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**M3 Lesson 4: Networking and Mentorship for Beginners**

Core Competencies:

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| * Communication | * Thinking | * Personal & Social |

Big Ideas:

* Achieving our learning goals requires effort and perseverance

Curricular Competencies:

* Use self-assessment and reflection to develop awareness of their strengths, preferences and skills
* Recognize and explore diverse perspectives on how work contributes to our community and society
* Appreciate the value of a network of resources and mentors to assist with career exploration

Lesson:

**Networking and Mentorship for Beginners**

Many people in your life have likely been a mentor to you without you even knowing it! A **mentor** is someone in your life who acts as an experienced and trusted adviser. This is someone whose opinion you respect who can help guide you through the career-life process. Mentors can and will likely change throughout your life as your interests and goals change.

As you move forward towards graduation, having a trusted mentor will become more and more important, and necessary when you complete your **Capstone Project**graduation requirement between grades 10 and 12 as you refine your career-life development personal, educational and career goals while establishing more connections in your community.

**What are some things you can do to find a mentor?**

Finding a mentor isn't always easy, but here are some ways you can start cultivating relationships (and potentially mentorships) in your community:

**Signal interest: The opening bid**

Potential mentors are everywhere: teachers, coaches, neighbors and others. However, they probably have more potential mentees than they could effectively teach. Thus, it’s important to be present and signal interest. Talk with teachers, assist the teacher or people in your community, or help the coach pick up the athletic equipment.

Or just ask. If you take initiative, most people will generally find a place for you. Most mentoring relationships start with the opening bid — some small request or task, initiated by either the mentor or mentee. As you demonstrate commitment, you will likely be given more responsibility with whatever project you are helping with.

**Start small and do good work**

Earning a mentor’s trust and developing skills takes time. Along the way, the mentor may assign unglamorous, even menial tasks. These tasks might help the mentor gauge your interest, work ethic, reliability and aptitude. They might also teach important skills.

A mentor shares their time, expertise and professional reputation with their mentee. Trust them and be prepared to learn, even if this involves small, apparently unimportant tasks.

**Be teachable**

If given an opportunity to work alongside a mentor, be teachable. Don't get upset or hurt when given feedback and don't argue with your mentor's advice as they likely won't sugarcoat their opinion. This is your first opportunity to be mature with your responses and use them for an opportunity for growth.

**Be reliable**

Most mentoring relationships give you a chance to participate in the mentor’s professional life, which involves great trust. Be respectful of your mentor’s work and reputation. Treat your experience as an honour and take care not to make the mentor look bad by completing work or tasks poorly.

*Adapted from*: Five ways to help your child find (and keep) a mentor - The Washington Post, September 26, 2017.

Assignment:

Sometimes we have to do a little leg work and take initiative in order to find a mentor in our lives. In this assignment, you will learn the basics of **networking**- interacting with other people to exchange information and develop your contacts, which will be especially helpful when you are starting your career.

Think about people that you know. Who do you respect in terms of:

* **their** **professional life:**these are people in your life who have worked towards a career that they are passionate about, or you have a particular interest in.
* **their personal life:** these are people in your life who are positive role models in the way they live their lives. This could include their positive attitude, service in their community or proactive approach to life.
* **their hobbies or interests:**these are people in your life who share your interests, hobbies or passions. Examples could include commitment in a certain sport or activity, hobby, or extracurricular interest such as traveling.

Complete the networking assignment in the portal for students to be able to start their professional, personal or extracurricular network.

Assessment:

