

MENTORING ENGINEERING STUDENTS

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Extended Abstract

Today successful teaching is not about holding and sending information to students, neither is efficient learning about passively processing and memorizing significant amounts of text in order to get higher test scores.

The 21st century is full of supportive resources; this is the reason why the teaching-learning process should be addressed differently. The instructors know already how to combine the technology, pedagogy, and content to create meaningful learning opportunities for all students, but still, this is not enough.

In this context it becomes an imperative to the teacher's practice to expand his activity by taking over the role of *mentor*, an activity that involves more than the previous ones.

The first year at university is considered to be quite difficult for the students in terms of adapting to a new environment, new rules, new colleagues and new academic staff. This is a crucial moment when students need someone to be taken care of, they need mentors' help, highly empathetic people who will guide and support them along this new beginning.

Mentoring is a two-way process of learning. It is defined as a relationship between an experienced and a less experienced individual, where the mentor provides guidance, direction, advice, support, help and constructive feedback to his students.

Nowadays, the idea of mentoring has discovered application in basically every dimension of life. According to Morris Zelditch, "Mentors are:

- *advisors*, people with career experience willing to share their knowledge;
- *supporters*, people who give emotional and moral encouragement;
- *tutors*, people who give specific feedback on one's performance;
- *masters*, in the sense of employers to who one is apprenticed;
- *sponsors*, sources of information about and aid in obtaining opportunities;
- *models of identity*, of the kind of person one should be to be an academic."

The paper clarifies to what extent the teacher in higher education is able to take on any of the roles above. The article considers the ways academic staff can perform the roles of a mentor, guide and facilitator of the learning process in collaborative learning. It also explores and analyzes how the impact of *mentors* on engineering students can influence their personal and professional development.

Keywords: *mentoring, personal and professional development, empathy, guidance, collaborative learning.*

References

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