We will start momentarily at 2pm ET

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No Mentor Available? Mentor Yourself!
Reflective Self-Mentoring

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Dr. Saundra McGuire
Director Emerita of the Center for Academic Success, Louisiana State University

Dr. Dave Harwell
Assistant Director, ACS Careers
No Mentor Available? Mentor Yourself by Using *Reflective Self-Mentoring*!

Saundra Yancy McGuire, Ph.D.
Director Emerita, Center for Academic Success
Retired Asst. Vice Chancellor & Professor of Chemistry
Louisiana State University

Tell us what you think…

How familiar are you with the concept of self-mentoring??

A) Very familiar
B) Somewhat familiar
C) Have heard of it, but am not familiar with it
D) Never heard of the concept
Desired Outcomes

- We will understand the importance of structured self-mentoring
- We will have specific strategies for effective self-mentoring
- We will have greater confidence in ourselves and our ability to control our own destinies

What is a Mentor?

A mentor is a wise and trusted person who guides, protects, and promotes a protégé’s (mentee’s) career.*

*Donna Joyce Dean, Ph.D.
Why is a Mentor Important?

“Because science survival skills are rarely taught in a direct way, most young scientists will need a mentor. Some will find one in graduate school, or as a postdoctoral researcher, or perhaps as an assistant professor. “Those who do not [have a mentor] have an excellent chance of moving from graduate study to scientific retirement without passing through a career.”


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Things a Mentor Can Offer

- Information about the culture/unwritten rules of an institution/organization
- Tools and strategies for success
- Information about resources
- Encouragement & inspiration
How often have you...

• You felt you really needed a mentor, but you didn’t have access to one
• You received advice from a mentor, but realized at the time, or found out later, that it was not the best advice for you

A) Never
B) 1 – 2 times
C) 3 – 5 times
D) More than 5 times

If you have experienced either of those situations (or if you may in the future)...

You can develop the skill of reflective self-mentoring
What is Reflective Self-Mentoring?

A type of mentoring in which an *individual cultivates his or her own professional growth* through self-tutoring activities and resource-finding techniques.

Self-mentoring requires the individual to be highly motivated and self-disciplined. The individual increases job effectiveness and augments professional talents by *building a body of knowledge and skills without the aid of other people.*

Things a Mentor Can Offer…

that you can provide for yourself!

- **Information about the culture/unwritten rules of an institution/organization**
  
  Observe and discern the rules/norms/mores

- **Tools and strategies for success**
  
  Observe and talk to others who have advanced

- **Information about resources**
  
  Google it!

- **Encouragement & Inspiration**
  
  Encourage yourself by reflecting on past successes!
It is crucial that you know yourself and others

- What are your personal characteristics?
  - Personality style (MBTI)*
  - Learning style preference (VARK)*
  - Job interests
  - Mindset (Fixed vs Growth Intelligence)

- What are the personal characteristics of those with whom you work?

*www.cas.lsu.edu

Monitor Your Mindset!


Mindset* is Important!

- **Fixed Intelligence Mindset**
  Intelligence is static
  You have a certain amount of it

- **Growth Intelligence Mindset**
  Intelligence can be developed
  You can grow it with actions


What Do you Think…

What do you think is the mindset about intelligence of most of the scientists that you have encountered?

A) Most had a fixed intelligence mindset
B) Most had a growth intelligence mindset
C) Approximately evenly distributed among the two
D) I couldn’t tell
Responses to Many Situations are Based on Mindset

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fixed Intelligence Mindset Response</th>
<th>Growth Intelligence Mindset Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Challenges</td>
<td>Avoid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obstacles</td>
<td>Give up easily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasks requiring effort</td>
<td>Fruitless to try</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criticism</td>
<td>Ignore it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success of Others</td>
<td>Threatening</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Monitor Your Self-Talk

Have you ever had any of the following thoughts?

- “I can't do this work; it is too much/too hard”
- “I'm not as good/smart as the others”
- “I remember the last time I tried this and failed”
- “I must be an idiot. What makes me think I can do this?”
- “They're gonna soon find out I'm in over my head.”
The Antidote to Negative Self Talk: Positive Self-Talk!

- Turning negative, destructive thoughts into positive, constructive thoughts
- Facilitated by objectively evaluating the validity of negative thoughts
- Forces the adoption of a different perspective
- Reflection and journaling can be important tools

How can we rephrase the negative thoughts into positive thoughts?

• “I can’t do this work, it is too much/hard”
• “I’m not as good/smart as the others”
• “I remember the last time I tried this and failed”
• “I must be an idiot. What makes me think I can do this?”
• “They’re gonna soon find out I’m in over my head.”
More Self-Mentoring Strategies

• Ask questions and listen carefully to the experts in your field of interest.
• Read and research materials in the field.
• **Observe people in leadership positions.** Notice the different styles of leadership and which are effective.
• Attend and present papers at conferences and other educational programs.
• **Seek out new opportunities.** Volunteer for projects or join professional organizations – but not too many.
• **Brainstorm with yourself!** Plan time for your self-mentoring activities.

Start using critical thinking to reflectively mentor yourself!

It’s a tool that works beautifully!
Additional References


• Feibelman, P. J *A Ph.D. is Not Enough!* New York: Basic Books


Useful Websites

• http://acswebinars.org/

• www.cas.lsu.edu

• www.vark-learn.com

• www.mentornet.net

• Searches on www.google.com
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