

PROJECT MANAGERS AGAINST POVERTY

MENTORING FACT SHEET - 3

Keeping an Activity Log

It could be said that the primary purpose of mentoring is to enable the mentee to become more effective and/or make the right choices through developing their ability to reflect on and learn from experience. For many of us, making time to reflect is a real challenge as we move busily from activity to activity - reflection time is a luxury. For mentees, though, it is essential.

To enable them to develop this ability, it can be very helpful to both mentee and mentor to practice the discipline of keeping an Activity Log. We use the term 'discipline' deliberately, since for some people, based on preferences such as their learning styles, this can seem more of a challenge than for others! The purpose of a learning log is straightforward: it has a threefold agenda:

1. To help the mentee review their experience (acknowledging success and any challenges).
2. To analyse, interpret and draw conclusions.
3. To consider what to build on and/or do differently as a result.

You do not have to reflect on and record all three in one go: it will be important to capture a brief record of experience as soon as possible after the event. Stages 2 and 3 can, if it is useful or necessary, wait. Below, is an example of what we mean:

What happened?

Key moment for me has been the project I have been helping to lead and the presentation we had to put together. It was a challenging deadline and I took on more of a lead than I have up until now.

Reflections and conclusions: what have I learned?

Generally it went well - both putting it together and presenting.

Good points: I felt I was able to have enough input on most things and I'm pleased with my input. I seem up-to-speed more now.

I feel I am more able to influence (appropriately)

I need to work on aspects of presenting to an audience.

What do I plan to build on or do differently as a result?

Like to make time to work with my mentor - seems to know and coached me well.

Learn more about the technical side of...

Have another go at presenting....

Your activity log can be a record of your experience in general or more of a critical incident journal, depending on the focus and scope of your mentoring activity. The log can be a useful mechanism for mapping and making sense of your current experience in order to identify patterns, clarify gaps and focus forward into the future.

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