MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

SUCCESS IN GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF NUTRITION AND HEALTH SCIENCES

Mary Ann Johnson, PhD
Jean Sundell Tinstman Professor of Nutrition
Nutrition and Health Sciences Department Chair
majohnson@unl.edu

University of Nebraska Lincoln
College of Education and Human Sciences
1700 N. 35th St., LEV 110
Lincoln, NE
Best Practices for the Success of Graduate and Professional Students
Mentoring can profoundly influence the success of a mentee.

- What is a Mentor?
- Who are your Mentors?
- Who do you Mentor?

UNL Graduate Mentoring Guidebook for faculty and students:
https://unl.edu/mentoring/

Mentoring Resources:
https://www.unl.edu/mentoring/mentoring-resources/
MENTORING

Worksheets to help students and faculty mentors communicate and define student’s goals and professional development plans.
Worksheet 1: Your expectations
Adapted from Brainard, Harkus & George (1998)

Use this worksheet to identify what you expect to gain from your mentoring relationships. By clarifying your own expectations, you will be able to communicate them more effectively to your mentors. Add items you deem important.

The reasons I want to mentor are to:
- Receive encouragement and support
- Increase my confidence when dealing with professionals
- Challenge myself to achieve new goals and explore alternatives
- Gain a realistic perspective of the workplace
- Get advice on how to balance work and other responsibilities, and set priorities
- Gain Knowledge of “dos and don’ts”
- Learn how to operate in a network of talented peers
- Other ________________________________________________

I hope my mentor and I will:
- Tour my mentor’s workplace/explore various teaching or work sites
- Go to formal mentoring events together
- Meet over coffee, lunch, or dinner
- Attend educational events such as lectures, conferences, talks, or other university events together
- Go to local, regional, & national professional meetings together
- Other ________________________________________________

I hope my mentor and I will discuss: __________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
Worksheet 2: Strategies for success in mentoring personal evaluation

Adapted from Lentin (2004)

Before you start a new mentoring relationship, step back from your day-to-day life and ask yourself where you are and how you are doing. You then can share this information with your mentor at your first meeting as you begin to plan goals and strategies for making your mentoring experience work for you. The purpose of this simple SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis is to help you get a real picture of where you are. Be as honest as possible in answering these questions.

| What are my top five strengths -the top five things I feel good about and am proud of? | 1. |
| What are the five weaknesses or areas in which I could improve -the five things I most want to work on or improve about myself? | 2. |
| What are the top five opportunities available to me at this moment -things I could do, act on, or take advantage of that would help me develop and reach my potential? | 3. |
Worksheet 3: Planning for first meetings
-A protégé’s checklist


Use this checklist to plan initial meetings with your mentors in light of what you hope to achieve over the long term.

___ Arrange first meeting with a prospective mentor.

___ Explain your goals for meetings and ask how confidentiality should be handled.

___ Discuss with your mentor what you both perceive as the boundaries of the mentoring relationship.

___ Review your current experience and qualifications. Record these on a professional development plan.

___ Discuss and record your immediate and long-term goals. Explore useful professional development experiences in view of these goals. Discuss options and target dates.

___ Discuss and record any issues that may affect the mentoring relationship such as time, financial constraints, lack of confidence, or newness to the role, etc.

___ Arrange a meeting schedule with your mentor (try to meet at least once a quarter). Record topics discussed and feedback given at each meeting. Request that meeting records be kept confidential and in a safe place.
Worksheet 4: Phases of your professional development

Adapted from Nyquist & Wulf (1996), p. 27

Which development phase are you in right now?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Senior Learner</th>
<th>Colleague-in-Training</th>
<th>Junior Colleague</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>You see your mentor’s role as:</strong></td>
<td>Manager, who says: “Do the task the way I’ve explained it, then get back to me.”</td>
<td>Educational/professional model, who says: “Think about the problem, identify options, then talk to me about potential outcomes and decisions.”</td>
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<td><strong>Your view your teacher role as:</strong></td>
<td>Assistant, who grades papers, meets students during office hours, plans quizzes and collects feedback.</td>
<td>Associate, who write assignments, creates tests, assists with teaching and lecturing, and leads small group discussions.</td>
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<td><strong>You view your research role as:</strong></td>
<td>Assistant who performs assigned duties under close supervision.</td>
<td>Associate, who is responsible for designing and implementing part of a faculty researcher’s grant project or your own research project.</td>
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<td><strong>You understand your practitioner, applied or service roles as:</strong></td>
<td>Assistant, who is learning the ropes and acquiring technical skills.</td>
<td>Associate, who provides assistance or lends expertise, but ultimately defers to your mentor.</td>
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Use this worksheet to start thinking about professional development goals and create a framework within which to talk about those goals with your mentor. Jot down your goals in the left-hand column. Then, in conversations with your mentor, identify strategies for achieving those goals, the means by which you will assess progress toward goals, how you and your mentor will follow up on your progress and the ultimate outcomes you hope to achieve.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Follow Up</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
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Worksheet 6: Sample mentoring agreement
Adapted from Brainard, Harkus & George (1998)

Consider using this agreement, or another one that you and your mentor create together, if you believe the mentoring relationship will be strengthened by formalizing a mutual agreement of roles, responsibilities, and expectations.

We are voluntarily entering into a mentoring relationship from which we both expect to benefit. We want this to be a rich, rewarding experience with most of our time together spent in professional development activities. To this end, we have mutually agreed upon the terms and conditions of our relationship as outlined in this agreement.

Objectives
We hope to achieve:

To accomplish this we will:

Confidentiality
Any sensitive issues that we discuss will be held in confidence. Issues that are off-limits in this relationship include:

Frequency of Meetings
We will attempt to meet at least ____ time(s) each month. If we cannot attend a scheduled meeting, we agree to notify one another in advance.
Questions?

Contact us at:

- Phone: (402) 472-3716
- Email: nhs@unl.edu
- Online: https://cehs.unl.edu/nhs
- Guide for Faculty and Students (2 pgs.), “Developing Shared Expectations in STEM and Social Sciences Focus”

- UNL Graduate and Professional Student Bill of Rights
  https://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/academics/rights

- UNL Graduate Mentoring Guidebook is for faculty and students
  https://www.unl.edu/mentoring/

- NHS Graduate Programs
  https://cehs.unl.edu/nhs/graduate-programs/
We wish you great success in your programs!

Thank You!