Article

How to Be a Successful Mentor

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Abstract

Mentoring doctoral students is one of the most challenging and important tasks faced by faculty teaching in PhD programs. Receiving effective mentoring is central to students' success in their graduate education. Without quality mentors, many graduate students do not have positive experiences, are unprepared for the life of an academic, and even drop out of graduate school. Previous research also reveals that mentors are closely tied to success after graduation. This essay contains observations and suggestions for becoming a successful mentor based on our years of experience.

Keywords

mentoring, graduate studies in criminal justice, professional development

Doctoral programs in the United States tend to focus on research skills and publication. There is less emphasis on teaching doctoral students how to teach, and even less emphasis on how to be successful in the service component of a professor's job. Rarely are there formalized efforts in doctoral programs to mentor students. As a result, mentoring students by faculty members is more often a product of natural selection or because a professor takes an active interest in becoming a better mentor. A lack of resources exists in academic units to promote or assist in learning how to be a mentor, especially to doctoral students. Resources exist for mentoring juvenile delinquents, athletes, and even college freshmen, but very little that will help a person become a better mentor to doctoral students. Because doctoral programs in criminology and criminal justice are expanding rapidly, an increasing number of assistant professors—some right out of their own doctoral programs—are put in positions of teaching and

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mentoring doctoral students. It is critical, therefore, that some resources be available to help faculty gain some experience in mentoring. That is the purpose of this article.

Anderson and Shannon (1988) defined mentoring as

> a nurturing process in which a more skilled or experienced person, serving as a role model, teaches, sponsors, encourages, counsels, and befriends a less skilled or less experienced person for the purpose of promoting the latter's professional and/or personal development. (p. 40)

The importance of mentoring relationships is evident because many students who begin doctoral programs ultimately fail to complete the degree (Bair & Haworth, 2004; Gardner, 2009). However, the cultivation of mentoring relationships between graduate students and their professors has been deemed a critical factor in determining which students will be successful in completing graduate programs (Davidson & Foster-Johnson, 2001). Mentoring is a cornerstone of the most effective and promising practices recognized by the Council of Graduate Schools' Ph.D. Completion Project (2010), and a wealth of research supports the influence of mentoring relationships on successful student outcomes (Baird 1995; Golde & Dore, 2001; Paglis, Green, & Bauer, 2006). The mentoring relationship discussed here extends beyond serving on a dissertation committee, even beyond chairing the dissertation committee. The work of the mentor begins much earlier in the student's academic life and involves much more than advising on what statistical processes should be used or editing the dissertation.

Many factors come into play in being a successful mentor. Most of the factors are based on the student, but some are dependent on the faculty member. A few of these are as follows:

- the level of the student (undergraduate, masters, or a doctoral student);
- what year the student is in;
- the strengths and weaknesses of both the faculty member and the student; and
- how many other students the faculty member is working with and how much time he or she has.

All of these factors are important. A 1st-year master's student needs a different type of mentor relationship than does a 4th-year doctoral student. Equally true, the chair of the department does not need to take on six new students at one time. The mentor relationship may start one way and evolve over time relative to the student's growth and progress. Being a successful mentor extends beyond students in the program as well. Young faculty members also need mentoring from more senior faculty members. Sometimes, the mentoring process even moves outside the walls of the home institution to young scholars or students in other programs who have not found solid mentors. This is especially true because not all graduate programs focus on providing mentors for students or junior faculty.

This article is intended to provide a few insights into the mentoring relationship based on our experiences. We both have a long history of mentoring students. Our

Master of Arts program has been in existence for 37 years. Both of us have served as mentors for undergraduate students through student associations, served as graduate coordinators, and mentored junior faculty members. In addition, we started a PhD program 4 years ago and have created a strong mentoring structure within that program. Even before the doctoral program began, we sent many of our students to doctoral programs elsewhere and mentored them during their PhD programs and into their careers as professors. We offer these insights from both our successes and our failures in hopes that readers may benefit from our experiences.

Building on the knowledge gained during our work with graduate students, we developed a list of 10 essential elements to becoming a successful mentor. These propositions are particularly geared to doctoral students; however, many of them can be applied to any mentoring relationship. Although the mentoring relationship is different depending on many factors, we feel that these 10 elements are most critical and can cut across mentoring at any level. The elements may be different in different situations, but they should guide mentoring behavior.

Element 1. Be Honest About the Amount of Time You Have to Spend With the Student

It is better to decline a request to mentor a student than to take on more students than your time allows. Such a decision will lead to frustration on everyone's part and slow progress toward the completion of milestones and measurable output. Previous research concluded that having more frequent interactions between students and program faculty, as well as ensuring that those interactions are available to all students, increases doctoral completion (Scaffidi & Berman, 2011). Scaffidi and Berman (2011) argue that a positive experience beyond graduate school is related to the quality of supervision and career mentoring, collaborations, networking, and a nurturing research environment. Not much is more frustrating for a student than to expect faculty input and quick turnaround on reviews of drafts only to have the faculty member take weeks or months to respond. Students in this situation often end up in a position of missing critical deadlines because of the mentor's delays. These students are put in the position of having to ask another faculty member to take over the project. That causes conflict and tension all around. The mentor being removed may become frustrated, the mentor being added may be a subordinate, and the student is never comfortable having such a discussion with the mentor. All of these uncomfortable situations can be avoided by an honest assessment of the amount of time you have to be a mentor.

Each semester, you should evaluate the number of students with whom you are already working. You must also consider all of the other responsibilities you have as a faculty member, including committee work, publishing requirements, and teaching load. You should determine whether you have time to meet with an additional student weekly and whether you can turn around written materials within 2 weeks. If you do not have this amount of time, make the decision not to take on additional students as mentees this academic year. If a student asks for your mentorship during a time that

you cannot take on new students, take the time to talk to the student about the reasons why you cannot overcommit. Then discuss with the student who else might make a good mentor. You might even make an introduction to the other faculty member, talk to him or her beforehand, or set up a meeting between the three of you to discuss the mentoring relationship.

It may even be necessary for the mentor to talk to current students about the time he or she can devote to mentoring during a semester. Faculty members take sabbaticals and may become involved in a grant or other project that will be very time consuming. Students need to know as much in advance as possible when this might happen. The mentor can talk to the student about how long this situation might last and how much time the mentor can provide during that time. The mentor could offer to have the student switch to a new mentor, either on a temporary or permanent basis, or an understanding could be reached about what kind of involvement the mentor might have during this time. Regardless, the student should not just be left hanging.

Being honest with students about the amount of time you have to give them is only fair. Most faculty want to help students, but not having the time to devote to them may do more harm than good. Being a good mentor sometimes means having to say no to a student.

Element 2. Listen to the Student

Once you decide to accept a student, the primary element of being a good mentor is listening to the student. A good mentor will listen and help the student strategize options to deal with life circumstances as well as academic issues. Doctoral students are more likely to graduate and report higher levels of satisfaction with their program when they engage in a meaningful relationship with a faculty mentor or advisor (Bair & Haworth, 2004). Many times during our tenure as graduate coordinators, we spent most of the day just listening to different students. Some had conflicts with other students, some had conflicts with professors, some were having conflicts at home. In the list of what we had to do that day as a faculty member, some of these concerns seemed insignificant; however, to the students, they were critically important. Therefore, they became important to us. In this role, the mentor may be more of a counselor than an academic advisor.

Students are often in an unfamiliar environment without family support. They often arrive at our programs thinking they have an understanding of graduate school and what it means to be in a PhD program, only to find out that they are sorely unaware or misinformed. Many of them have been extremely successful in their other academic pursuits, and they are totally unprepared to for the first set of revisions handed back by well-intentioned faculty. During the first semester of the 1st year, much of our time was spent convincing new doctoral students that the others in their cohort felt the same way. We cannot count how many times we talked to students about the “academic imposter syndrome” that is experienced by many doctoral students. Students often feel isolated and alone in the uncertainty. They have the mistaken impression that others

around them are much more successful and having an easy time in the program. The stress they feel from having to catch up, in addition to the volume of new material, makes them believe that they should quit. It is difficult for them to see the reward at the end. A good mentor must listen to these concerns, and help the student work through them. If you do not appear to take them seriously, and do not offer encouraging words, the student will quit. Other strategies we have used to help students overcome this rough time in their academic career is to work with family members to encourage and support them (see below) and to contact a mentor from the student's master's work and have that person reach out to the student.

One of the reasons for such a high drop-out rate in doctoral programs is likely the lack of understanding among friends and family about the volume of work, lack of understanding among the students about the reality of other members of their cohort's abilities, and lack of a support structure in the new place. The mentor can fill this critical gap and encourage the student to stick it out. In our experience, getting through the first semester of the 1st year is the hardest part. Everything gets easier after that point, largely because students know more what to expect.

Occasionally, real crises occur in the lives of doctoral students. In those situations, mentors must know when it is truly in the student's best interest to take a break from doctoral work and take care of the crisis. We have had several students who encountered issues completely beyond their control and had to withdraw from our program. Because of our work with the students, however, some were able to return to the program after the crisis was resolved, and others went to another doctoral program that suited their needs better. Usually, such a relocation was related to the need to be closer to family or significant others, either because of one's choice or because of child custody issues or child care needs. In these limited situations, it is important for mentors to support students and not make them feel guilty for the tough choices they must make.

Probably the easiest part of listening to students is in their academic work. Students are bright or we would not have them in our programs. But they do not have the grasp of what kinds of topics might be good for research, the methodology for doing so, or of the data it would take to complete a project. Students often enter doctoral programs with grandiose ideas of what they want to do, or they want to tackle some popular topic that is virtually impossible to study. In these situations (and even after as the students gain a better understanding), it is important to hear them out, even if we are not thrilled with the idea or it is not tenable as a research project. The students have to know that their ideas have value even if it is ultimately not going to result in a project. We have both heard stories of "I don't want to work with Professor X because he won't let me do the project I want to do and only wants to do the project he wants to do." Listening to students and letting them see the advantages and disadvantages of a project is important—and they may be able through the discussion to reach the same conclusion as you would have told them. But the process is a part of learning.

Proper listening to students gives the mentor the best opportunity to accomplish the rest of the suggestions contained in this article. Without good listening, the rest will be difficult at best and often impossible.

Element 3. Respect the Student

Good mentors will treat students more as a colleague and not as servants. You should respect their time, their talents, and their limitations. Doctoral students generally desire mentors who serve as role models, value the student, are generous with their time, and provide support for research (Bell-Ellison & Dedrick, 2008).

Doctoral students are being trained to take on an active role in academia. Mentors should introduce students to all three of the components of academic success: teaching, research, and service. The mentor should also work to prepare students in roles beyond the academic discipline. Having your doctoral student spend 20 hr a week filing your research articles is not really a good learning experience. Having students help with a research project (hopefully beyond simple data entry—at least for advanced students) may be the best learning experience for them. This is often the most difficult to grasp and takes the most out of class work. Grading assignments in your class and guest lecturing are also good learning experiences. Invite students to attend your committee work with you to get an understanding of how that works. If you can identify committees for student participation, nominate students for those roles. In all of these activities, work closely with the student so he or she learns how to budget time to be productive. If you put your student in a position to always put your work ahead of his or hers, that is not respecting the student, or helping the student. Also, if the student needs flexibility in work hours during particular times to accommodate such things as preparation for a conference or grading a large class of essay exams, work with the student to make those adjustments. In other words, doctoral students should be treated the same way that you want to be treated as a faculty member.

A study on the effectiveness of the mentor relationship suggested the importance of careful and deliberate selection of faculty members to serve as mentors for doctoral students (Holley & Caldwell, 2012). An ongoing effort to monitor the mentoring relationship from the student and faculty perspective enables administrators to identify problems and reassign individuals if needed. Although program administrators should be responsive to desires for particular mentors, the ability to meet all requests may be limited by the race, gender, and time requirements of the faculty (Holley & Caldwell, 2012). Students included in Holley and Caldwell's study, however, expressed that finding someone who they could relate to and who understood what they were going through was more important than finding someone of their same race or gender. A specific example was that "if I have someone the same skin color but they are single, they don't have family, they are totally at opposite ends" (Holley & Caldwell, 2012, p. 248). This statement expresses the importance of faculty and student having a shared experience for the mentoring relationship to be stable and fulfilling over time.

Taking the time to listen to students, respecting their time, and having a focus on their learning is a critical element of being a good mentor. This takes time on the mentor's part. This and being able to relate to the student have been found to be critical elements of being a good mentor.

Element 4. Engage the Student

Davidson and Foster-Johnson (2001) outlined important elements of mentoring, including the significance of achievement or knowledge acquisition between the mentor and student, an emphasis on long-term professional development, the production of reciprocal benefits for the mentor and student, a highly personal relationship between the mentor and student, and a focus on the expertise that the mentor brings to the relationship. Students should be engaged in all aspects of their graduate experiences. That includes classroom discussion, research topic selection, peer reviews, presenting their work, and others. Oftentimes, graduate school is the first experience students have ever had in which they have choices about what they learn and how they learn it. The majority of school experiences from the time students start elementary school quashes students' excitement and investigative spirit. Students feel less creative with each year of school as they progress into high school (Age and Creativity, 2014).

A graduate school calls on students to reengage the creative spirit—the natural urge to investigate. Unfortunately, many students have trouble finding that part of themselves again. They do not know what they want to study, or why. Being a mentor often means spending time engaging in brainstorming with the student to make him or her think and arrive at an idea worthy of their time and investigation.

Finding the topic of research is only the beginning, however. Most students come to graduate school ill-prepared to write at a graduate level. Many are even intimidated by the writing experience. The mentor must be willing to spend hours working with a particular student to improve writing skills. This means reading and revising papers multiple times and searching for new ideas about teaching students to write. It also means teaching the student how to write. It is not enough to simply correct papers. You should engage your student about why you made a change and what that change means to good writing. Have them read good writers in the literature and learn from their prose. Give them short assignment (perhaps for your own research) and then use that writing assignment as an example to teach them how to write.

A recent trend in teaching is "flipping the classroom." This is a process where students do most of the interaction and developing ideas and the teacher serves as a guide. This is an excellent mentoring strategy for doctoral classes. Allow students to find and suggest readings for the class. They might very well come up with the same readings you might have, or perhaps better ones, and if they do not, you can still make assignment. Have students peer review each other's work. This teaches them a great deal about not only the practice of teaching but also improving their own writing. And you may have better papers before you have to grade them. Have the students teach and work in small groups. All of these give the opportunity to engage the students.

The most common way to engage students in the research enterprise is through having them present their work at academic conferences. Most students have limited exposure to conferences prior to entering a doctoral program. Recognizing this, and the importance of participating in a conference, we decided at the beginning of our program to fund doctoral students who were presenting a paper at a conference at US$500 for two conferences per year. Thus, our doctoral students can get up to

US$1,000 toward their conference travel. Additional resources are available on our campus as well. Our graduate student association and our graduate school have limited funds available to support student travel. We try to stay informed about when those funds are available. Our students are generally successful in securing the funds because of our departmental match. There are also travel grants for all of the national meetings. The experience of attending a conference, meeting people in the field that they have read about, and presenting their work for comment and discussion have an inspiring effect on most students. They return energized and full of ideas. This is where the role of mentor comes in. Do not just let students return from a conference and get back to the routine. Engage them about the conference itself (especially if you did not talk to them that much at the conference). Have a debriefing session; take a class period and discuss the conference (both the content/panels and the interaction and social aspects). It is particularly important for a mentor to perhaps take the student to lunch either toward the end of the conference or after returning home and talking about the conference and what happened. Talk to the student about networking and other activities that make the conference a successful professional experience.

Once you have listened to and engaged the student, you can get a better understanding of him or her. With this, you can begin to determine how and about what you want to give advice. With this knowledge, you can also begin to challenge the student to make the most of the doctoral program and setting the stage for his or her career.

Element 5. Challenge the Student

An identified problem with mentor relationships is the tension that exists between the supportive helping role of the mentor and the requirements of the quality of the product (Murphy, Steele, & Gross, 2007). The mentor's role is to be honest with the student, and that includes constructive criticism. All parties should be aware of this upfront and understand that being a good mentor does not mean always having good things to say. It also means handing out some hard criticisms with the goal of making the work, and the student, better.

We have a course in our curriculum that is the first course doctoral students must take. It is called Proseminar. In that class, students learn how to survive the PhD program, how to finish the program, and how to choose and cultivate a mentor. Much time is spent talking with students about getting feedback and giving feedback. For many of them, the initial shock of seeing their work marked on or seeing a low grade spins them into panic mode. It is the role of the mentor to engage the student and develop an understanding of what good feedback looks like (which is not always pretty).

In previous studies, authors found that the opportunity to openly discuss the challenges of graduate school with their peers is beneficial (Holley & Caldwell, 2012). In our Proseminar class, once a week, the 1st-year cohort is together and class starts with a discussion of how things are going. Depending on the needs of the students, sometimes their discussion takes on a life of its own and the class revolves around their issues and concerns. Oftentimes, these "weekly therapy sessions"— as they have begun to be called by the doctoral students—revolve around their stress about being

critiqued. We try to emphasize to the students that this is a natural part of academic life. We use examples of work of our own that has received strong reviews and was ultimately published in that journal. We talk about the need to be challenged to be able to improve. One of our consistent messages is "If you give a paper to someone and it comes back with a couple of comments and a 'good job;' give it to someone else. That person is not necessarily helping you." Although this may be a bit of an overstatement, it does help them understand that they need to be challenged to do their best and to improve.

Mentors should take this same approach (keeping the current mindset of the student in mind, of course). We have found that students generally respond well, even to harsh criticism, when they know that the mentor has their best interest at heart and when they know it is helping. It is through this process of critique mixed with sympathy and understanding that mentors can begin to develop the skills of the student.

Element 6. Develop the Student's Skills

Do not do students' work for them. The mentoring relationship should focus on developing the personal and professional skills that the student needs to be successful in the doctoral education and beyond into the early career (Holley & Caldwell, 2012). Often, it is easier for a mentor to run a statistical application or complete revisions on a paper than it is to work with the student to do the work. The problem with this approach, however, is that it does nothing to help the student learn how to do the work. Mentors must accept that, often, it will take a lot longer to work with the student to develop the necessary skills (and will involve the tension of challenging the student as discussed above). But this is the process of being a mentor—working with students to overcome deficiencies and to develop the strong skills they will need in their careers.

Two additional reasons are compelling for ensuring that students do their own work. One is that when the student presents the work at a conference or a job talk, the student is expected to be able to explain all steps in the process. Even though not all coauthors have to know every detail of the project, it is important to have an understanding of the elements. While beginning students can often refer back to a coauthor or mentor on parts he or she may not be familiar with, it is even more important for advanced students to be able to discuss all elements of the research. If he or she cannot, it can be awkward. Second, when students go on job talks for jobs, interviewers want to know how much of the project was conducted by the student. Specifically, they want to know how much of the paper is the student's idea, how much of the statistical process did the student run and interpret, and how much of the writing belongs to the student. Of course, getting students' works published in top journals is important, especially if a student is placed as the first authorship. But if students cannot make a convincing argument to others that they were actually responsible for doing the work, or at least demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the work, they will risk being embarrassed.

Along with these considerations, mentors must know and understand their own management style and the best fit for students. A conflict naturally exists in the

mentoring relationship between the friendship component and the rigid academic requirements component (Mainhard, van der Rijst, van Tartwijk, & Wubbels, 2009). That natural conflict can be exacerbated when the faculty member's supervisory style does not match well with the learning style. Some mentors like to be hands-on and some like to be hands-off (Mainhard et al., 2009). Either works fine as long as the right type of student is paired with that management style. A student who is very self-directed and self-motivated will work well with a hands-off supervisory style, but will feel micro-managed by a hands-on approach. Likewise, a supervisor whose natural style is hands-off will feel annoyed with a student who needs a hands-on approach and is never on task, never sticks to deadlines, and seems to be floundering. To become the best mentor possible, faculty members must assess their own preferences and skills and be aware of their supervisory styles. They should carefully assess students through classes and interactions to determine which student would work best with their style. This component of the mentoring relationship goes beyond common research interests or analytical skills, and goes more to the learning style of individual students.

Element 7. Give the Student Credit

Whether you are working with master's or doctoral students, you must give students credit for the work they contribute to a project. Students feel subordinate to faculty, because they are. We determine whether they graduate, pass their comprehensive exams and dissertations, and grade them in classes. Students are not, therefore, typically comfortable negotiating credit for their work. Ethically, faculty should be bound to acknowledge student contributions, but beyond that, it is just the right thing to do. We have had students in our office who have committed a great deal of effort to an article to find out that they are listed as only third or fourth author—nontenured faculty are listed higher than them to promote their march toward tenure. Those types of conversations should occur very early in any authorship arrangement—conversations that are initiated by the mentor. Feelings can be sparred and misunderstandings avoided simply by having honest conversations early in the process.

Determining what type of credit a student receives can be challenging. Issues that affect credit include the amount of work undertaken by the student, what the student did do to make the project a success, and who originated the idea for the project. As a general rule, if we are working on a project with a graduate student in which the student was the idea generator—even if that required a little nudging—the student gets first author. Undergraduate students can contribute greatly to the research enterprise as well, but usually we are asking them to help us with a project that is already underway. Thus, they usually get something less than first author, and maybe even an acknowledgment, depending on what they contributed. That decision must be made on a case-by-case basis to address each individual situation. The important part, however, is to talk about these issues with the student ahead of time. Mentoring relationships should be mutually beneficial to both parties. Faculty should not use students to promote their own interests, and they certainly should not do so without giving the student credit.

Element 8. Introduce the Student to Others in the Field

One of the commitments our program made to our graduate students, particularly doctoral students, is that we will introduce them to as many scholars in their area of interest as possible during their time with us. As stated earlier, we support conference travel up to US$1,000 each year for students presenting papers. We spend a large amount of time at conferences dragging our students from one reception to another to meet people. Before we ever leave for the conference, we know which scholars each student would like to meet. We work hard to make sure that they are able to meet and spend time with these scholars to begin to build their networks.

In addition to taking students to conferences, we bring distinguished lecturers to our campus. We started a lecture series titled "The Orval Walker Lecture Series" that sponsors two scholars each year to come to our campus. During their time with us, they spend at least an hour talking to our doctoral students alone without faculty in the room. The scholars then give a public lecture later in the day to which our entire campus is invited. Students are encouraged to ask questions during this lecture as well. In addition to the scholarly part of the program, we schedule dinner and then drinks afterward for each night that the scholar is in town. Students are strongly encouraged to attend those dinners and social times. This provides an informal atmosphere for the students to interact with the scholar.

Our lecture series has been so successful in bringing scholars and students together that several of those who have visited have agreed to serve as outside readers on dissertations. We have even sought out and invited some scholars to the lecture series based on the work of a doctoral student. Thus, our students, in a program that is only 4 years old, have prominent scholars working with them and reading their dissertations. Our role as mentors, then, goes beyond what we can do for the students or they can do for us; it also includes who we can introduce our students to who would benefit their careers.

Element 9. Make Time for Social Activities Outside of Academia

In addition to time for networking and socializing with scholars in the field, it is important for the mentor to spend time with the student in ways other than work. The role of the mentor is much more than setting a student's academic plan, advising on scheduling, or reading the dissertation. Any faculty member can assist with those things. The mentor is a more personal relationship than that. The most successful mentor relationships have a bond between the student and the mentor (Golde, 2000). Good interpersonal working relationships between supervisors and their students were associated with good progress and student satisfaction. In particular, the psychological aspect of mentoring was connected to "the protégé's sense of competence, confidence and role effectiveness" (Luna & Cullen, 1998; Paglis et al., 2006). From the student's perspective, supervisors who have listening skills, encourage argument and debate, and provide continuous feedback and support are enthusiastic, and show warmth and

understanding (Denicolo, 2004) have the most positive relationships and the best student outcomes. These are all critical factors that have been addressed to this point. Here, we argue that it is important to do those things away from work—and just take time to know the student—as well as at work and about work.

Students must learn to balance work and leisure, and the mentor needs to help them in that quest. Regardless of their origin, engagement with a mentor offers the opportunity for doctoral students to interact with role models and garner support for their professional development and socialization experiences (Holley & Caldwell, 2011). We generally suggest that students do not really enter into mentoring relationships with faculty until their 2nd year of study. When students enter the program, they are largely working off of reputation and rumor about which faculty members are good to work with. They often find that a person was a wonderful mentor for a friend of theirs, but the personalities do not work for the new relationship. Furthermore, students do not always have an understanding of their areas of interest when they first enter a doctoral program. That makes it difficult to establish a strong mentorship. And feelings can get hurt if a student decides to leave a mentor to seek out someone who is more closely aligned with the ultimate area of interest.

To give students the time they need to make this happen, the program must provide opportunities for students and faculty to interact during the 1st year so that students, and faculty members, can accurately assess who could form good relationships. Not all faculty teach all doctoral students in their 1st year. That is another reason faculty need the opportunity to meet and socialize with new students.

Element 10. Be Involved in the Student's Life

All of these elements come together in the mentor truly becoming a part of the student's life. The mentoring relationship extends beyond book chapters, publishable articles, and classroom learning. Graduate students, particularly doctoral students, have lives that are sometimes complicated and time consuming. Mentors should meet the student's family, particularly a partner. Provide background for the family member to feel included and have a better understanding of the demands of the educational experience. Considering that only 1% of the U.S. population achieves a PhD (http://factfinder.census.gov), most family members have no point of reference for the demands of graduate school. Such lack of understanding makes the process more difficult for students, especially those who have children. Students often feel torn between devoting time to their studies and time to their families.

Any activities that make the student's family a part of their academic experience can help family members feel more invested in the student's success, and can enhance understanding of the demands. An example of an activity that gets family members and faculty together, and that has been successful in our program includes a graduate student meet and greet held at the beginning of each academic year. We provide pizza and soft drinks for all graduate students across all of our programs. Families are invited to this event as well. All faculty are encouraged to attend. This is a time for the families and the students

to socialize with faculty in a nonacademic setting. Each person is introduced and tells a little something about himself or herself. Faculty also bring their spouses and/or children. This is event begins the relationship-building process for our students.

Another bonding experience we have found successful is hosting social events throughout the year and inviting families to these events. One such event is the annual Halloween party. Attendees are encouraged to dress up and awards are given for best costume. If enough children attend, they trick-or-treat in the local neighborhood wherever the event is held. The annual Halloween party has been a big success for bringing our students together, with their families, and creating some lasting bonds. We also have events such as Holiday parties, Super Bowl parties, or football game dinners. Families are invited to all of these events. Not all events occur every year, but hosting these types of nonschool-oriented events has proven successful in keeping students engaged, including the family in the event, and giving students some time to relax in the midst of an otherwise stressful endeavor.

Another area mentors need to understand is finance. Graduate assistants are generally prohibited from having employment beyond the assistantship. Thus families are forced to rely on meager incomes during the doctoral program. Working with limited financial resources causes additional stress. Mentors should not get directly involved in the student's financial situation, but they should have community resources available to be able to share with students who need them. For example, most graduate students qualify for food stamps, day-care subsidies, free healthcare for minors, and other types of social programs. Mentors should advise students who are struggling financially about these resources.

Finally, mentors are often counselors for student and even family. Beyond encouraging students and/or family and helping them through the tough times of graduate school, mentors often become like parents in the student's life. There are times, however, when it may be best for the mentor to encourage the student to seek other help. Mentors should be informed about counseling services that exist on campus. Many graduate students could benefit from counseling services if they were encouraged to use them. These types of social services can make the difference between students completing their graduate program and dropping out.

It takes time to be a good mentor, and some of that time requires the mentor to be involved in the student's life outside of the classroom or work. Mentors should be involved in the student's life in important ways. This outside mentoring can often produce greater results related to work as the student understands that the mentor is truly interested in him or her and not just what products or assistance the student can help with.

Conclusion

We want to make two caveats to this discussion in closing. These do not necessarily apply to the mentors themselves, but more to the whole process of faculty mentoring. These have to do with who actually serves as mentors for doctoral students.

First, there is a difference between the person a student works for as a graduate assistant and the mentor for that student. Certainly, it often occurs that the first person a doctoral student is assigned to become his or her life-long mentor. A graduate coordinator who works to learn about incoming doctoral students and who knows the faculty can greatly enhance this possibility by working to match people up. Many times, however, the person a doctoral student is initially assigned to may not be the perfect match, or the initial assistantship may not necessarily involve a mentoring relationship, such as when a student is working for an outside agency. Often moving a doctoral student to a new assignment is difficult. Most graduate coordinators try to avoid this step unless serious conflicts arise between the student and faculty member. A possible solution is to work with the student (and faculty member) to establish a working relationship. The graduate coordinator can then also work with the student to find a mentor that may be a better match.

Second, not all willing faculty members make good mentors. Sometimes the personality of a faculty member does not fit the roles of being a good mentor. The faculty member may be a wonderful teacher, researcher, and so on, and can serve doctoral students well in this role without being a mentor per se. Those who are right out of graduate school also may not be the best mentors for doctoral students. Intuitively, it would make sense to have a person as a mentor who just went through the process. There are two potential dangers however (not mutually exclusive). One danger is that the mentor could become too close to the student. After all, they are close to the same age, experiencing the same kinds of experiences, and so on. Alternatively, newly graduated faculty can mistakenly believe that all students should function at the level he or she was at on graduating, forgetting all of the growth that occurred within the past several years. Either way, it can create potential problems for all involved. Of course, many faculty right out of graduate school can make wonderful mentors—especially with the right student. The pairing of mentors in general but especially with newly minted PhDs should be approached with caution.

Finally, research suggests that faculty members benefit from training in effective mentoring practices. This could come in the form of training classes or conference, or could come from a faculty-to-faculty mentoring program. This professional development effort could prove advantageous to faculty members' role in their academic department and discipline (Holley & Caldwell, 2012). The bottom line, however, is often whether a mentor truly wants to be a good mentor. With the proper attitude and a little guidance, any faculty member can become a mentor the students acknowledge in writing for the rest of their careers.

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