

# Coaching, Tutoring and Mentoring in the Higher Education as a solution to retain students in their major and help them achieve success

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## *Abstract—*

*This paper introduces new concepts of mentoring and tutoring which can be applied in the higher education institutions to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the Palestinian Universities especially the IT faculties where the students retention rates and performance are low as they face lots of problems and could not find solutions but to change their major and try another faculty or stay more than four years before graduation or withdrew from the faculty and leave education because of failure. These concepts are quite important for both students and teachers and consequently for the university. Teachers should utilize from these concepts and be close to the students, listen to their problems and concerns and propose actions to improve the overall performance.*

***Index Terms—mentoring, coaching, tutoring, academic quality.***

تقدم هذه الورقة مفاهيم جديدة للتوجيه والإرشاد والتي يمكن تطبيقها في مؤسسات التعليم العالي لتحسين نوعية التعليم والتعلم في الجامعات الفلسطينية، وخاصة كليات تكنولوجيا المعلومات حيث أداء الطلاب المنخفض و معدلات الاحتفاظ بالطلبة في التخصص منخفضة ايضا لانها تواجه الكثير من المشاكل. ولا يمكن للطلبة أن تجد الحلول لها مما يضطرهم لتغيير كلية والتخصص أو البقاء أكثر من أربع سنوات قبل التخرج أو الانسحاب من الكلية وترك التعليم بسبب الفشل. هذه المفاهيم هي مهمة جدا لكل من الطلاب والمعلمين، وبالتالي للجامعة. لذا ينبغي على المعلمين الاستفادة من هذه المفاهيم وان يكون المعلم قريبا من الطلاب، والاستماع إلى مشاكلهم وهمومهم واقتراح إجراءات لتحسين الأداء العام.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Mentoring and coaching are processes that enable individuals and corporate clients to achieve their full potential as mentor offers ongoing support and development opportunities to the mentee (Clutterbuck 2004)

The mentoring is about helping and supporting learner through the transition from one stage of professional development to another (Wallace and Gravells 2005).

The first year students who just pass the school period and commence their higher education face many problems. These problems are related to lack of information gained and planning to take an appropriate and accurate decision to decide which major to follow. Who decides at the end of the day is it the average obtained in the secondary education certificate (Tawjehi) or the internal influences from parents and relatives which force the students to study subject he/she dislikes and he is not well prepared and satisfied all the

necessary requirements needed to follow up this subject. The solution for all these difficulties is to assign a mentor for each student to help him/her to integrate smoothly in the university stream and before that to help him/her decide the suitable major to follow and help him/her solving difficulties faced throughout his/her university life. This paper aims to highlight the importance of adopting a system where coaching, mentoring and tutoring applied to help our students achieve better levels of learning at the Palestinian universities. These approaches are important to improve the performance of students and teachers in the higher education's institutions. These principles are essential to improve the quality of teaching and learning. This paper achieved four main objectives. The first one is providing a generic literature about coaching, tutoring and mentoring and the skills and methods used to perform one to one learning and teaching in the learning sector where these skills can be applied in the higher education environment to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The second one is the narration of two one to one learning sessions one is mentoring and the other is tutoring to utilize these situations as case studies to improve the teaching and learning environment in Palestinian universities. Consequently I have performed a comparative analysis of the skills, methods and strategies used in each session. The third objective is an analysis and reflection on the experiences gained from both situations and how to use these skills to improve the quality of teaching in Palestinian universities. The fourth one is conducting an interview and questionnaire to find out the causes of the students low retention and performance in the computer department in Palestinian University.

The narratives are analyzed to explore the helping methods and strategies used by the mentors. This paper is also provided a comparative analysis of the students' participation and involvements in each session and the contexts in which these sessions were took place. The paper also highlighted some concerns about the ethics and confidentiality regarding mentoring professions.

## **II. RESEARCH PROBLEM**

Computer department in a Palestinian university has low retention rate and low of students' performance. Lots of drainage happened each year, as students move forward they face more troubles and problems which are accumulations of the first time problems once they enroll in the department and because of lack of mentoring and tutoring. These problems cause the students to face dramatic situations. One of these situations is to force the students either to change their major and transfer to different departments. Other situation is fail to meet the transfer requirements and spend more years in the department or withdrew because of failure. The research aim is to find out the main causes which affect the low retention rate and low of students' performance.

## **III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research methodology in this paper based on the following:-

Literature review to find out from the literature what are mentoring, tutoring and coaching and what are their importance in improving the retention rates and students performance at the university level and consequently improve and assure academic quality.

Narrating two success stories where mentoring and tutoring helping students to overcome difficulties and improve their learning.

A face to face interview has been conducted besides a yes/no questionnaire to around twenty students out of two hundred from the department. The aim of the interview is to find out the causes which force them to leave the department to different faculties and the causes of low performance and failure. The twenty students have been chosen in a random way from the students' registration list which contains a round two hundred students arranged in a way that the first year students first then the second year and so on. We choose the first one, tenth, twentieth, thirtieth and so on until the two hundredth student. This sample represents 10% of the students department. Twenty different students have been interviewed other than those who answered the questionnaire. These students are divided equally into four years which means five students from each year have been chosen also randomly from each year using the student list. The name of the department and the names of the students are confidential to protect their privacy and create the feeling of confidence to find out the exact causes of the problems. The data collected has been analyzed and some major causes have been highlighted.

#### **IV. COACHING, TUTORING AND MENTORING**

##### *A. Coaching*

Coaching relates primarily to the learning performance improvement often in a short term in a specific skills area. The coaching goals are set at the suggestion of coach. The learner has the primary ownership of coaching goal and the coach has the ownership of the coaching process (Megginson and Clutterbuck 2005).

##### *Skills of a coach*

There are some famous skills of Coaches. According to David Megginson (Megginson and Clutterbuck 2005) , Coaches need to:

- Be caring, supportive and patient
- Have good listening and communication skills
- Have an ability to diagnose issues and find solutions
- Be aware of their own strengths and weaknesses
- Have a capacity for self-awareness
- Have an ability to build relationships and inspire others
- Be good observers and counsellors.

##### *B. Tutoring*

Elizabeth Holmes highlighted in her handbook some roles which the tutor should play to maximize his potential and the use of tutorial time, some examples of these roles are (Holmes 2002):-

##### *- Inspirer and Morale-booster*

The tutor role is to draw the learners together and recreate their sense of enthusiasm for each other and for learning. The tutor should identify the causes of the learner's feelings, if they are due to exam pressures, poor behavior or an event that had a damaging impact on them send them away with positive thought or technique that helps them tackle any troubling emotions they are experiencing.

##### *- Counsellor*

Tutors use counselling skills, whether they are qualified counsellor or not. They should always seek a professional advice whenever they face a situation where are not fully equipped to deal with.

- Communicator

Tutors are valuable route to communicate information to learners either from the other staff members or students. They should assess the best methods for conveying necessary information and set standards for how learners can communicate in the classroom keeping in mind the tone and atmosphere that tutors want to create.

- Problem-Solver

Tutors should offer solutions acceptable to all involved in any emotional tensions or outbursts and accordance with polices adopted by the institution.

### *C. Mentoring*

Parsloe defined mentoring as “To help and support people to manage their own learning in order to maximize their potential, develop their skills, improve their performance, and become the person they want to be”(Parsloe 1992). Sarah Fletcher gives another comprehensive definition of mentoring. She said “mentoring is guiding and supporting trainees to ease them through difficult transitions; it is about smoothing the way, enabling, reassuring as well as directing, managing and instructing. It should unblock the ways to change by building self-confidence, self-esteem and readiness to act as well as to engage in ongoing constructive interpersonal relationships”.(Fletcher 2000)

Mentoring means help another one to achieve something that is essential to them. It is about offering help and support in anon-threatening way, in a way that the recipient will value and appreciate the help given and this will empower them to move forward with confidence towards what they want to achieve.

Mentoring essentially is a learning relationship between two people in which the human qualities of trust, commitment and emotional engagement are ever present. Mentoring involves the application of certain skills and in particular, listening, questioning, challenging and supporting. Mentoring relationships are dynamic and change and develop over time (Hartley 2006).

Mentoring is also concerned with creating an informal environment in which one person careful encouraged discussing their needs and circumstances openly and in confidence with another person who is in a passion to be of positive help to them.

### *Mentoring Skills*

A mentor is usually an experienced person of relative authority and has a valued perspective by the learner. However, besides authority, a mentor needs some specific skills to help him/her undertakes the role. The institute of management highlighted some essential mentoring skills (1999, People Management) as follow:

- The mentor should be an active listening and responding positively to students concerns and queries. The mentor should concentrate on what mentee is saying and demonstrating that he/she has heard and understand what has been said. Susan Wallace and Jonathan Gravells suggest some ways to follow to perform active listening (Wallace and Gravells 2006):-
  - Maintain regular eye contact and not continuous eye which will be seen as a scary eye.

- Mentor should focus entirely on the mentee and be there for them and leave his/her own concerns outside.
  - Mentor does not start thinking of the next question as soon as the previous question has been asked.
  - Mentor should brief the notes to keep focus or stop the conversation to have time to write notes.
  - Mentor should not be afraid of being silent during the conversation. Silence is helpful in slowing down conversation and allowing reflective space.
  - Mentor should not interrupt the mentee and let him/her finish what he/she is saying
  - Mentor should be aware of body language. He /she demonstrates interests by leaning forward and nodding. Mentor should also avoid leaning back or folding arms and looking at the ceiling.
  - Mentor should make encouraging noises as saying, yes, I see, right, really, which also show interest from the mentor.
  - Mentor should summarize at the end to help check understanding and agreeing what has been said.
  - A mentor has an understanding of and the ability to use a range of questioning techniques and responses (1999, People Management). Susan Wallace and Jonathan Gravells affirm that questioning is a crucial skill for mentoring. Examples of the main types of questions are Open questions, probe questions hypothetical questions, link questions, closed questions and leading questions.
- Open questions are questions which need more explanation than yes or no answers. For example, tell me..., how did you feel about?. Good mentors use most of these questions because the open questions are ideal for raising awareness, exploring issues, getting information, understanding consequences and explore and commit to solutions (CUREE 2005).
- Probe questions are questions used to get more details about a topic. For example, what do you mean when you say ..., or tell me a bit more about...?. These questions are used for more exploration to ensure that the relevant issues have been fully examined and understood.
- Link questions are questions which connect ideas or seek to understand the connection between them. For example, what will you do if ? These questions are helpful in prompting new understanding and helping the mentee to explore cause and effect.
- Closed questions are questions which generally have either yes or no answers. For example, “do you think what happened is right?”. This type of questions is used to avoid misunderstanding and to assure that the situation is fully understood.
- Leading questions are questions which lead or invite a particular answer by the way they are phrased. For example, “I expect you were just feeling a bit off, were you?”. These questions should be watched or avoided where possible as they can disguise real issues and patronize the mentee.
- The mentor has the ability to suspend judgment and avoid prejudice so as not to lead the learner in a particular direction only.
  - A mentor should be able to provide constructive feedback that enables learning from mistakes and success (CUREE 2005).
  - A mentor should be able to help define objectives and action plan
  - A mentor should be able to assess a range of other learning opportunities.

Normally, the mentor is someone who the learner is able to trust and talk openly, as the mentor supposes to offer help for the learner or suggest solutions and gives advice (1999, People Management).

As long as the mentor should have some skills to perform well in the mentoring process, the mentee should have correspondent skills to play the effective role as a mentee and be well prepared to communicate and perform to reap the benefits from mentoring. In the mentoring process, there is much depends on the skills and attributes of the mentee. The mentee can learn to become a skilled mentee. Sarah Hartley suggests the mentee should have the following skills:-

- Recognizes the need for the relationship with the mentor.
- The mentee is able to listen and is open to learning opportunities.
- The mentee is open and honest about his/her own behavior.
- The mentee has clear expectation of the purpose of the relationship and is prepared to develop it
- The mentee is able to reflect and use reflective models.
- The mentee recognizes that he or she may need to change her./his own behavior.

#### *The mentoring Process*

Sarah Hartley in her mentoring and coaching skills development guidance pack (Hartley 2006) suggests that mentoring process is a three-stages process which makes the mentoring process useful to use within mentoring conversations. She said that the process is very simple to remember but there are some challenges in its operation. It is about, exploration, new understanding and action. Through appropriate exploration new understanding is gain and then actions can be considered in relation to the understanding.

##### Stage one-Exploration

In this stage the mentor may have the following strategies to facilitate the mentoring process:-

- take the lead to open the discussion
- pay attention to the relationship and develop it
- clarify aims, objectives and discuss ground rules
- support and counsel

Besides these strategies, the mentor is going to use some methods to achieve the purpose of exploration. The methods are, question, listening and negotiating an agenda.

##### Stage two-New Understanding

In this stage the mentor may use different strategies to gain new understanding, some of these strategies are:-

- Support and Counsel
- Offer Feedback
- Coach and demonstrate skills

For these strategies, the following methods are appropriate:

- listening and challenging
- using both open and closed questions
- helping to establish priorities
- summary
- helping identify learning and development needs
- giving information and advice

- sharing experience and story telling

#### Stage three- Action

In this stage, the mentor may use the following strategies to perform an action.

- Examine options and consequences
- Attend to the relationship
- Negotiate and develop an action plan.

The appropriate methods the mentor may use in this stage are

- Encouraging new ideas and creativity
- Helping in decisions and problem solving
- Agree action plans
- Monitoring and Reviewing

However, the mentoring process rarely moves in a straight line from stage one to stage three. More, often, in use, the conversation moves about between all the stages. The mentor has a temptation and the desire to get the action as quickly as possible but often the quality and the commitment to the action are dependent on the quality of stage one and two.

### **V. THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN COACHING, TUTORING AND MENTORING**

Coaches have some special expertise and or experience that equipped them to act as a role-model or expert advisor. the mentors or coaches know what competent performance looks like so they decide when coachees or mentees have attained the necessary standard (Hay 2007).

Mentoring, coaching and tutoring have much in common, although have some differences. Some similarities have been highlighted by Zeus and Skiffington (Zeus and Skiffington 2000) as follow:-

- They require well-developed interpersonal skills.
- They require the ability to generate trust, support commitment, and generate new actions through listening and speaking skills.
- They aim to improve learner performance and be more productive.
- They provide support without removing responsibility.
- They focus on learning and development to enhance skills and competencies.
- They stimulate personal growth to develop new expertise

Beside the above mentioned similarities, mentoring, coaching and tutoring have also some differences which distinct them from each other (Conner and Pokora 2007).

- Mentoring, Tutoring and Coaching are distinguishes in the length of the relationship (Wallace and Gravells 2006). Mentoring and tutoring are on going relationship that can be last for a long period of time, while coaching relationship generally has a set duration.
- Mentoring and tutoring are more informal and meetings can take place as and when the mentee or the learner need some advice, guidance and support while coaching generally is more structured in nature and meetings are scheduled on a regular basis.
- Both mentoring and tutoring are long term and takes a broader view of the person, while coaching is short term and sometimes time-bounded and focused on specific development areas/issues.

- Mentor and tutor are usually more experienced and qualified than client. Often a senior person in the organization who can pass on knowledge, experience and open doors to otherwise out-of-reach opportunities, while coaching is generally not performed on the basis that the coach needs to have direct experience of their client's formal occupational role, unless the coaching is specific and skills-focused.

## **VI. SUCCESS STORIES WHICH PROVED THE EFFICIENCY OF HAVING MENTORING AND TUTORING IN PLACE**

### *A. Mentoring One-to-One Session*

A friend of mine who was working as computing lecturer at one of further education colleges in the Northwest /England UK narrated a mentoring situation that happened with him as a mentor. He was a mentor to a mentee who was both apprehensive and nervous at the beginning of the course. The mentee was a girl. She was unsure at the start of the course if she had done the right choice of study, and questioned her own abilities whether she could or she had the appropriate ability to commence the subject and passed it successfully. She was wondering if she could do the required assignments and prepare for the final exam to pass the course. Once the mentor had been assigned to the mentee at the beginning of the year, he started to negotiate with her in order to setup a series of mentoring meetings to understand the whole overall situation and helping her to achieve the course goals. The mentor agreed with the mentee to hold subsequent meetings every week. In the first meeting, they met in the mentor office. The mentor sat next to her on one table introduced himself as he is going to be her mentor during her period of study at the college and ask her to endorse a consent form. She was listening well to him and tried to enquire further about the mentor role and how he was going to help her. He also assured her that he wouldn't mention her name and any confidential data she provided will be treated with confidentiality and data protection rules and just shares the information with the people who will be involved in the situation. He tried to calm her down and relax her by narrating some similar examples of her case as they started with fear, anxious and worry, nevertheless, by the time and by the help offered from the college mentoring and tutoring system, they completed their course successfully. The meetings continued on a weekly basis in the mentor's office as agreed upon between the mentor and mentee. After a couple of meetings with the mentor, the mentee seemed to settle down once some of her concerns had been heard. The mentor was always there; listened to her concerns throughout the course whilst directing her to different sources of advice and useful readings using a procedure of individual learning plan (ILP) on weekly basis and reviews her achievement at the end of each week. The mentor said during the mentoring process, he did not want her to just gloss over the problems, but the more important was to tackle the causes of these problems. Towards the end of the course, the mentee had worked through her problems showing progress where the mentor could see definite improvements.

One mentoring session he told me about was dealing with her assignment. She was nervous of doing the required assignment. The mentor asked her some questions to find out the causes of her nervous as was she suffering from some illnesses, or any financial difficulties or family problems. She replied that she concerned of the time were running fast, and she had some writing obstacles as she had no previous experience on how to write an assignment. The mentor helped her to manage her time effectively. He divided the

assignment into stages. Each stage needed different sources of information. The mentor tried to build up self-confidence to his mentee after each stage done. He tried to direct her to some specific books in the library where she could find assistance in doing similar questions and assignments. He tried also to involve some other mentors and tutors to discuss with them the concerns and came up with more reliable proposals. Each time they met they had an organized meeting and wrote notes and minute of meeting and both of them signed it at the end. They also reviewed what had been done, gave her some courage, promotions and praising, as she is doing well but she needs more concentration and focusing and so on. The mentor suggested corrections and action plan for the areas which were needed to be developed for the forthcoming meeting until she completed the assignment and passed the final exam successfully.

## **VII. TUTORING ONE-TO-ONE SESSION**

I had observed a tutoring session in the University of Bolton in England. The student was at the university level studying undergraduate course in computing. She was a hard working student as her tutor acknowledged. She always got to the classes on time, did her work effectively. The tutor noticed that she started to come late to class. This happened more than once which annoyed the tutor and made him to ask the student to come to the staff room after the class to have a word with her to find out the causes which made her attended the class late. The tutor met her in the staff room. He sat on his office facing her keeping a distance or barrier to keep it official. He started acknowledging and praising her, mentioning that she was an active student, attending the class on time and she was always well prepared. The tutor asked her why she started to come late, was it related to the class itself or to the tutor or something outside. She said that her husband travelled abroad which caused her to look after her child, fed him and sent him to school. Also she had to leave the class early to collect her child from school and sent him home. The tutor also found out that this will affect her handing in the assignment on time. The tutor found himself in a position where he could not offer help in this situation. He referred her to social services and to the university counsellor to find out more accurate and official assistance for her. Regarding the assignment he asked her to fill in the appropriate paper work to be submitted to the right department at the university to seek further extension to have more time in doing the assignment.

During the meeting the tutor was kind and friendly and tried to relax and assured her that he is going to do his best in helping her and he offered a help if she needed in the future.

## **VIII. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE TWO HELPING SITUATIONS**

### **1. HELPING STRATEGIES AND METHODS**

In the first situation, the mentor opened the discussion, led the meeting and arranged for the subsequent meetings using helping strategies to explore the real mentoring situation (Zeus and Skiffington 2000; Hartley 2006). He clarified and setup objectives. Supported, praised encouraged the mentee. This is obvious from the narration that the mentor agreed with the mentee negotiated, arranged and held subsequent meetings every week. The mentor used the methods of questioning and listening to understand the mentoring situation (Parsloe 1992; Wallace and Gravells 2006). He supported and counselled the mentee and offered him a feedback each meeting (Megginson, Clutterbuck et al. 2006). Each meeting they

concluded and summarized what had been discussed and agreed upon and the suggested and endorsed the meeting minutes and agreed a plan for the next meeting (Hartley 2006). In the second situation, mentor highlighted the problem and asked to meet the mentee to find out the causes of the problem. He used the strategy of paying attention to relationship with the mentee (Megginson, Clutterbuck et al. 2006). He used also the methods of questioning and listening to clarify the situation (Wallace and Gravells 2006). The mentor is guiding the mentee to the solution without making her decision (Elemson Winter 2007). The mentor gives the following guidance:

- He referred the mentee to the social services and the university counsellor.
- He asked her to fill the appropriate paper work to apply for an extension for the assignment and submitted to the appropriate department.

## **2. Skills, Approaches and Techniques used in each situation**

In the first situation, the mentor was an active listener, used the questioning skills and demonstrated that he understood the overall situation by asking more questions to portray the whole picture (Wallace and Gravells 2006). He wrote down the overall minutes of meeting He offered a constructive feedback through reviewing what had been done in the assignment and suggested corrections for mistakes occurred. He also provided her with action plan every meeting for the forthcoming one (Hartley 2006).

In the second situation, the mentor was listening and questioning, suggested solutions as he suggested her to see the university counsellor and the social services that can be of more assistance (CUREE 2005).

## **3. Communications and processes of interaction**

Informal mentoring has better communication skills than formal. In informal mentoring, the people put themselves forward. Informal mentors are more friendship and empathy than formal mentors (Clutterbuck 2004). Both mentoring session are informal.

The communication includes (Clutterbuck 2004):

- Listening skills; the mentor has to listen well.
- Observing as the receiver.
- Parallel processing- analysing what the person is saying and reflecting on it.
- Preparing responses

In the first situation, the mentor met the student and introduced himself to her as her mentor during her study. He asked her to discuss and arrange a series of meetings to find out if she had any concerns regarding her course. The mentor used the listening and questioning skills to establish communications with the mentee (Wallace and Gravells 2006). The mentee was listening carefully as she needed to understand what she was going to do to improve her situation and follow the mentor guidance and advice (Megginson, Clutterbuck et al. 2006). He opened the discussion and led the meetings. The communication was mutual as the student answering and questioning as well as the mentor (Hartley 2006). The mentor used some related books, manuals and library as aids to help her doing the assignment. He also built up self confidence to her by looking at similar questions for the exam. The mentor tried to involved some other mentors and tutors to discuss with them the concerns and came up with more reliable proposals of solutions (Megginson and Clutterbuck 2005).

The tutor in the second situation noticed that the student started to come late; therefore he asked for a meeting at staff room to start a communication with the mentee and used the

listening and questioning skills to discuss and explore the whole situation (Tummons 2007). The tutor used the processes of acknowledging, and praising her to create a positive and warm atmosphere to ensure the student that her problems will be dealt with and attracted the tutor attention (Megginson, Clutterbuck et al. 2006). He also communicated to the special department in the social services and discussed also the situation with the university counsellor. The student was cooperating with the tutor and was an active listener and answered the tutor questions (Hartley 2006; Megginson, Clutterbuck et al. 2006).

#### **4. Students participation and involvement**

In the first situation, at the beginning of the course the student was apprehensive and nervous, unsure whether she had done the right choice of study. She agreed to negotiate and setup a series of meetings on weekly basis. The mentee is participating effectively. The mentor is giving help to the mentee in developing greater confidence by using encouraging words (Clutterbuck 2004). She also endorsed the consent form as she agreed to have a mentor and comply with the conditions. She was listening carefully to the mentor. She also agreed to co-operate and provide the mentor with the essential information which obstructed her situation as a student which caused her to feel nervous and annoyed. She worked hard and attended all the meetings. She accessed the library, looking, searching and reading. She also did the suggested corrections each meeting. She also communicated positively with her mentor (Hartley 2006) as the narration concluded that she passed the exam and did the assignment successfully.

In the second situation, the student was a hard working student. She always got the class on time, did her works effectively. She started to come late more than once. She agreed to meet her tutor at the staff room. She was honestly answering the questions. She told the tutor about the reasons of why she started to come late to the class. She also followed the procedure for the extension by filling the appropriate form and submitted to the right department.

The mentee has the opportunity to explore her and setting the goals because the tutor is listening actively and asking open questions. Therefore, the mentee can build self confidence and self-esteem, can improve personal skills, can improve problem analysis, and has the opportunity to reflect and the relationship will be built on trust (Megginson, Clutterbuck et al. 2006). So, the benefit of the mentoring will be achieved.

#### **5. Contexts of the sessions.**

In the first situation, the mentee is a student. The mentee needs to improve her performance to pass the course and this may require a long-term relationship because the mentoring is on going process (Connor and Pokora 2007). The first situation took place in a college. The mentor met the student in his office. The mentor sat next to her on one table introducing himself as a mentor to the student for the whole period of time (Stephens 1995). The way of sitting is friendly, which makes the mentee feels comfortable and this enables her to explore her issues effectively. The effective mentor must know enough about the mentoring context to be able to facilitate exploration of issues (Connor and Pokora 2007). It seems that the mentor understands the mentoring context because he observed the mentee for several sessions. So, the mentor is well prepared and has new ideas to be discussed in the mentoring session to support the mentee to solve her problem.

The mentor tried to calm her down and relax her by narrating some similar examples from his experience that were succeeded and passed successfully. The mentor was always there, listening to her concerns. He tried also to build up self-confidence to her. Each time they met, they reviewed what had been done, gave her some courage, promotions and praising. The mentor was so kind and helpful as he devoted sometime to have a sequence of meetings to help his student to overcome the difficulties she faced in her exam and in doing the assignment.

In the second situation the mentee is a student and took place in a university. The tutor met his student in the staff room. The tutor sat on his office facing the student and keeping some barriers between them. They met just once as the event occurred the tutor tried to find out what was happened to the student and caused him to come late to class while, she used to come early or on time. The tutor was so kind and friendly and tried to relax and assured her that he was going to do his best in helping her. He also makes her feel friendly and feel free to discuss any concern regarding her problem and in the future if she needs any help just ask for a meeting.

The mentor and tutor should comply with the rules and legislations of ethics and confidentiality as the mentor should respond to the client's learning and development needs as defined by the agenda brought to the mentoring or tutoring relationship (Wallace and Gravells 2006). Also the mentor should understand his/her responsibilities as a mentor and should not exploit the student or the client in any manner (Megginson, Clutterbuck et al. 2006). The tutor and mentor should also understand their professional responsibilities and continue beyond the termination of the relationship this means that the mentor or the tutor should maintain of agreed confidentiality of all the information related to the student and avoided any exploitation of the former relationship. He/she should safe and secure maintenance of all related records and data (EMCC 2007) .

## **IX. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

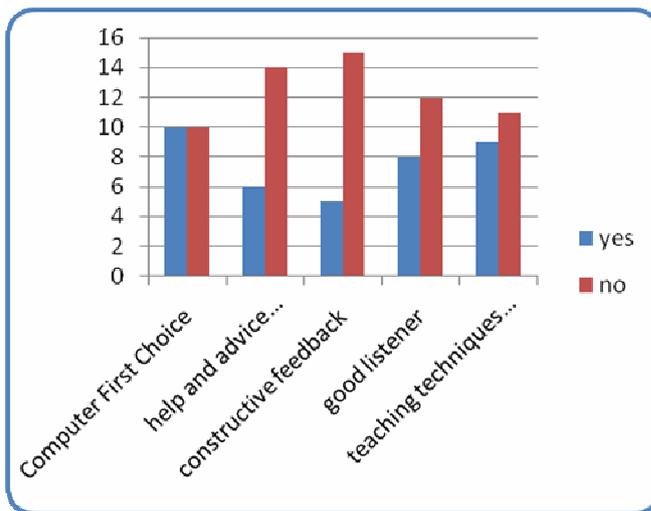
From the aforementioned one-to one tutoring observed session, in-depth feedback has been obtained to identify areas for personal development and improvement of lecturers at Palestinian universities in terms of skills and techniques needed for one to one helping.

Firstly the teacher or tutor should be ready to learn new things no matter the source of the learning either from books or from other expertise, as the mentor in the first session contacted other mentors to involve them and utilized from their experiences. The teacher should be passionate to develop his/her skills and knowledge.

Secondly, the teacher should be able to develop his/her communication skills both verbally and non-verbally. In both sessions, the mentors are able to listen to mentees and give them the chance to explain the situation in a good manner. Depending on this observation, the teacher should be able to demonstrate active listening and paid more attention to understand the real situation of the mentee in order to seek and try alternative solutions. She/he can use effective questioning techniques and responses, and able to explain, clarify and summarize the situation to come to common understanding with the mentee. Also the teacher should be able to reflect and review the mentoring situation to explore the pitfalls and learn from mistakes or weaknesses. In both situations mentors did not share the mentees or asked them if they have any suggestion of solutions for their problems in order to share responsibility. The teacher should be able to accept and provide constructive feedback from mentees. If the teacher feels that he/she has some weaknesses in understanding some arising issues,

he/she should have enough courage and passionate to ask and seek further knowledge from peers or develop an action plan for himself to follow, develop and build new skills. The teacher also should be aware of a range of learning opportunities either from books and doing further research to improve and develop knowledge and experience or from experienced people who are ready to offer the learning opportunity and show the ability to liaise easily with others in the educational environment. Judgment and prejudice should be suspended and avoided as seen and explored from both sessions either from the first session where the mentee was annoyed of doing the assignment or from the second session when she started to come late. The teacher can establish rapport and convey warmth understanding and sincerity. He should have the ability to motive, encourage and enthuse them to talk clearly and confidently about their situation and what problems they are experiencing. Finally the time is an important factor in mentoring process; therefore mentor should be able to manage time effectively where he could do much improvement in managing time as a mentor or as a tutor.

Exploring the new situation where there is lack of mentoring and tutoring by conducting this type of research we could spot the real causes of the problem. Figure. 1 below shows the questions asked and the results obtained.



**Figure.1** *Questionnaire results*

From the results above we could conclude that half of the students enrolled are not aware of their choice and not choosing the computer as a first choice of study which affected the annual retention rate. The faculty should have an induction meeting with the fresh students to convince and motivate them with the prospective of the computer science and how it is important and highly demanded in the market which will ease their job hunting and consequently improve their performance and increase the retention rate. Fourteen students out of twenty feel they do not receive enough help and advice from teachers or get them motivated especially in the practical sessions. Fifteen students out of twenty show they do not receive constructive feedback from teachers either on the coursework or on exams and from the interview some of the students do not feel confident with the marking scheme and policy and there is high subjectivity in marking exams and coursework.

Twelve students show that teachers are not good listener which makes the students feel discomfort and discouraged to discuss learning issues with them. The last question showed that eleven students out of twenty said that the lecture is always teacher-centered without involvement of the students with learning activities.

I have explored from the interview that some students take wrong decisions in choosing the major from the first instance as a result of influences of parents and relatives and lack of information about different faculties and subjects and the prospective of having more chances to hunt a future career. Some students related some causes to teachers who are not good listeners and does not offer further help in subject matters attributed to the lack of time and the heavy load of teaching. Students also could not have the chance to discuss personal matters with teachers which affect their performance and affect the quality of learning. These causes could be overcome by proposing a mentoring and tutoring system in place from the first time the students commence their studying at the faculty. There should be an induction day to introduce the faculty, majors and staff to students and where to seek help and advice if they need them. Reduce the teaching load and activating the office hours by assigning students to each member of staff to offer supervising, mentoring and tutoring to improve the students' performance. Weak students in subject matters can fill an individual learning plan supervised and monitored by a teacher to help them achieve the minimum threshold to pass or to score good marks.

#### X. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

From the research above I could conclude that there is a necessity of having teaching training for teachers to provide them with the teaching skills and strategies need to make them good teachers and to improve the quality of teaching within the higher education institutions. A follow up procedure to improve the skills and propose action plans for teachers to flow if they feel they have weaknesses in any area of teaching either in subject knowledge or in teaching skills in general. Teachers in Palestinian Universities are sometimes applying coaching, tutoring and mentoring throughout their teaching process in personal capacity without having a systematic approach in applying them or follow up raised issues. What is important is to have a system with tutoring, coaching and mentoring in place to increase the retention rate and help the students to improve their performance in learning, furthermore to help teachers in getting an accurate feedback to improve their teaching process. This system is a good way to activate the office hours of each member of staff to offer the help and listen to students in systematic way and require all the students to meet their teacher to discuss teaching issues, this require a private place to protect the students privacy and make them feel confident to disclose their concerns. This research consider one point of view as students and I recommend to conduct further work to consider the concerns of teachers and share their ideas and opinions then we could create a full obvious picture about the teaching and learning environment in Palestinian Universities.

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## Appendix A

### **Questionnaire**

Dear Student: this questionnaire is designed to explore the causes of the difficulties you face throughout your study at the department. Please be objective in answering these questions and thank you for your participation.

1) Is the Computer Science your first choice of study?

Yes No

2) Do you receive a continuous help and advice throughout your study?

Yes No

3) Do you get constructive feedback from your teacher in every assessment or question you ask?

Yes No

4) Do you find your teacher a good listener and give you the chance to ask and exhibit your concerns?

Yes No

5) Do you realize your teacher using different teaching methods and teaching techniques or always traditional way of teaching?

Yes No