

Mentoring and Leading the ELAI Way: What Can We Learn from This?

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Some Existing Research on Mentoring and Leadership

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Educational Leadership Advancement Initiative

of the Lookstein Center for Jewish Education



ELAI

Background

- 4 cohorts between 2008 and 2014
- over 80 participants
- 10 mentors
- 2 directors
- 41 NY area schools (UJA Fed NY funding) of all denominations



ELAI

Program Components

Study, observation, practice:

- One year
- Retreats (New York and Israel)
- Workshops, meetings
- Visits to other schools
- School enrichment project
- Review of case studies
- Mentoring





Research Methods

- Researchers from The Lookstein Center: Rabbi Dr. Eli Kohn, Dr. Alissa Burstein
- Qualitative
- 25 semi-structured interviews: 17 participants, 6 mentors, and 2 directors
- Research questions:
 - How do current and future aspiring leaders in the Jewish education field view the role of mentoring in leadership training?
 - What elements in the ELAI program do the participants view as most important, inspiring, and unique, and why?

What's On Today's Menu?

- (Introduction)
- What makes the ideal mentor?
- What makes the ideal leader?
- Why am I mentioning both in the same breath?



Hint: vision, collaboration, reflection, modeling, (knowledge)



What Makes the Ideal Mentor?

Clearly:

- Offer support
- Give guidance
- Have knowledge/wise and experience
- Share experience
- Listening skills...like a good therapist
- Encouraging
- Validating
- Inspires/facilitates growth
- Hand holding
- Guide, support, help individual achieve their career/personal goal
- Collaborates with you
- Good reflector
- Draws out of other person
- Partner

But also:

- Creates goals
- Makes you feel confident
- Be non judgmental...safe place
- Is a lifelong learner
- Someone outside of the picture
- Not a power situation
- Someone who is not perfect/shares successes and failures
- Someone who doesn't have all the answers
- Serves as role model



What Makes the Ideal Mentor?

- "They have to see you as a **model** of somebody who's a **learner**, not just somebody who's just all knowing." (AR mentor)
- "Actually the biggest thing I gained was the **confidence** that I could actually do this." (KT mentee)
- "I think that when the mentees are in a mentoring relationship, they gain the **courage** and the **skills** to go into leadership" (BS mentor)
- "In these two areas, one is to broaden their **skill set** for leadership and two, to strengthen their **confidence** that they can move forward and can effect change " (MG mentor)
- "The benefit of being a mentor not a supervisor...**no fear and judgment**.... Everyone's more open to being mentored." (PB mentor)
- "It's the beginning of creating a professional **network**" (LC mentee)



Who benefits from the mentor-mentee relationship?



- "It's not school, it's not a teaching experience, it's a growing experience and the mentor grows with the mentee" (AR mentor)
- "The best teaching is a mentorship also" (AR mentor)
- "Being a mentor keeps you accountable for being the absolute best educator you can be. Because if I'm given the role as guiding someone to become the best teacher they can be, I have to also be" (RT mentee)
- "I never really thought that much about my own practice, when you're a mentor you really have to" (HD mentee)
- "...when you teach you learn, right...When you engage someone else in mentoring, you're being a teacher and you have to come prepared....it forces you to take a step back and to define that, and for myself that's great, you're defining it for yourself, that I think makes you a better educator, makes you a better practitioner. It brings stuff to consciousness" (PG mentor)

And Remember...

Mentor \neq supervisor

Leader \neq manager





What Makes a Good Leader?

Personality

- Has a strong vision/visionary
- Commitment to school values/vision/mission
- Patience, warmth
- Humility
- Integrity
- Brings out the best in everyone
- Has people skills
- Optimism
- Understanding of the students
- Sees the big picture
- Understands the culture

Actions

- Facilitator
- Role model, both to the teachers and the students (leading by example)
- Lifelong learner
- Listens and follows up
- Organized
- A manager takes as is and makes it work well.... Leadership is where are you going to go from here
- Leadership is not about power, but about the ability to effect positive change
- Is among the people
- Navigates politics
- Collaborates



What Makes a Good Leader?

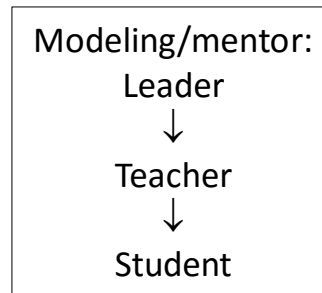
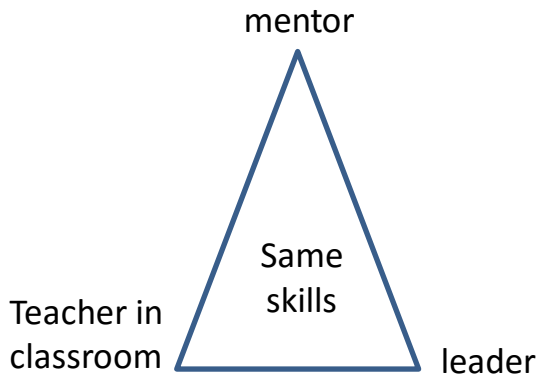
- "The natural inclination for the leader is to think of the **big picture**, the natural inclination of the non-leader, for lack of a better word, is how do I win this situation, I have to show that I'm right or my position is right. A real leader, it's not about who is right, it's about what is going on here" (BM mentee)
- "a school leader has to be a **role model** first and foremost as a learner" (AR mentor)
- "teachers are leaders...they also need to model what they want the teachers to do or their students to do, it's all the same, you model respect, you will get respect.... I think that **leaders are models**, they're all models for everybody, they're all models for colleagues, they're all models for students, they're all models for parents" (GC director)
- "So if you have a **vision** for your school, and you know who your school is and what you believe in, that comes out in every other aspect of what you're doing" (RT mentee)
- "you don't have to be alone at the top, leadership is not about being alone at the top, it's about building a **cooperative**" (BS mentor)
- "**Hording the mantle of leadership** is ... makes your ego better but it doesn't make the school better" (MY mentor)
- "if you don't know where the promised land is [**vision**], then how can you lead anybody there" (MT mentor)

Why am I mentioning mentoring and leadership in the same breath?

Good mentor = good leader

Good leader =? Good mentor

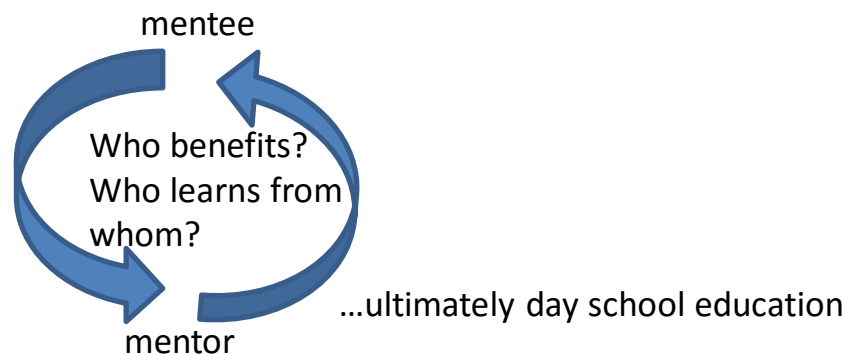
"a good mentor will be a good leader, but not all good leaders will make good mentors"



vision, collaboration, reflection, knowledge

In other words, to summarize...

"it's not just two, three, four, ten thousand students, of the mentees who were impacted in a positive way, but it's another ten thousand of the mentors, students, and faculty, that gain, it means everyone gains, it's closer to, let's say in numbers, 25,000 students who would be directly impacted leadership wise, because there were five mentors and twenty mentees in a given program approximately" (MY mentor)





In closing: *Mini Dvar Torah*

- Vision/Leadership: Moshe at Har Sinai
- Collaboration: bringing of *bikurim* on Shavuot
- Knowledge/reflection: all night learning
- Modeling: מדור לדור, from generation to generation

vision, collaboration, reflection, knowledge, modeling