

Re-envisioning Mentoring as Learning:

Promoting Growth, Reciprocity & Success

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What is mentoring?

What is not?

Let's turn to math....

Mentoring \neq Advising

Montgomery et al, 2014, SAGE Open

Mentoring \neq Advising

Advising consists of recommendations for *anyone* on a particular path of achievement

Mentoring is based on offering advice and recommendations based on a personal understanding of a specific individual, their experiences/capital and their path of achievement

Montgomery et al, 2014, SAGE Open

Mentoring \neq Imprinting



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Mentoring \neq Imprinting

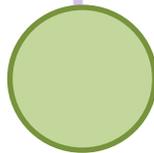
Imprinting is the process of training someone to pattern their behavior after yours, or after the norms of the group. If you desire to imprint, *be honest about it* and STOP calling it #mentoring which is (or SHOULD be) something very distinct.

Montgomery, 2018, <https://twitter.com/BerondaM/status/991991068114681856>

If your 'mentoring' approach in any way devalues the goals that an individual has identified for themselves, you may not be mentoring at all

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You may instead be offering advice & simultaneously seeking self-validation regarding your idea of what's a "right" & "valuable" way forward



Impactful Mentoring

Impactful mentoring focuses deeply on personal growth as one recognizes and considers the whole person, and also seeks to support an individual's personal advancement in some specific domain and in a specific environment

Plants and Mentoring?



“Physical environs, both on campus and in the surrounding area, are crucial considerations for any university seeking to achieve any sort of transformation. **The quality of the environment can either create opportunity or impose costs.**”

Promoting growth-mindset focused mentoring

- Institutions need to address the environment or ecology in which the students are exhibiting challenges, in addition to providing interventions for individual growth
- What is a growth mindset?

It is focus on a belief that “**talents can be developed**,” rather than on a “fixed mindset,” (also student- or individual-deficit model) which centers on the belief that “talents are innate gifts.” Dweck (2016)
- While growth mindset-based interactions can be individual, they are most effective when ingrained in the unit culture or institution

Promote “Assumption-less”^{*} Mentoring Culture



Assumptions can circumvent understanding *individual* strengths and areas for **growth** that promote developing or adapting mentoring to support each individual based on their unique cadre of ‘capital’ that will support their success IN CONTEXT.

Impactful Mentoring

Impactful mentoring at its core occurs in a learning environment...and success is determined not just by what the mentee needs to learn.

Effective mentors learn and grow as they contribute to the success of those mentored.

A close-up photograph of two hands, one from the left and one from the right, cupping a mound of dark brown soil. A small, vibrant green seedling with several leaves is growing out of the center of the soil. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green. A semi-transparent white rectangular box is overlaid in the center of the image, containing the text 'humans & plants'.

humans

&

plants

A different perspective



What do we generally do when our plants are not faring well?



A different perspective



What mentoring
lessons can we learn
from this
perspective?



#LessonsFromPlants: Plant Growth-Inspired Mentoring Implications (1/6)

Plant Lesson 1—We probe the environment first and extensively when plants in our environment are not faring well.



Mentoring Implication 1—With students and junior colleagues we often ask questions **about personal deficits first.**

Our engagement with and mentoring of individuals would be well-informed by our practices with plants to **ask questions first and systematically about the impacts of the environment on the potential for individual success.**

#LessonsFromPlants: Plant Growth-Inspired Mentoring Implications (2/6)

Plant Lesson 2—We recognize that in some cases new and at other times the relocation of existing resources are needed to support plant growth.



Mentoring Implication 2—When specific environmental deficits or needs have been identified, we assess whether new resources are needed or whether resources already present somewhere in the ecosystem need to be relocated and/or connected to the individual to support the individual's growth and development.

This is a critical role for mentors and leaders.

#LessonsFromPlants: Plant Growth-Inspired Mentoring Implications (3/6)

Plant Lesson 3—We recognize that caretakers and their specific preparation and expertise matter to plant persistence and optimized survival.



Mentoring Implication 3—Mentors and leaders matter greatly in supporting the success of individual mentees.

Given two individuals of equal aptitude, the individual connected to the right mentoring resources or imbedded in the right mentoring network is much more likely to succeed.

Additionally, the potential for success and mentoring outcomes are supported greatly by the efficacy of the caretaker.

#LessonsFromPlants: Plant Growth-Inspired Mentoring Implications (4/6)

Plant Lesson 4—We seek external expertise when our own caretaking efforts are not effective or we lack knowledge about the underlying causes of the impairments or limitations in plant growth.



Mentoring Implication 4—Mentors can AND should seek external advice from others with experience or expertise with inclusive and excellent mentoring, or **mentors can seek training to improve their mentoring efficacy.**

#LessonsFromPlants: Plant Growth-Inspired Mentoring Implications (5/6)

Plant Lesson 5—We attribute a failure to support plant growth to our own inadequacies, inabilities, or a need to seek opportunities to improve our care regimen.



Mentoring Implication 5—In the unfortunate event that a mentoring relationship or exchange is not progressing towards successful guidance of an individual student or junior faculty member, one of the most useful lessons we can gain from the care humans offer plants is to consider that the mentor may not be meeting the needs of the individual rather than an individual mentee having intractable deficits.

#LessonsFromPlants: Plant Growth-Inspired Mentoring Implications (6/6)

Plant Lesson 6—As a very last resort, when a plant is not faring well, we *MAY* attribute this outcome to a failure of a plant to thrive.



Mentoring Implication 6—When a caretaker has exhausted all environmental interventions, or has unsuccessfully sought help with care outcomes, the individual may ultimately reach a decision that the plant exhibits deficits or is incapable of thriving.

However, in such instances there is often no real negative judgement of the plant per se, but often a reluctant acceptance of failure to support its growth.

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Effective mentors learn and grow as they contribute to the success of those mentored.

What are you prepared to learn? To enact?



Thank you!!!

#LessonsFromPlants

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