Maximizing Mentoring

Overview of today's workshop

- What does it mean to be a Mentor/Mentee
- What makes for a successful Mentor-Mentee relationship
- What makes for an unsuccessful/bad relationship
- How to manage a difficult mentor/situation
- Finding mentors – networking
- Exercises and discussions

My Career Path

My Mentors

Who is your mentor?
Who is your mentor?

Who should they be?

What can they do?

Mentors Can/Do…

• Take a long-range view of your growth and development.
• Help you see the destination versus just the map
• Offer encouragement & cheerleading
• Provide psychosocial support and ways to cope

Qualities of a Mentor

What roles should a mentor play?

What characteristics do you want in a mentor?

– Type in the chat or shout them out –

Mentors Don’t…

• Tell you how to do things.
• Support you on transactional, short-term problems.
• Try to create a clone of themselves in you.
• Serve as a counselor or therapist per se.

Qualities of a Mentor

• Appreciates uniqueness
• Approachable
• Available
• Challenger
• Committed
• Enthusiastic
• Guide
• Honest
• Inspirational
• Listener
• Motivational
• Opens doors to opportunities
• Optimistic/positive
• Provides feedback
• Reassuring
• Reputable
• Respectful
• Role model
• Sharer of experiences
• Sponsor
• Supportive
• Trustworthy
Mentoring lessons from plants?!

Assumption: something in/about the environment or my caretaking is amiss versus: these plants don’t have the intrinsic ability to grow
-Beronda Montgomery, “Mentoring Lessons from Plants” 2018 Pub Phi J

Another 30,000-foot view

**Mentees Should...**

- Discuss and compare mutual goals and expectations and SOPs.
- Be coachable and open to input (even if it’s "harsh").
- Cultivate the relationship (appreciate the effort).

**Mentees Shouldn’t...**

- Expect to be handheld.
- Expect mentors to be mind-readers.
- Lose touch with their mentors.

Roles of a Mentee

What roles do you think a mentee should play?

What strengths do you bring to your mentoring relationships?

- Type in the chat or shout them out –

Roles of a Mentee

- All in
- Ask questions
- Communicates
- Hard worker
- Independent
- Mentor for others
- On time
- Open/responsive to advice/critique
- Preparing for the future
- Proactive
- Record keeper
- Regular reporting
- Respectful of time
- Responsible
- Responsive
- Studious
- Team player
How to make it work

Be sure to voice and get on the same page with respect to:
- Goals
- Expectations
- Effort
- Concerns
- etc.

If there isn’t a fit, then perhaps that isn’t the best mentor for you.

How to make it not work

How to make it work (mentoring viewpoint)

• Maintaining effective communication
  Foundation of any relationship
  mode, frequency, duration, etc.

• Aligning expectations

• Assessing understanding
  If you are having trouble grasping something, let them know

• Addressing equity and inclusion
  What unique perspective do you bring to your work/studies/research?

• Fostering independence

• Promoting professional development

• Articulating your mentoring philosophy and plan
  Do they have one? Ask them for it to provide you with one.

Benefits from Mentoring

- Career and professional guidance
- Confidence in abilities/path
- Sense of belonging in the field
- Connections/networking opportunities
- Productivity
- Satisfaction/happiness
Mutual Benefits from Mentoring

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- Productivity
- Satisfaction/happiness

Mentoring benefits mentors too

- Recognition/contribution for tenure, etc.
- Happy mentees = productive mentees
- Satisfaction/rejuvenation
- Fulfills goals of department, institution, and funding agencies ($)

Mentoring vs. Cloning

- Disinterested or absentee mentor

Brainstorming Activity:

What challenges impede successful mentor-mentee relationships?

think: individual, relational, and environmental contexts

Challenges to Mentoring Relationships

- Personality conflicts
- Power dynamics
- Mis-aligned goals and expectations
- Miscommunication and communication breakdowns
- Cultural differences
- Environmental factors (e.g. departmental cultures)
- DEI issues
Managing Difficulties

**DO NOT**
- Ignore it
- Suffer silently
- Complain to others
- Become passive-aggressive
- Surrender

**YES**
- Assess your role
- Seek assistance
- Develop strategies
- Engage in honest communication
- Expand your network of support

LAST RESORT
- Detach or distance yourself

What is mentoring?
*The Fantasy*

Where do I find mentors?
- Locally
- Regionally
- Nationally/Internationally

What is mentoring?
A New Mentoring Paradigm
- Multiple Relationships
- Reciprocity Rather Than Hierarchy
- Formal Mentoring Programs

Locally
- Connect with peers within and outside your department,
- Department Seminars
- Campus Events
- Campus Organizations
- Outreach/Volunteer opportunities
Finding Mentors is a Type of Networking

- Networking is necessary in academia
  - Develop connections over time.
  - Develop connections at multiple levels and areas (academic, industry, institutes, government).
  - Develop two-way relationships.

Discussion

- Where did you find your mentors or network?
- Or, what opportunities can be used to find mentors or expand your professional network?

5 minute break

If you wish, you may use this time to begin formulating a networking plan.
Mentoring Case Studies

Group Activity

1. Assess this mentoring relationship from the perspective of the mentee or mentor's best practices.

2. What strategies could the student or the mentor employ to improve the quality of their relationship?

Don’t believe us that mentoring is important?

“Your mentors in life are important, so choose them wisely.”

Special Thanks to Nicole Lehman!

Please complete the session survey.