Today's Performance-Driven Workforce Requires Coaching and Mentoring

Eugene J. Monaco, Executive Director and Public Service Professor
Professional Development Program

Coaching and mentoring have become integral components of human capital investment for organizations. Today's workplaces require high-performing employees to meet measurable performance goals. Effective coaching and mentoring lead to this end.

Forword-thinking organizations embrace coaching and mentoring programs because their leaders understand that effective coaching and mentoring ensure sustained organizational progress, which benefit both mentors and mentees.

Mentoring is designed to promote the growth and professional development of employees, as opposed to targeting a specific skill or knowledge gain. Mentoring focuses on building relationships and making sustained organizational contributions. A primary goal of mentoring is for employees to become reflective, independent, and ultimately more confident in their problem-solving abilities. Successful mentoring programs move employees from being dependent to being independent expert problem solvers. Lasting a year or more, mentoring is always long-term and requires the investment of significant time by both the mentor and mentee. Mentoring is difficult to quantify and tends to focus on leadership development, critical thinking, and active listening. Increased competency in these areas is important but not the primary focus. The emphasis is on improving overall employee development leading to personal transformation and professional growth.

A mentoring program is a major investment for an organization and, once in place, supports employees in becoming autonomous professionals and valued organizational contributors. Well-designed mentoring programs are vital to support employee development. They positively affect morale and ultimately contribute to an organization's increased productivity.

Coaching, conversely, is short term, performance-driven, and directed at improving the individual's immediate job performance within a short period of time. Coaching is particularly effective with the onboarding of new employees. Other employees also benefit from coaching as assignments

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Coaching and mentoring effectively increase worker morale, productivity, and retention for all involved.

Tell me about PDP when you started.

As you can imagine, it was quite small and it was mostly just soft skills training. I wasn't hired as a trainer, but as a policy person to help with the curriculum because of my Local District experience.

Peter Kircher

One huge difference is that at the time we had no one with any experience in curriculum. Our curricula were just outlines. The science of adult education did not exist yet in our group.

Performance-based training was not a term that existed, at least not within the walls of our unit. Yet, we did some things that had the same concepts and values.

How did trainers prepare for training?

The more senior members of the training team made decisions about training topics and assignments, but there were no rules about how often you should practice and what those practices should look like. There was no structure to feedback. Feedback was given but was delivered inconsistently. Lots of just handing over notes to trainers to discern on their own.

We had less knowledge about how to train, and we decided for ourselves what was good. There was no focus on ensuring that the training was interactive and responding to all the questions. We knew practice was important, but there was no methodology. Trainers coached each other by saying "watch and imitate me" instead of supporting the use of individual training styles.

Staff changes within PDP changed the environment to focus on bringing PDP more current with the educational community. Training went from informal to formal, and was no longer just talking at and lecturing. We realized that this is not how people learn. It was a subtle shift in line with PDP's growth and commitment to professional education.

What has stayed the same?

A lot didn't change. Even though we could not put our finger on what we were doing right or wrong, because we didn't know about performance-based training or job task analysis, we still cared tremendously for the success of the programs. Our passion showed through the success of the people we trained.

News & Views

PDP Staff Retire

Peter Kircher
Peter Kircher retired from PDP after 36 years. He came to PDP in 1981 as a trainer and subject matter expert in the Department of Temporary Assistance Training.
Peter distinguished himself as a master trainer, subject matter expert, coach, mentor, and curriculum writer for OTDA and OCFS training programs. Peter developed and delivered training institutes and specialized programs related to employment and economic supports and served as the project leader for several programs.

Diane DiGiorgio
Diane DiGiorgio joined PDP in November 1988 on the *Casework Documentation* project. Her dedication, commitment, and enthusiasm remained consistent over the years. Diane was a pillar in the child welfare area at PDP, the School of Social Welfare, and OCFS. She was known and respected for her knowledge and was called upon many times by key stakeholders to provide her professional input on child welfare issues and practices.

Angela DiBiase
Angela DiBiase was part of the PDP team for over 30 years, working in the Buffalo Regional Office on the Child Welfare Permanency Planning Project. Angela worked with OCFS and the counties in Region I to meet their training needs, served as mentor and role model for her teammates and coworkers, and exemplified the professionalism expected of a PDP employee.

PDP Annual Awards

The purpose of the PDP Award and Recognition program is to foster a culture that supports and rewards innovation and professional improvement; recognizes and rewards staff who support and exemplify the PDP vision, mission, core values, and beliefs; encourage excellence in service; recognizes and rewards significant achievements and contributions; and recognizes and rewards outstanding individual and team performance. The following PDP staff are recipients of PDP's 2016 Annual Awards:

Outstanding Team—Foundations in Health and Safety e-Learning Development Team
The Outstanding Team award goes to the *Foundations in Health and Safety* e-Learning Development Team: Nathan

Allen, Casey Becker, Ron Biggé, Ric DiDonato, Colleen Faragon, Gary Glinski, Erica Hunter, Ed Kirchgessner, Penny Kurtz, David Lanthier, Dan Meade, Joan Meyer, Ed Skawinski, Bryan Sotherden, and Rohan Warkad.

Due to new federal mandates, 180,000 childcare providers in New York are required to take the *Foundations in Health and Safety* e-learning. This five-hour e-learning course was conceptualized, written, designed, recorded, developed, and tested in five months and publicly launched in early 2017 without missing a deadline.

Executive Director's Award—Casey Becker

Casey Becker is the recipient of the Executive Director's Award. Casey produced the Pyramid Model webcast series that received an APEX award for excellence this year. She also produced the *Preventing Expulsion and Suspension* e-learning course, which features interviews conducted with national expert Dr. Walter Gilliam of Yale University, and has been the driving force behind the 5-hour *Foundations in Health and Safety* e-learning course.

As a Senior Education Specialist and Producer in the Media Production Unit, I develop e-learning courses and webcast trainings for childcare providers. The "changing times" of the training landscape continually affect the technology we use to connect our trainings with more child care providers from New York State and around the world.

Casey Becker

Some of my responsibilities include storyboarding creative treatments for products, writing scripts, overseeing production on video shoots, securing live guests, and developing supplemental training materials like participant materials, activity sheets, evaluation objectives, and tests. I work closely with others on the Media Production team to get our ideas from paper to screen.

Throughout the process, a tremendous amount of feedback is shared. I receive and share thoughts and ideas with live panelists and on-camera content experts, funders, co-trainers who facilitate the webcasts throughout the state, participants who attend the trainings, and staff members at PDP. Every piece of feedback received effects what we are currently working on as well as products we produce in the future.

Using Feedback in Our Changing Times

During my time with PDP, the use of feedback, both giving and receiving, has been a helpful and a very effective method in preparing for training, developing curriculum, delivering training, and preparing new staff to perform well in the classroom.

Cecilia Archer-Tucker

I think of feedback as a cycle. When an individual is new to the organization, that individual receives a lot of feedback on classroom presentation skills, voice projection, preparing for training, delivering training, how to use flip charts, how to respond to questions from the trainees, and how to maintain credibility in the classroom.

As new hires become more familiar with the organization and with fulfilling the expectations of their training roles, they also become not just the receiver of feedback but the providers of feedback as well.

PDP's inclusion of DDI trainings has strengthened both my and the organization's value of feedback.

The times are changing. We are experiencing a more diversified workforce, as well as more diversity within our classrooms. In addition, change is occurring daily with new advances in technology and the rapid dissemination of information. The bottom line is we are experiencing change all around us. The challenge is to maintain the principles of feedback and instill in our workforce that feedback is the foundation of high morale, productivity, and sound management. The most important goal of feedback in these changing times is to build a collaborative environment where individuals trust each other, feel respected and valued, resolve conflicts, develop solutions, and plan how to implement change.

Change is the one constant we can all count on. It is going to take place if you are an active participant or not.

Outstanding Trainer—Cecilia Archer-Tucker

Cecilia Archer-Tucker is the recipient of the Outstanding Trainer award. During 2016, the Department of Temporary Assistance Training experienced several staff vacancies, which created many challenges in meeting PDP's deliverables. Cecilia stepped up to fill many of the gaps. She filled multiple roles, delivered a significantly higher volume of training, developed new curriculum, participated in job searches, and helped on-board new staff. Cecilia is a model for fostering positive behavior and peer coaching.

Outstanding Professional Staff— Nathan Allen

Nathan Allen is the recipient of the Outstanding Professional Staff award. His problem-solving abilities and technical skills are in high demand with peers, supervisors, and project sponsors. Nathan worked on several key projects during the year, which included developing the 2017 iteration of the OCFS County Plans application and CFScormHandler. These helped PDP bring trainings to more people throughout New York State.

As a computer programmer in PDP's Instructional Technologies Unit, I specialize in building and maintaining the websites that provide online learning to many audiences as well as designing the e-learning courses themselves. The work we do would not

Nathan Allen

exist if not for the changing times that have made online learning not just possible, but necessary.

The speed at which the field is changing provides the challenges that define much of the work we do. The challenge of finding and using the best new technologies and training methods to move forward in this field while recognizing our responsibility to maintain the many courses and systems that have gotten us this far.

I work with a team of experts in course design, graphics, and programming to ensure that our learners' experience is of the highest quality. As a team, we work together, learn from each other, and encourage one another. This team method brings together different perspectives to conquering each challenge.

There is never a dull moment in the ever-changing field of e-learning, and I would not have it any other way.

Outstanding Administrative Support Staff— Terri Zuelsdorf

Terri Zuelsdorf is the recipient of the Outstanding Administrative Support Staff award. One of Terri's key strengths is anticipating problems and implementing steps to prevent them from occurring. Last fall, OCFS adopted Terri's suggestion to include a visual instruction to help gather accurate data from trainees. Terri takes pride in her work at PDP and makes sure all of her projects are successfully completed. *PDP*

Did You Know?

Mentoring is beneficial for **both** the mentee and the mentor.

A comprehensive case study in 2006 by Gartner, a Connecticut-based market research firm, of over 1,000 workers from Sun Microsystems over a five-year period revealed the following benefits of a formal mentoring program:
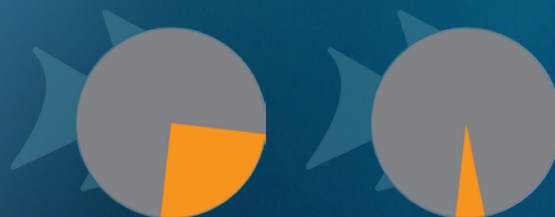
25% of employees who enrolled in a mentoring program had a **positive salary-grade change,** while only **5%** of workers who did not participate in a mentoring program had a change.
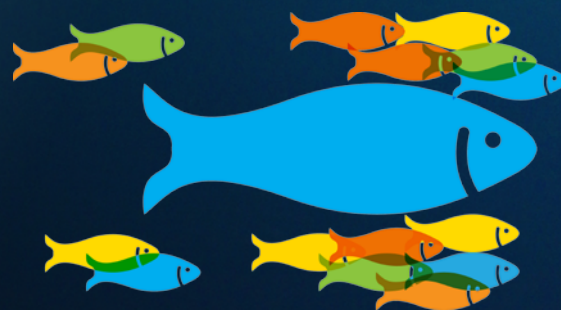
Mentors

Promoted **six times** more often

69% higher retention rate

Mentees

Promoted **five times** more often

75% higher retention rate

We have always respected the work of the people we train. We know it is important work. Because of that, we never wanted to waste their time. The focus has always been on making sure that the information in training was useful to the trainees even before we knew what adult education philosophy was.

I don't remember PDP always having a written mission, vision, and values, but our work has always been in line with PDP's current mission, vision, and values.

What is it about feedback at PDP that sticks out to you the most?

I have never worked with anyone who was not supportive. I had my ups and downs, but I also had opportunities and there were always new challenges. One of those opportunities was getting involved with Development Dimension International (DDI) trainings. DDI shaped how we provide feedback to trainers and other team members to not knock them down or not overwhelm them.

As a supervisor and coach to new trainers, what did you focus on to try to grow people?

For me, the most important was one-on-one, face-to-face feedback. When possible, I demonstrated for new trainers while trying not to impose my way. One thing I learned over time was to spend most of the time in feedback sessions asking the trainer what they thought instead of just telling them "the answer." I asked what they thought they could do differently and what ideas they had. I would try to find a balance between asking and telling in feedback, just as we wanted trainers to do in training. It was important that trainers had a role in the feedback process.

The other key was to help new trainers feel confident so they would come across as credible. It took me a long time to learn that you can't give someone confidence, they have to get there on their own.

If you were to give one piece of advice to a new trainer at PDP, what would it be?

There are three elements:

- **Support.** Rely on others, but don't use others as a crutch.
- **Research and start with policy.** If you are training a topic, don't start with what is in the curriculum. Go to the policy sources and first get the big picture. Figure out how we have taken that policy and structured the curriculum in a way that makes it easier to learn.
- **Be inquisitive.** You have lots of help around you and people want you to succeed. So, look around and figure out who is your best resource for each topic. *PDP*

EIP Coaching

By Colleen O'Grady, EIP Manager
Professional Development Program

The Educational Incentive Program (EIP) has evolved over the years as PDP seeks new and better ways to use scholarship funds to advance the professional development of child care providers in New York State. In recent years, more scholarship funds have been issued for College Credit-Bearing and Early Childhood Credentialing programs than for stand-alone workshops. This shift toward more formal education involves learning facts, concepts, and principles in a more comprehensive way and over a longer period of time to establish a foundation to provide higher-quality child care. In 2017, with support of the NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), PDP continues this EIP transformation by recognizing coaching as a valuable and supported method of professional development. Research shows that effective coaching leads child care providers to be more intentional in their practice and leads to positive child outcomes.

Coaching is defined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) (2011) as "a relationship-based process led by an expert with specialized and adult learning knowledge and skills, who often serves in a different professional role than the recipient(s). Coaching is designed to build capacity for specific professional dispositions, skills, and behaviors and focuses on goal-setting and achievement for an individual or group."

Coaching can provide maximum-level comprehension and practical application of performance-based outcomes to implement practices that foster high-quality child care. Coaching programs are most successful when combined with classroom trainings related to the skills being addressed (Isner, et al, 2011).

Effective this year, NYS OCFS will allow up to 20 hours of coaching by an approved coach to count toward the OCFS biannual 30-hour regulatory training requirement. EIP has added coaching as an allowable training type and will provide scholarships up to $1,100 per year to eligible child care providers. Coaches must meet an approved criteria to participate with EIP. *PDP*

Isner, T., Tout, K., Zaslow, M. ,Soli, M., Quinn, K., Rothenberg, L. & Burkhauser, M. (2011). Coaching in Early Care and Education Programs and Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS): Identifying Promising Features. Child Trends.

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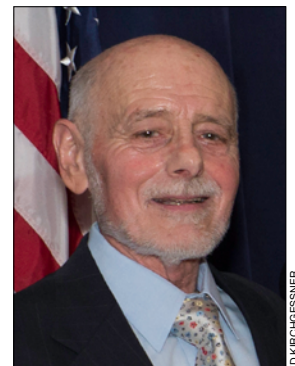*Continued from page 1*

change, necessitating new skills and knowledge in new work areas. Successful coaching provides an employee the opportunity to link with a content expert to develop competency in acquiring specific skills or knowledge. Constructive and balanced feedback received in a timely manner is an important part of the coaching process.

Coaching can be easily evaluated as a return on investment (ROI). Therefore, when employees have gained greater skill/knowledge, progress can be measured in terms of improved performance or completed tasks using ROI indicators. Once skills are successfully attained, coaching is no longer necessary.

Well-rounded coaching and mentoring programs enable employees to connect, learn, grow, and align with the organization. Progressive organizations have readily embraced both coaching and mentoring, which provide a platform for continuous performance improvement for employees at all levels. Make no mistake that these systems can be extremely time consuming and costly to implement, but at the same time they are highly valuable in helping organizations serve new employees as they enter the workplace. Furthermore, the seasoned employee has much to gain from participating in coaching and mentoring programs as they take on new organizational assignments and seek leadership opportunities. The overarching benefits derived from coaching and mentoring are that they provide the opportunity for employee

growth in the short run and the capability to contribute to the overall well-being of the organization in the long run.

The Professional Development Program has long used a coaching program to assist with the onboarding of new trainers and is now looking to expand its program to include a more focused mentoring system. This issue of the *Communiqué* highlights the approach PDP has taken to further its own coaching and mentoring for new and veteran employees. **PDP**

Eugene Monaco