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Intentional Mentorship 101

Learning Objectives



1

Mentorship as workforce strategy

Design intentional mentorship to address staffing challenges and skill gaps in higher-ed IT, cybersecurity, and beyond.



2

Roles, structures & safe contribution

Identify mentor roles and structures that let students and early-career staff contribute safely and effectively.



3

Build & scale a program

Balance professional oversight with autonomy and growth as a program grows across career stages.



4

Measure the impact

Apply a practical framework to measure learning, behavior, retention, and operational outcomes.

TODAY

Our Path — 75 Minutes



Five frameworks, four reflection points, three small-group activities — and a plan you leave with.

Opening Poll



Think of the best mentor you've ever had.

Was that relationship structured... or did it happen by accident?



Mostly structured

It had goals, cadence, and intent



Mostly accidental

Right person, right time — luck

Show of hands — raise your hand for A or B

BLOCK 1

Why Mentorship Is a Workforce Strategy

Objective 1 — closing staffing gaps and skill gaps on purpose.



You Can't Hire Your Way Out of This



Persistent shortage

The cybersecurity workforce gap remains in the millions of unfilled roles worldwide.



Slow time-to-competency

New hires and students take months to contribute — informal mentoring doesn't scale.



Engagement & turnover

Without development, early-career staff disengage and leave, widening the gap.



The return runs both ways. Heiser's research shows mentoring also pays the mentor back — meaning, legacy, and renewed engagement. That's how you get busy senior staff to say yes.

Sources: ISC2 Cybersecurity Workforce Study; Heiser, *The Mentorship Edge* (2024).

My Journey: Building the Auburn SOC

1

The challenge

Stand up a Security Operations Center for a complex university environment — and staff it.

2

The solution

A team that pairs full-time analysts with student workers, built on a training program that put mentorship first.

3

The outcome

A strong detection-and-response foundation, advanced SOC capability, better visibility, and response to thousands of incidents and alerts a year.



THE MOST IMPACTFUL OUTCOME

The people.

Students who became analysts.
Analysts who became leaders. The
capability outlived any single project.

Where Is Growth Happening by Accident?

On your team, where does someone's development currently depend on luck — the right person happening to help at the right time?

How it runs

- Think (1 min): jot one spot where growth is accidental, not designed.
- Pair (2 min): compare with a neighbor — any overlap?
- Share (2 min): a few pairs report one pattern to the room.

BLOCK 2

What Intentional Mentorship Actually Is

Objective 2 — modes, directions, and the nine roles.



Teach • Coach • Mentor • Inspire



Teach

Transfer knowledge and skills. Content-driven. 'Here's how it works.'



Coach

Improve performance on a task, now. Question-driven. 'How will you approach this?'



Mentor

Develop the whole person over time. Relationship-driven. 'Where are you headed?'



Inspire

Model what's possible. Purpose-driven. 'Here's why it matters.'

Source: Temte, Balancing Act: Teach, Coach, Mentor, Inspire (Kaplan).

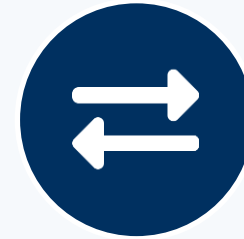
Mentorship Runs Two Directions



Hierarchical

Traditional top-down: a more experienced person guides someone earlier in their journey.

- Clear expertise transfer
- Sponsorship & visibility
- Career navigation



Lateral (Peer)

Equals mentoring each other — same level, your team or another, even outside the org.

- Lowers intimidation
- Safe vulnerability
- Powers mid-career growth

Source: Heiser, *The Mentorship Edge: Lateral and Hierarchical Mentoring* (2024).

The Nine Roles of a Mentor



Career Functions

Advance the work

- 1 Sponsor**
Advocate for them; put their name forward.
- 2 Expose & make visible**
Create chances to be seen by decision-makers.
- 3 Coach**
Give specific feedback to improve performance.
- 4 Protect**
Shield them from harmful or premature risk.
- 5 Give challenging work**
Assign stretch tasks that build real skill.



Psychosocial Functions

Build the person

- 1 Role model**
Demonstrate values and behavior worth copying.
- 2 Counsel**
Be a sounding board for worries and doubts.
- 3 Confirm & affirm**
Affirm their worth; validate their ability.
- 4 Befriend**
Relate as a trusted peer, not just a boss.

Source: Kram, *Mentoring at Work* (1985) — five career + four psychosocial functions.

Rate yourself 1-5 on each of the nine roles. Circle two you do naturally — and one you tend to avoid.

Sponsor

1 2 3 4 5

Advocate; put their name forward.

Expose / Visibility

1 2 3 4 5

Create chances to be seen.

Coach

1 2 3 4 5

Specific feedback to improve.

Protect

1 2 3 4 5

Shield from premature risk.

Challenging work

1 2 3 4 5

Stretch tasks that build skill.

Role model

1 2 3 4 5

Behavior worth copying.

Counsel

1 2 3 4 5

A sounding board for doubts.

Confirm / Affirm

1 2 3 4 5

Affirm worth; validate ability.

Befriend

1 2 3 4 5

Relate as a trusted peer.

BLOCK 3

Creating Safety for Contribution

Objective 2 — the conditions that let people contribute safely.



The SAFE Conditions for Contribution



Security

Certainty & predictability
— they know what's
expected.



Autonomy

Freedom to decide —
room to act within clear
limits.



Fairness

Equity & transparency in
how decisions are made.



Esteem

Status and respect
relative to the team.



Trust

Belonging — safe to ask,
admit, and try.

Autonomy is your oversight dial. Safe contribution from a student or new hire comes from widening autonomy as trust grows — not from removing oversight.

Teaching label 'SAFE' adapted from David Rock's SCARF model (Rock, 2008, NeuroLeadership Journal).

Where's the Line?

A junior team member is about to act on a live, sensitive system — a production change, a financial entry, a student-data record. They're capable but not certified. What do you do?

In pairs (5 min)

BLOCK 4

The Mentor's Playbook

Objective 2 — a repeatable process: Axelrod's 10 Steps.



Axelrod's 10 Steps to Successful Mentoring

- 1 Prepare for your role
- 2 Establish the relationship
- 3 Set the direction
- 4 Leverage experience for development
- 5 Expand growth using everyday psychology
- 6 Elevate the power of questions
- 7 Diversify development methods
- 8 Promote influence skills
- 9 Address mentor challenges
- 10 Consolidate learning & bring closure

Guiding principle #1: *“Start where your mentee is — not where you think they should be.”*

Source: Axelrod, 10 Steps to Successful Mentoring (ATD, 2019) — woven through with seven guiding principles.

Spotlight: The First Three Steps



1 • Prepare

Know your motivation and your role. Mentoring isn't managing or just advising.



2 • Establish

Align on seven things up front: objectives, a development plan, communication, meeting cadence, scope, confidentiality, and feedback.



3 • Set Direction

Co-create concrete development goals — and use a template to make them real.

Teach a Step

Each group takes ONE of the first three steps and teaches it back to the class in 60 seconds.

Round (5 min)

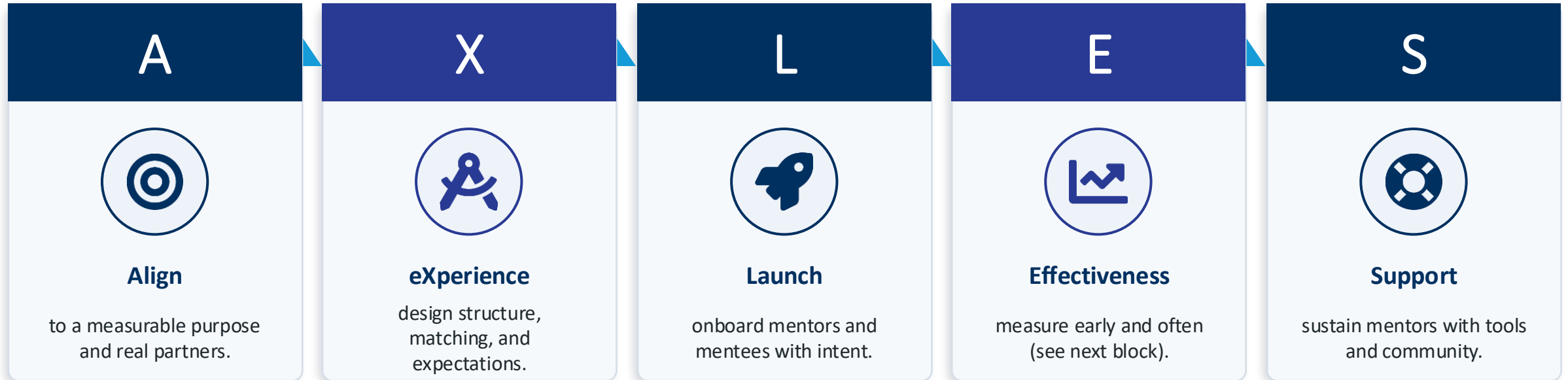
BLOCK 5

Build & Scale the Program

Objective 3 — from individual mentoring to a system: AXLES.



Build a Program That Lasts: AXLES



Source: Labin, *Mentoring Programs That Work* (ATD, 2017) — the AXLES model.

Map AXLES to Your Unit

In groups of 3-4, pick ONE AXLES stage and sketch what it looks like for your team.

Groups (8 min)

- Choose a stage: Align, eXperience, Launch, Effectiveness, or Support.
- Each person adds one concrete idea (round-robin — everyone contributes).
- Report one move your group would make first.

Example: *Effectiveness — add one “what did you learn?” question to monthly 1:1s, and review the answers each quarter.*

The Cadence: 10 Mentorship Touchpoints

Amy Summers' ten touchpoints — the chapters of “Lift”

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Show Up | 6 Delegate MSH-Style |
| 2 Set Structure & Goals | 7 Break Remote Barriers |
| 3 Provide Purpose | 8 Address Taboo Topics |
| 4 Build Confidence | 9 Elevate & Release |
| 5 Create Connection | 10 Support Healthy Exits |

+ **Bonus Touchpoint:** Be There

Source: Summers, Lift (Page Two, 2026) — the book's ten touchpoints (Part 2 chapters).

THE THROUGH-LINE

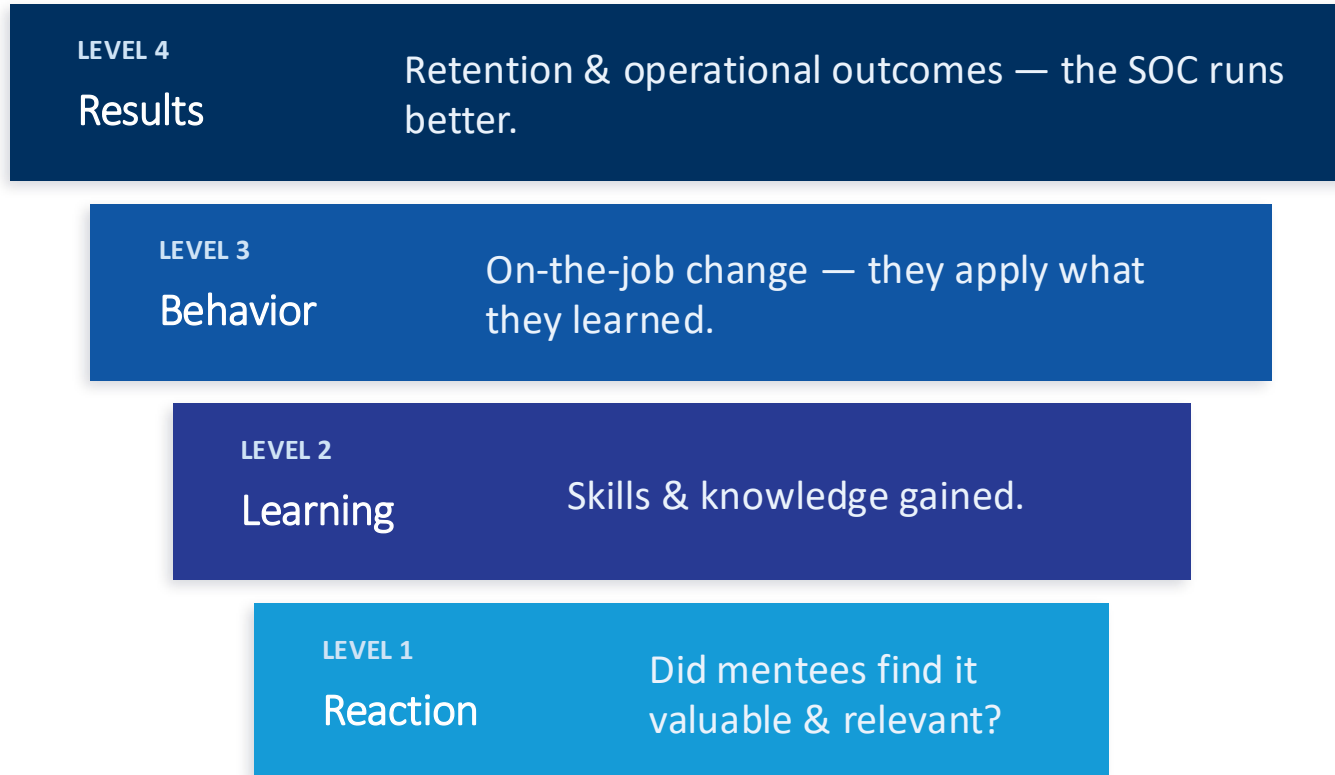
Mentorship is a relationship, not a program — a shared commitment to potential, trust, and progress.

Built for remote & hybrid teams, and the AI era — the human work tools can support but never replace.

Spans the whole arc — from showing up to a healthy goodbye, then staying in touch.

“Invest in people, not followers — when you lift others, you rise.”

Measuring Impact: Four Levels



Your objective, mapped

Learning → L2 **Behavior** → L3

Retention → L4 **Operational** → L4

AXLES calls this its “Effectiveness” stage — same model.

REFLECT

Which level are you NOT measuring today?

Source: Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, Four Levels of Training Evaluation (ATD, 2016).

Teach Your People to Be Super Mentees

Modern mentorship is about opportunity, not just advice.

- 1 **Aim High** — Reach for people who can actually open a door.
- 2 **Ask Small** — Make one specific, easy-to-say-yes request.
- 3 **Do It Again** — Build a network of many mentors — not one guru.



Why it matters here

Students and early-career staff who can ask well get access others don't. Teaching the ask is an equity move — it levels the social-capital playing field.

Source: Koester & Soven, *Super Mentors* (New Degree Press, 2022).

Make the Commitment

Make it concrete: a real mentor and mentee, one specific goal, how you'll measure it, and how often you'll meet — fill every blank.

I will pair _____ with _____
working toward _____
measured by _____
with touchpoints every _____ .

Example: *I will pair Maya (new help-desk hire) with Devon (senior analyst), working toward Maya owning weekly ticket triage by Q3, measured by a two-week solo run with no escalations, with touchpoints every Friday.*

TAKE IT FURTHER

The Mentor's Bookshelf

Balancing Act

Temte

Distinguishing teach / coach / mentor / inspire; leadership as balance.

Mentoring at Work

Kram

The foundational career + psychosocial roles of a mentor.

SCARF (article)

Rock

The neuroscience of safety — why people contribute or shut down.

10 Steps to Successful Mentoring

Axelrod

The mentor's how-to: the start-to-finish process & 40 tools.

Mentoring Programs That Work

Labin

Designing & scaling a program — the AXLES model.

The Mentorship Edge

Heiser

Lateral (peer) mentoring and what the mentor gains.

Lift

Summers

Cadence — 10 touchpoints; human mentorship in the AI era.

Super Mentors

Koester & Saven

The mentee's playbook: asking well and building access.

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