Becoming a Mentor (to students and post-docs

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goal

- to help those you mentor toward greater initiative, independence, and self-reliance.

role of a mentor includes:

- directing and advocating
- evaluating and rewarding
- celebrating successes
- guiding through adversity and disappointment

promoting mutual respect

- take students seriously
- don’t dictate answers
- be frank and direct
- help students develop self-esteem
- invite other mentors
- address fears without belittling
- meet on neutral ground

Adviser, Teacher, Role Model, Friend: On Being a Mentor to Students in Science and Engineering (1997)

before they choose to work with you

- what are their career goals
- discuss available projects (why is it important)
- what background is needed; what will student learn
- your expectations, funding situation

student makes the decision to join your group for the right reasons

intellectually challenging, personally supporting

- challenge the student in various ways
- engage student to think about projects of other group members
- encourage student to build a network of fellow grad students outside your group for professional development
- be sensitive to student's own style, but help her develop more effective styles

student takes ownership of problem

design a specific program

- treat each student as an individual
- tailor her graduate program for her career goal
- always have timelines and milestones (evolving)
- make sure student understands your and department's requirements
- meet with student individually and frequently

encourage mentor role for fellow students in your lab

- students contribute to each other's projects
- establish a culture of teaching and sharing of skills and knowledge
- provide forum to develop communication skills
- social activities establish group identity, shared values

shared experiences develop network for life

provide networking opportunities for grad students & post-docs

- meet with departmental seminar speakers
- introduce to colleagues at conferences
- encourage approaching colleagues in your field about scientific matters
- encourage presentations at meetings
- invite research leaders in your field to visit your lab and meet your group

students grow toward independence and bring new ideas into the group

teach standards of the profession

- research standards: laboratory record keeping and data management
- regulatory requirements
- ethics of authorship

mentoring post-docs

- treat as collaborators with sufficient independence
- establish publishing goals with deadlines
- discuss career goals at the outset
- if bound for academe, help develop a project that they may take with them
- facilitate job hunting and placement into the next stage of career

post-doc becomes a valuable extension of your professional network

Entering Mentoring

Jo Handelsman et al.. This guide developed by HHMI Professor, Jo Handelsman, and her colleagues and co-founders of the Wisconsin Program for Scientific Teaching at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, raises questions about teaching expectations, mentoring as a function of training new teachers, and dealing with diverse learning styles, personal styles, ethnicity, experience, gender and nationality. 141 pages.

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