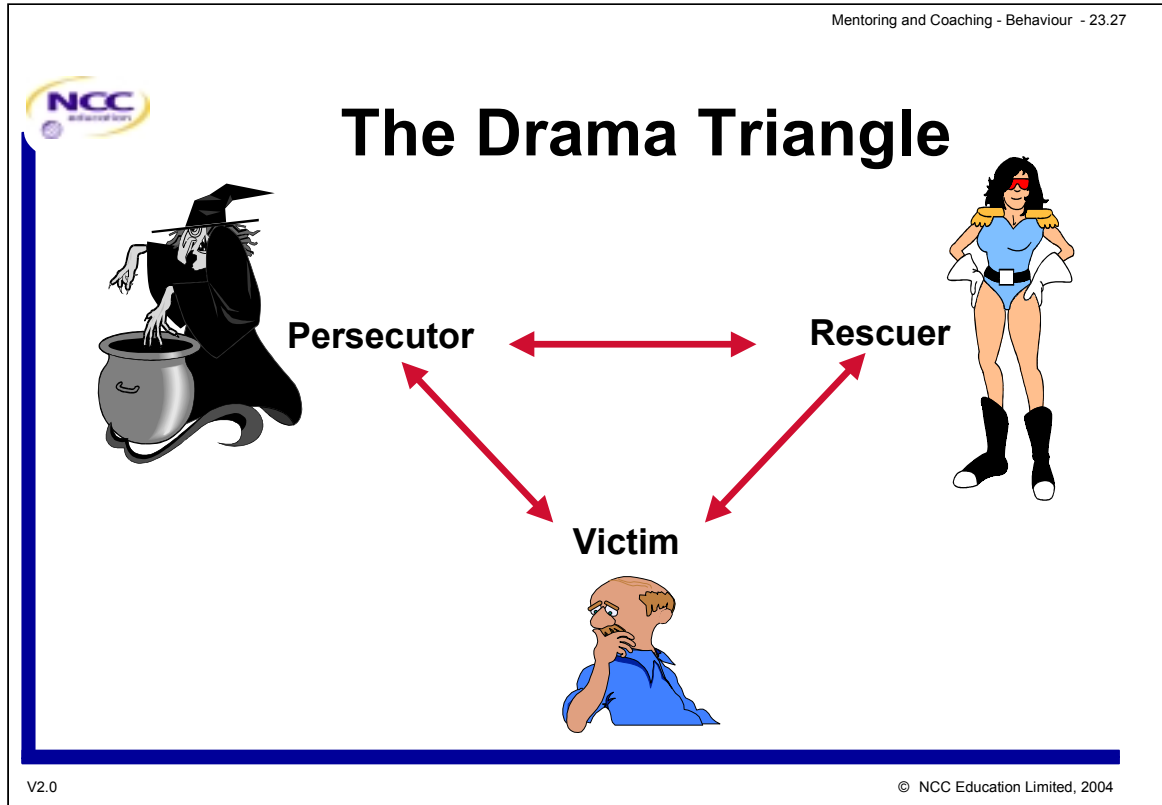
**May be true in professional areas, but not necessarily in personal areas**

**“Yes, but ...”**

Many mentors believe that a large part of their job is giving advice to their mentorees. There is a downside to giving advice. When we give advice, we assume we have superior knowledge, insight or wisdom related to the problem. This may be true when we are engaged in professional discourse.

Most independent-minded mentorees do not really want advice, though they will value your experience, ideas, knowledge of how things work and special insights into problems. To keep them independent, offer but do not push. They must learn to make their own decisions, if they have not already.

*Do Exercise 18 – Case Study – Kate.*



This drama triangle is a way of analysing psychological games, which illustrates why people often resist taking advice.

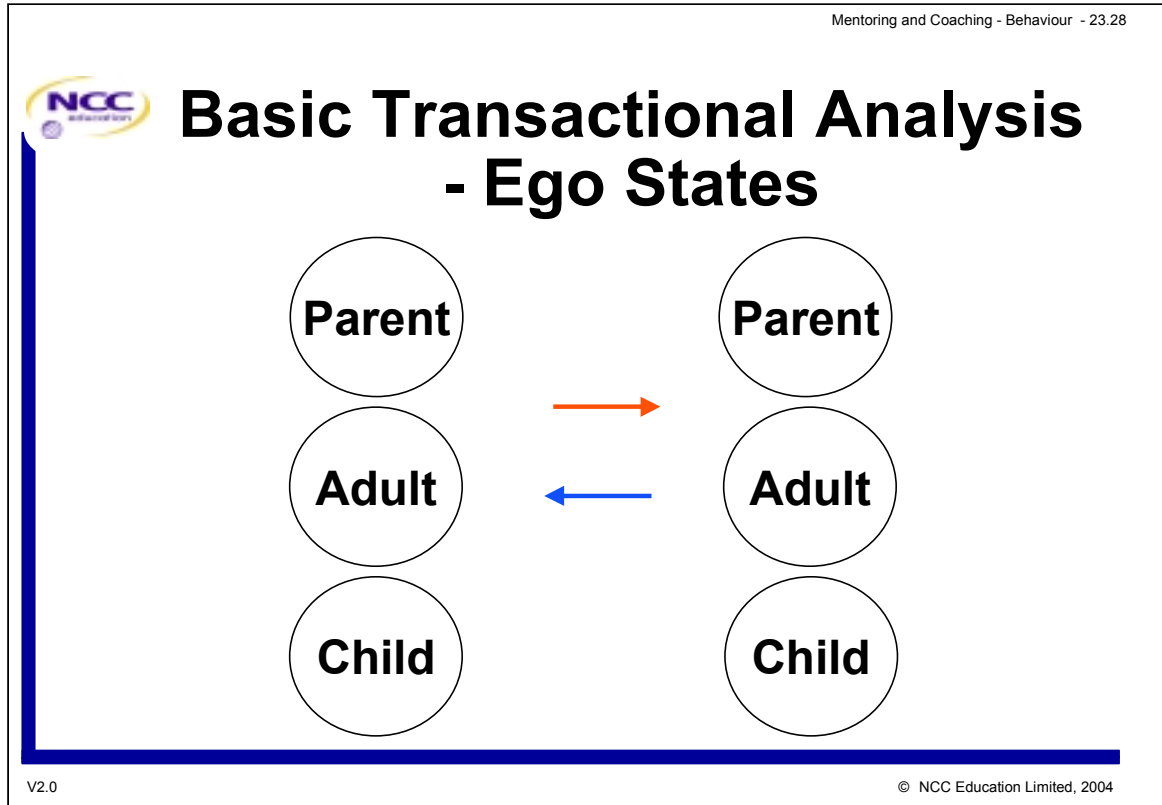
When a person feels victimised by a problem, he may send a plea for help to a person he perceives as able to rescue him (i.e. as more capable than himself). The victim's feelings of inadequacy are real but his lack of ability usually is not.

The would-be rescuer accepts the inadequacy of the victim and offers advice. In doing so, he/she contributes the “why don't you – yes, but” psychological game.

Most often the victim rejects the advice with “yes, but”, followed by a reason for not taking the advice. This is hardly surprising, since he knows all the facets of his problem and has probably already considered and rejected all the easy answers.

The rescuer has only the information that the victim gives in response to each suggestion. He/she keeps making suggestions, each of which is rejected for some new reason. Finally, the rescuer grows impatient with the rejections and turns persecutor. She says something to the effect of “Buzz off – you don't really want to solve this problem”.

At that point each party is confined in his or her own judgement. The victim feels even more like a victim. He not only still has the original problem, he also has the would-be rescuer exasperated with him. The would-be rescuer has confirmed his belief that the victim was and still is inadequate. The victim is also convinced that his problems are too big to be solved by anyone. The relationship has been damaged.



Transactional analysis provides a useful model for understanding the nature of interpersonal relationships. Personality is presented in terms of three ego states – Parent, Adult and Child.

- The parent ego state comprises a set of feelings, attitudes and behaviours that have been copied from parental figures (nurturing, standard setting, criticising and judging).
- The child ego state comprises a collection of feelings, attitudes and behaviours that are the remembered reactions to parental behaviour including guilt, anger, rebellion, excitement, joy, sadness and fear.
- The adult ego state comprises a set of feelings, attitudes and behaviours associated with information processing and objective testing of reality.

The balance of these ego states may vary from person to person, and within the same person from time to time. It is the ego state that predominates that determines behaviour. On one occasion a person may behave as an Adult and on another occasion the same person may behave as a critical parent.

This model can be usefully used to improve a person's awareness of their own personal style. The basic unit of behaviour is referred to as transaction. It involves one person doing or saying something to another and the other responding. By analysing a series of transactions it enables a greater understanding – and therefore possible improvement – of a particular relationship.



## Summary: Managing Relationships More Effectively


- Awareness of need
- Read behaviour
- Ensure desired outcome

An awareness of one's own and others' needs can enable a person to assess what he/she needs to do to make his/her behaviour more effective.

Further interpersonal competence comes from the ability to understand the nature of social interactions, to be able to read behaviour, and to act in ways that will bring about desired outcomes.



Mentoring and Coaching - Gains and Difficulties - 24.1



**Postgraduate Diploma  
in  
Strategic Business Information Technology**

**Module 2  
Task Management**

**Lecture 24  
Mentoring and Coaching -  
Gains and Difficulties**

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This session explores some of the mutual gains that can be made from mentoring, and the problems that can arise out of difficult or special situations.

Pressures, stress and the effect of diminishing returns are also covered – to ensure that the mentor is able to judge the appropriate action depending upon the state of the mentee, and their workload.

Eight exercises are included in this session – including one role play exercise. This role play should be performed in pairs, with a swap of roles – so every student has the opportunity to play both roles.

Mentoring and Coaching - Gains and Difficulties - 24.2



# Partnership



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Mentoring is often perceived as a one-way street, with the mentor giving and the mentoree receiving. In the past, this top-down, parent-to-child relationship was often based on the assumption that the mentoree was not in a position to do much in return except be a dutiful and appreciative protégé.

In the past this often worked, giving career success to the mentoree and a type of parental satisfaction to the mentor. But it tended to produce clones and prepare people to succeed in a world which is now passing. In these days of self-empowerment and rapid organisational and professional change, the senior-junior model needs revision.

Today, mentoring may be viewed as a partnership, with both parties freely contributing to the discussion as equals working together, based upon mutual respect. A mentor may still have greater experience, insight and wisdom but the relationship can be one of showing rather than only top-down giving and receiving.

Mentoring is not a bookkeeping exercise. There is no need to balance accounts or to give back in kind. Yet, a two-way flow of kindness, respect or giving can return much to the mentor.

*Do Exercise 19 – Partnership.*

Mentoring and Coaching - Gains and Difficulties - 24.3



# Mentor Expectations


- Satisfaction
- Recognition
- Reward
- ?

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As a cultural value, generosity is extolled. We give for the love and care of our fellow human beings. This giving is usually honest and sincere. But since we also have needs we hope that others will apply the golden rule and that some joy will come our way. If it does not, we may be disappointed and possibly resentful.

Accepting that each of us has needs, and being open and honest about them, can help us to make our expectations explicit. Failing to state our expectations of another person is all too common and unfair. Both mentorees and mentors need to be explicit about what they hope to gain from the relationship.

Mentoring and Coaching - Gains and Difficulties - 24.4



# Mentoree Expectations



**Do not assume  
Find out first**

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The expectations of your mentoree will vary from situation to situation, and from person to person. It is important that you establish what their expectations are at the outset of the mentoring relationship, otherwise you are heading straight for failure.

You could do this by asking the mentoree to write a brief essay of one or two pages describing what he/she expects to gain from the relationship – short term and long term. Ask the mentoree to list any special needs or features of the relationship that should be considered in developing the relationship.



# Mentoring Agreements

- **Expectations**
- **Reconciliation of views**
- **Written or verbal**

When formal mentoring arrangements are established, usually sanctioned by the employer, school or other agency, a mentor-mentoree agreement may be helpful.

When both parties in a mentoring relationship have made their expectations clear, reconciliation of views may be necessary. At least they should define how they will work together and what they hope to achieve through this association.

Their agreement may not be formal or even written down – it must be remembered that mentoring is a friendly, helping, informal relationship – and any effort to extract promises is probably based on fear, mistrust or hostility.

*Exercise 20 – Mentoring Agreements.*

Mentoring and Coaching - Gains and Difficulties - 24.6



# Implementing Mentoring

## How might you implement a mentoring programme in your organisation?

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After discussion of this topic in class, Exercise 21 – Action, should be completed.



## Special Situations

- **Cross gender mentoring**
- **Cross cultural mentoring**
- **Cross hierarchy mentoring**

We are now going to look at some of the difficult situations that can arise when different types of people become paired up in mentoring situations.

These represent the three primary challenges in mentoring when it is used to:

- adapt our workforce to demographic changes already under way;
- prepare us to operate in a competitive global environment;
- manage organisational and technological change effectively.

Mentoring and Coaching - Gains and Difficulties - 24.8



# Cross Gender Mentoring



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Until recent decades, cross gender mentoring in organisations has been rare. Several studies of mentoring reveal a number of problems related to *cross gender mentoring* based on gossip, envy, suspicion, speculation, false assumptions, sexual stereotypes and charges of sexual harassment. Unfortunately, such attitudes and behaviour have lessened the effectiveness of cross gender mentoring in some environments. Yet each sex has much to offer and teach the other.

Cross gender mentoring can improve morale, enrich the lives of mentorees and provide valuable insights and experiences to each sex.

A gender-balanced and fairly treated workforce is likely to remain a challenge rather than a reality for some time. Effective cross gender mentoring is one of the tools we can use to achieve this balance and fairness.

*Do Exercise 22 – Cross Gender Mentoring.*

Mentoring and Coaching - Gains and Difficulties - 24.9



# Cross Cultural Mentoring



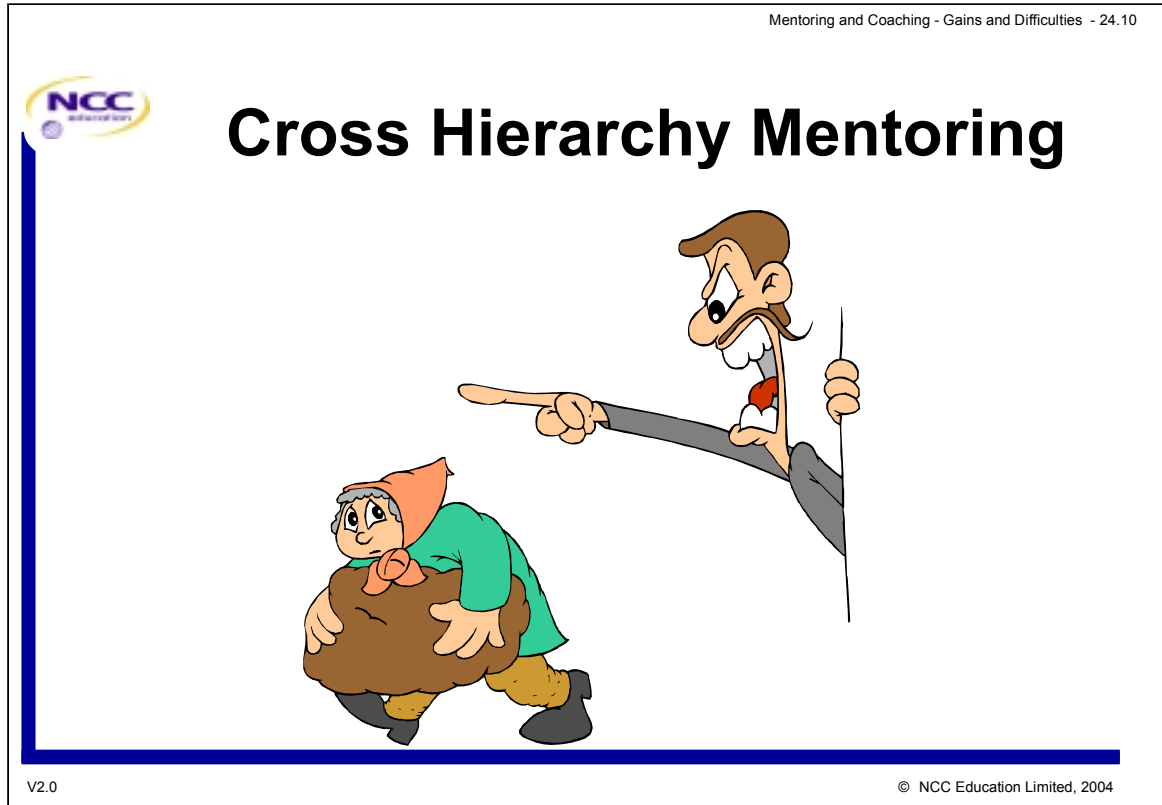
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Signs of cultural diversity are virtually everywhere – and this diversity represents some of the most subtle and special relationships imaginable. Even in a relatively homogeneous society, differences in economic class, religious background, regional allegiance and even family traditions can generate cultural differences which can complicate the task of mentoring.

Cultural differences and our personal response to them are a large part of what makes each of us unique. Our cultural heritage may also enable each of us to appreciate special facets of a problem, approach its solution from different angles and contribute to a more comprehensive solution.

We can trace the origin of a plate of spaghetti to China, modern medicine to the ancient Arabs, the roots of Christianity to the Hebrews of old, or modern dance rhythms to Africa. Our lives have gained richness and variety from people all over the world, whether we are aware of it or not. The contributions are almost endlessly varied.

*Do Exercise 23 – Cross Cultural Mentoring.*



Some of the most powerful, effective and long-lasting mentoring can be done by the person who has authority over the mentoree – and this can include parents. The power or authority to reward and punish people creates both opportunities and obstacles to effective mentoring.

The possession of power or authority over a mentoree can work against a helping, caring, nurturing relationship. It is difficult for a mentoree to become her own person when she is subject to pressures from others.


Power and authority, however, need not be used negatively. Used wisely, to challenge, to offer opportunities and to encourage, power and authority can provide powerful assistance to a mentoree.

Mentoring by a supervisor or line-manager must be done carefully, artfully and fairly. In one respect, bringing out the best in each employee may well define the art of supervision. Mentoring can contribute strongly to the development of that art.

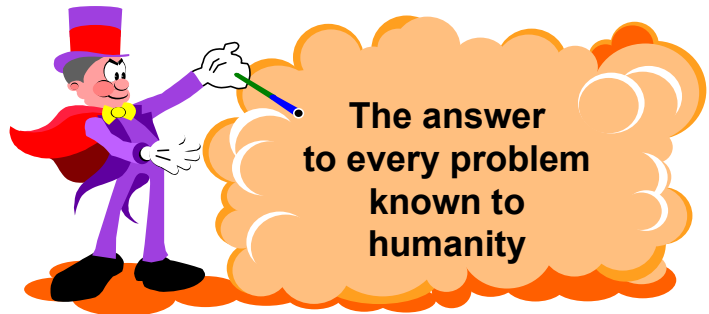
Hierarchy is not simply a matter of placing people on an organisational ladder. We have hierarchies of knowledge, of experience, of seniority and yes, of position and power. Hierarchies of influence, personal complexities and abstraction also exist.

*Do Exercise 24 – Cross Hierarchy Mentoring.*

Mentoring and Coaching - Gains and Difficulties - 24.11



# The most useful skill of them all...



The answer to every problem known to humanity

# .... is knowing our own limitations

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Knowing our own limitations, and being able to admit that we don't know – or can't do something, is one of the most useful skills that a professional person can have.

It must be remembered that, even as a *mentor*, you cannot be expected to be able to help your mentoree in *every* difficult situation that he/she might face. You owe it to both yourself and your mentoree to admit when you are out of your depth.

Mentoring and Coaching - Gains and Difficulties - 24.12



# Specialist Areas

**Stress**      **Redundancy (or threat)**  
**Pregnancy**      **Retirement**      **Performance appraisal**  
**Disciplinary interview**      **Psychometric testing**  
**Relocation**      **Sexual Harassment**  
**Specific Schemes**      **Debt**      **Substance misuse**  
**Violence/Trauma**      **Relationship issues**  
**Bereavement**      **Chronic sickness**  
**Depression**      **Psychiatric problems**

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Knowing a route to solving some of the specific specialist problems that you might be confronted with – is likely to be the best that you can offer in terms of constructive suggestions .....



## But You Can

- Listen
- Be the one to recognise the problem
- Address your own prejudices
- Be alongside



But you can, after all, listen and provide an unbiased, unprejudiced ear and be available if needed at times of crisis.

*Do Exercise 25 – Sam, Role Play.*



# Summary

## Mentoring can be ....


- Formal or informal
- Long or short term
- Single action or agreed plan

To summarise this final mentoring session – you can make mentoring formal or informal, it's up to you!

It can be a long or a short term investment, a single action, or an agreed plan.

The success of your relationship depends upon the commitment you and the mentoree are willing to make to meet the challenges and capitalise on the opportunities.

Task Management - Summary - 25.1



**Postgraduate Diploma  
in  
Strategic Business Information Technology**

**Module 2  
Task Management**

**Lecture 25  
Task Management -  
Summary**

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This summary session to the Task Management module reviews the objectives of the module, recaps on the major topics that have been discussed throughout and provides an opportunity to re-run an exercise that was run during an earlier session that will help strengthen the usefulness of the material.



# Task Management Module Objectives

- **Evaluate requirements and managerial constraints**
- **Apply resource and time management techniques**
- **Integrate appropriate styles of leadership and behaviour**
- **Reconcile human communications with task**
- **Appreciate need for mentoring and coaching**

The objectives of the module have been to equip the students with the skills to be able to:

- evaluate the requirements and managerial (financial and temporal) constraints within which a task has been specified;
- apply resource and time management techniques to plan and deliver achievable objectives meeting the established requirements within the stated constraints;
- integrate the appropriate styles of leadership and human behaviour into the task management process;
- reconcile the issues and concerns of human communication within task management;
- reflect upon the differing role of mentoring and coaching by evaluating their benefits and difficulties from the perspective of both the mentor/coach and those assigned to them.




## Topics Covered

- **The task envelope**
- **Time management**
- **Principles of human communications**
- **Resource management**
- **Principles of human behaviour**
- **Mentoring and coaching**

The module explored each of these topics over a series of sessions.


The emphasis has been placed on the human aspects of task management that are essential for all IS professionals.

Task Management - Summary - 25.4



# The Task Envelope

- What is success?
- Initiating the task
- Supporting disciplines
- Managing risk
- Completing the task




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Many of the sessions, both in this topic and in the others, were based on the assumption that it is possible to establish concrete success criteria – so this was covered in some detail in the first session. We come back to this to complete this session later.

The remaining sessions focussed on the task in hand – how it is initiated, how the conflicting constraints of cost, time, quality and content can be managed, the supporting disciplines that are necessary to deliver a quality product from the task such as Quality Assurance (QA), Configuration Management (CM) and Verification and Validation (V&V). We also looked at the delivery options and relationship with the *client*, whoever the client might be.

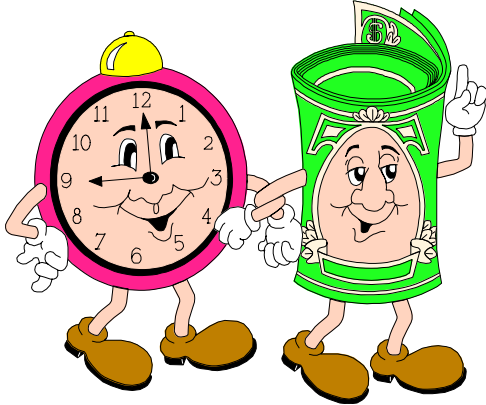
*Now that the students have explored what they should be doing, how would they go about changing the approach – not only of themselves – but also that of their colleagues and organisations?*

Task Management - Summary - 25.5



# Time Management

- Managing your time
- Managing meetings
- Managing the time of others



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In a human resource intensive industry like Information Systems, time is one of the most critical resources for undertaking a task.

This topic looked at the different requirements and techniques that are available to help improve the effective utilisation of this critical resource.

The sessions focussed on these three aspects, and provided the opportunity for a significant amount of discussion and practical work.

*How do students believe they could improve on their time management skills?*



# Principles of Human Communications

- Introduction to communication skills
- Listening skills
- Interviewing skills
- Negotiating skills



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People are by far the most important and expensive asset a business owns. Although most people cherish their most valuable assets, unfortunately human factors are often totally ignored in the business environment, with predictably bad consequences.

This, and the subsequent sessions on human behaviour and mentoring, therefore form the human factors element of the module.

The sessions discussed the following aspects.

- The communication loop – message, media and method, the strengths and limitations of language, barriers and filters, the audience, working in groups.
- Difference between hearing and listening – different approaches to listening, the use of silence, reflective listening, listening to non-verbal messages.
- Interview as a social encounter – bias, behaviour, organisation of topics, formulation of questions, probing and clarification, closure.
- Negotiation looked at strategies, bargaining, concessions and settling.

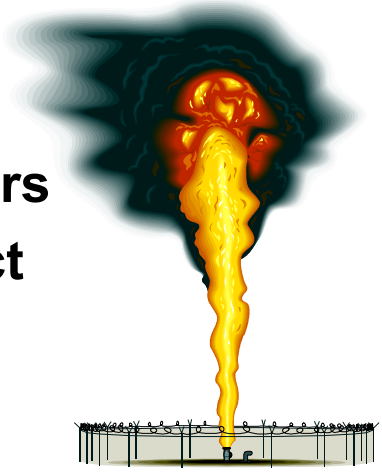
*How do the students believe that they can improve their communication skills, and help to make their organisations more 'people oriented'?*

Task Management - Summary - 25.7



# Resource Management

- Managing internal resources
- Managing subcontractors
- Acquisition and contract management



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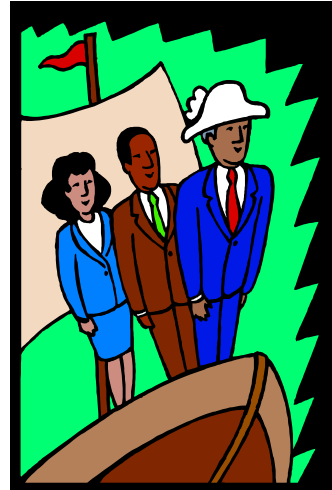
Focussing on people again, these sessions looked at how to make the most effective use of existing resources, and how to obtain resources that the business does not currently own or employ.

*How do the students believe they could improve on their delegation skills, and improve the procurement processes embedded in their organisations?*



# Principles of Human Behaviour

- Leadership and motivation
- Team factors
- Innovation, quality and productivity



These sessions discussed:

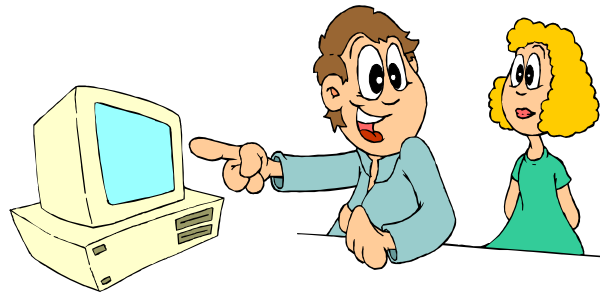
- Leadership and behaviour preferences – the importance of leadership, Maslow’s hierarchy, motivations and incentives, preferred learning styles.
- Team Building – the balanced team, steps to a successful team, team roles.
- Approach to innovation, significance of quality and productivity, involvement and commitment.

*Students should think about their understanding of human behaviour, and how it will affect their interactions with colleagues, managers and subordinates.*



# Mentoring and Coaching


- **Mentoring and coaching roles**
- **Mutual gains and difficulties**
- **Pressure, stress and diminishing returns**



During these sessions, in addition to discussing the topics listed below, there was significant opportunity for practical exercises.

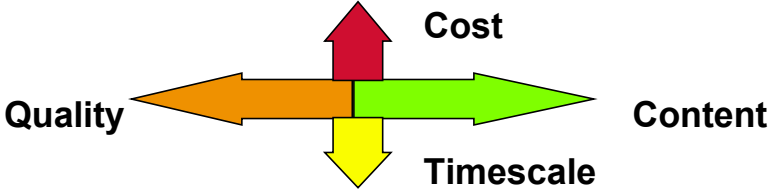
- The mentoring role.
- Mutual gains.
- Mentoring difficulties.
- The difference between mentoring and coaching.
- Pressure, stress and diminishing returns.

Task Management - Summary - 25.10



# Critical Attributes

Those which if not achieved mean the task or project is a failure



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*This is one of the key visuals of the entire module.*

*The following visuals pose questions which explore the reasons for failure to achieve in each of these four dimensions. Repeating this exercise here should indicate to the students how their understanding of these criteria has changed over the course of the module.*



# Budget

- **Has the task met its budget targets?**
- **What could cause the answer to this question to be “No”?**

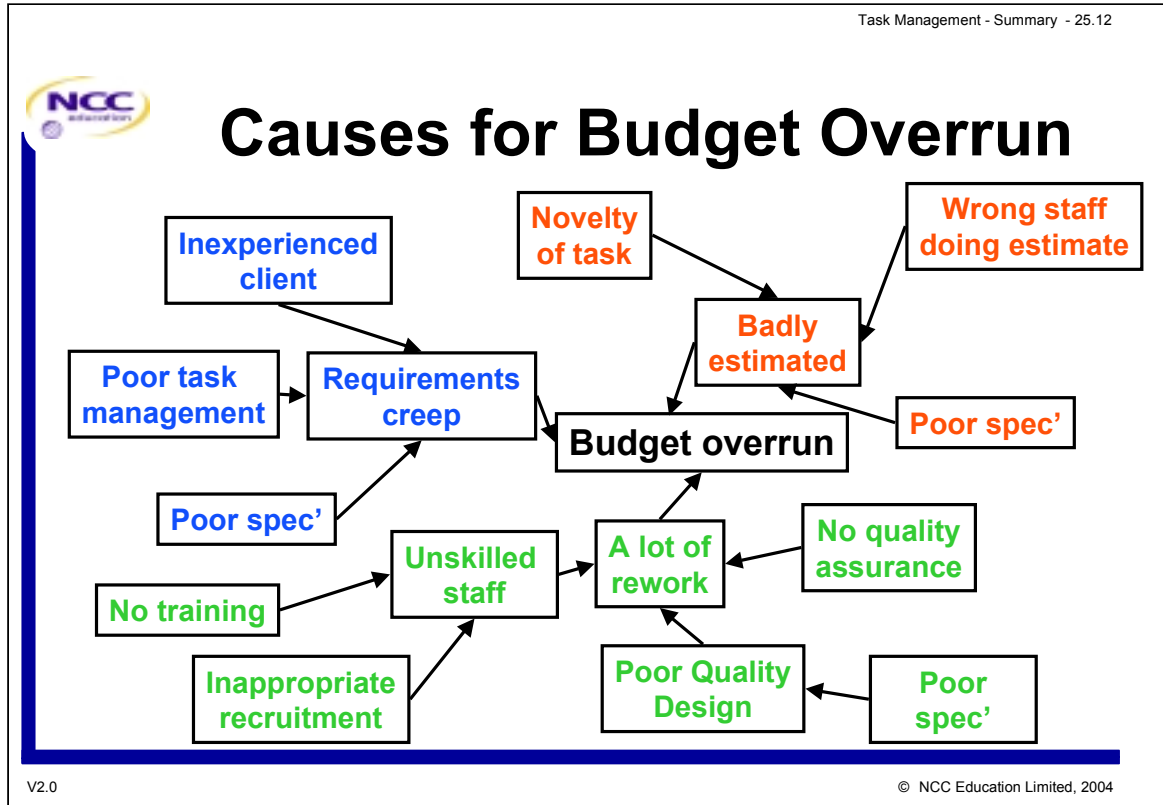
*This and the following visuals form the basis of a discussion on the possible causes which could lead to failure in each dimension.*

*The lecturer should use these visuals to explore the possible answers to the questions posed – these could be undertaken in class or in syndicates of 3 – 5 students per syndicate. Techniques such as the mind map or the Ishikawa fish bone could be used.*

- *Are there any common cause problems that have been identified in each of the dimensions?*
- *If so what could be done to prevent the problems occurring?*

*An example of a mind map is shown on the next visual. The lecturer may wish to use this one as an example.*

Note: The Ishikawa fish bone technique is detailed in Sarazen, J S, *The Tools of Quality, Quality Progress*, July 1990.



This is the beginning of a mind-map for budget overrun causes. It is simply drawn up by brainstorming the possible causes of failure, and then further exploring what may lead to those causes occurring.

Already it can be seen that an obvious common cause for budget overrun is a poor specification of task. If this also occurs on the other mind-maps, then it is a significant indicator that something needs to be done about it. This can be achieved by exploring the reasons why poor specifications happen, and trying to put in place preventative measures before the potential problem becomes a reality.



# Timescale

- **Has the task met its timescale targets?**
- **What could cause the answer to this question to be “No”?**

*See notes on previous visual.*



# Content

- **Does the information system do what it needs to?**
  - Completely?
  - Correctly?
- **What could cause the answer to this question to be “No”?**

*See notes on previous 25-12.*



# Quality

- **Does the system meet its non-functional requirements?**
  - Usability
  - Modifiability
  - Understandability
  - Reliability
- **What could cause the answer to this question to be “No”?**

*See notes on previous visual.*

In addition, it is worth noting that quality is rarely a single entity, and first needs to be broken down into its constituent parts. The reasons for failure to meet each of these non-functional or quality requirements are likely to be very different, and it may be more appropriate to treat them separately in this exercise.



# Stages of a Task

- 1. Initial enthusiasm**
- 2. Onset of reality**
- 3. Panic**
- 4. Blame of the innocent**
- 5. Reward for the uninvolved**

Finally, we conclude the module with the well published five stages of a project or task – unfortunately there is more truth in this list, than any academic text books on the subject.

The more that the students recognise that these stages are a natural phenomenon, (they will identify the symptoms at various points in their tasks and projects), the more they will be able to counteract them.