

BEST PRACTICES



Best Practices #072: Mentoring

Heading: Membership

This mentoring best practice model illustrates one chapter's program developed with advice and suggestions from other chapters. Your chapter is encouraged to use it to start discussions in your group and modify it as appropriate.

“The purpose of the Minnesota Woodturners Association (MWA), a Minnesota nonprofit corporation, shall be to foster and encourage a wider understanding and appreciation of woodturning as a craft and art form, both traditional and contemporary, among the general public, hobbyists and professional wood turners, to educate the general public and MWA members in the art and techniques of woodturning.”

This purpose is currently carried out on a regular basis through monthly meetings, occasional special sessions, seminars and presentations for large or small groups.

The MWA Mentoring Program is presented to suggest ways and means to expand on the programs that carry out the above stated purpose: “and to educate the general public and MWA members in the art and techniques of woodturning through the establishment of a MENTORING program.

Mentoring

This means helping the mentee (student) succeed by providing guidance. A more experienced person helping the less-experienced person with information and guidance and instruction characterizes the mentor-mentee relationship.

Mentors:

- Are usually more experienced individuals who have knowledge and understanding of the woodturning craft and are willing to share this knowledge through examples and advice.
- Act as role models to the mentee.
- Focus on technical skill and encourage self-development
- Provide advice on “woodturnings” next steps, and can recommend the mentee for guild service and active participation in social services involvement.
- Work especially well with those first starting out in this new craft and/or entering a new area of skill appreciation and development.

Mentees:

- Are interested in learning more about woodturning from other turners.
- Are dedicated to self-improvement and practice.
- Are willing and eager to accept instructions, suggestions, and guidance in the framework of positive one-on-one relationships.
- Will respect their mentor as one who is a volunteer and dedicated to the sharing of the satisfaction, meaningful activities of, and personal desire to help others in their development as wood turners.

How does it work?

The program is flexible, but generally works like this:

- Members of MWA who are willing to mentor tell the mentor coordinator what they feel comfortable teaching.
- When someone makes a request for mentoring, the coordinator searches for the mentor whose skills match the request and who lives in close proximity to the mentee. (As much as this is possible and practical).
- Then the coordinator calls the mentor to see if they are available to accept a new mentee (student).
- Once the mentor agrees he/she will receive the name and contact information of the mentee applicant. The mentor will then contact the mentee directly to establish the teaching process.
- Once there is a “team” established the mentor will contact the mentor coordinator with appropriate information.
- At the first contact between the mentor and mentee schedules will be discussed and a first meeting in the mentor’s shop will be arranged. (Mentees will need to bring their own tools, face shield, sanding/finishing supplies, and in some cases wood to be turned. If the student does not have equipment this should be discussed with the mentor during first contact.)
- The mentors/mentees are responsible for setting up future meetings with each other
- If for some reason the match does not work for either party the mentee should contact the mentor coordinator for reassignment.
- There is no limit to the number of sessions between the mentor and mentee as long as they both agree progress is being made. The decision to end the relationship should be mutual and then reported to the mentor coordinator.
- The mentor is responsible for recording the time, date, length and place of each session and the student’s name for each session. This record is to be forwarded to the Mentor Coordinator after each session (email best). These records may be then used to further refine our program and to report to the MWA through its web site and/or newsletter.

- To participate in the mentoring program individuals must be 18 years of age OR be accompanied by a parent or guardian to each mentoring session. The parent or guardian must be present during the entire session. ABSOLUTELY NO EXCEPTIONS!

~ Fred Kogler
Minnesota Woodturners Association

AAW Resources:

Safety for Woodturners:

Free download <http://www.woodturner.org/?page=Safety>

Teaching Resources:

Free downloads <http://www.woodturner.org/?page=TeachingResources>