

Project: Online Mentoring Platform for Secondary Students**Rationale**

With a corporate background, the lens in which I perceive education in Australia is with a very practical, realistic and pragmatic skew. My sentiments are shared by many which leads to a sense of duty for teachers like myself to develop some kind of stewardship/legacy to provide students with access to advice, information from the real World. Mentors have an effective role and a mentoring system should be innovative in creating efficiencies within schools with the understanding that "someone's hindsight can be another's foresight". The mentoring process has progressed in many professions and is crucial to the development of many starting out in the business sector and in particular start-ups. However, from a practical standpoint, mentoring programs in schools are not fruitful, long lasting or in abundance - due to time, costs and effort constraints. I currently, don't have a mentor myself and have struggled to find many ex or current teachers willing to give their time and effort into mentoring. So, can an accessible online mentoring forum for secondary students to access industry leaders afford efficiencies, effective learning and new opportunities for secondary schools?

How does it relate?

Developing such an online platform doesn't tick any boxes in terms of my professional development requirements but I think it is crucial for the progress of education in Australia if we can build relationships with industry to create a better future and access to other people's hindsight for developing better foresights of secondary students.

Assignment structure and theory?**Abstract**

After some informal research exploring different online mentoring platforms like Mentor Loop and Mentor Pitch, SLACK was selected as the online collaborative tool to establish a mentoring program for St. Vincent's College students.

Method

Initially, a SLACK team was established and channels were built to cover a number of industries. A number of mentors were approached and sold in on the idea that their LinkedIn profiles would be posted within their respective channels and notifications would be pushed to them if any students had questions to ask. Issues about security, working with children and commitment levels were addressed and the main theme promoted to all participants was that the channels were like group chats so all mentors/mentees subscribed to each channel would be able to access the same advice or conversation.

The mentoring program was launched to the students as a display in the library, a central location within the College, as an interactive display. Where by library staff and change agents like ex-students demonstrated how to use the application, highlighted what were the possibilities, help student's setup SLACK on their laptops and mobile devices. I would be the sole administrator of the online tool which gave me the ability to be across all conversations and intervene when needed.

Discussion Points - links between theory and practice?

By implementing such a project, the following questions could be discussed. Firstly, can an online group mentoring program for secondary students use ideas from the **traditional paradigm** as well as from **contemporary thinking of mentoring (Rolf's, 2012)**? Also, as a direct consequence of such discussions, how effective can **informal** and **group mentoring** be for secondary students? Secondly, using, Rolf-Flett's (1995) The Mentoring Workbook, questions arise around the **sustainability of informal mentoring** and does informal group mentoring only play a **consulting role** or does such programs also provide opportunity for **coaching** and/or **counselling**? Lastly, using the map of mentoring approaches by Brockbank (2006), which **approach** is an informal group mentoring program for secondary students considered as? and is it a different approach for different users of an online mentoring platform?

Ultimately, this paper would like to assess the importance of group mentoring for young people and the effectiveness of online platforms in implementing a mentoring program.

Bibliography

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Rolf, A (2012) Mentoring: Mindset, Skills and Tools. Mentoring Works.

Rolf-Flett, A (1995) The Mentoring Workbook. Synergetic Management.