

# AITD'S MENTORING PROGRAM

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This year AITD piloted a Mentoring Program in NSW. The Program brought together experienced and successful professionals with AITD members who are looking to develop their skills and careers. Two of the participants, Chemène Sinson, Learning and Development Consultant, and Justine Jardine, Learning and Development Specialist share their experience what it is like to participate in a mentoring program.

Whether it is the mentor reflecting on the questions to ask or it is a mentee reflecting on their goals, reflection is inextricably linked to mentoring. Earlier this year Chemène took time to reflect on her career and explore ways to ensure her skills remain current and in demand. She met with respected industry colleagues, who shared their expertise and invaluable advice. Soon after these meetings, AITD invited expressions of interest for the mentor program and Chemène decided that this was an opportunity to give back to the learning and development community.

Chemène had not been in a formal mentoring situation for quite some time, and welcomed the opportunity for her own professional development. Something Chemène has learned, is that as a mentor she does not need to have all the answers! She explained, 'A good mentor is someone who helps people help themselves. It is okay if I don't have all the answers, but I can help my mentee explore possibilities and make their own choices.'

'I'm still trying to work out who is getting the most out of our mentoring relationship - my mentee or me? I was assigned a mentee who is such an extraordinary woman in her own right, that I find I am gaining as many insights from our conversations as I hope she is.' Chemène said. Her advice is 'Be generous, enjoy the ride, and expect to learn as much from your mentee (if not more) than they learn from you.'

Before the opportunity of having a mentor through the AITD arose, Justine had been trying to make sense of all the changes within learning and

development and its impact on her career. She had been thinking about what the future requirements of a learning and development specialist would be, if she had the right set of skills in place to meet those requirements, and where she might need to upskill herself.

Justine was glad to be given the opportunity to personally connect with a mentor who is in the same industry to share perspectives and ideas. 'I felt that because my mentor was not a current or former colleague, employer or friend, our conversations would be unbiased and without consequence other than focussing on growing and learning,' she said.

A relationship is dynamic. No two mentoring relationships are alike as the relationship that is formed is dependent on the mentor and the mentee. Personality and experience, both professional and personal, will define the relationship.

Justine explained 'My mentor is optimistic, generous and encouraging. For that reason I was excited to be matched with her by the AITD. We formed a relationship that is one of guided self-reflection and discovery through discussion and the sharing of ideas and experiences. My mentor has helped me to clarify my thoughts and keep them focussed on what I am trying to achieve.'

Justine's mentor worked with her through the process of identifying her strengths and her biggest professional contribution. 'This helped me realise that often the most ground breaking ideas don't come as a Eureka moment but that they gradually evolve from reading, reflecting and mulling over.' Justine said.

Justine's advice is 'Have a clear idea of what you are trying to achieve and be open to change. Life happens - situations and people change and so too may your goals. As long as you share that with your mentor, they will be able to continue to support you on your journey albeit in a different direction.'

In 2016 AITD's Mentoring Program will be offered across Australia. For information about the program and how you can get involved visit [aitd.com.au](http://aitd.com.au)