HOLISTIC MENTORING: Supporting the WHOLE Postdoc Experience

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How do we effectively support postdocs throughout their training?

- Will there be enough funding?
- Do I have what it takes to be successful?
- Will my experiments work?
- Am I stable?
- Am I safe and supported?
- Do I fit in?
- Will anyone be interested in my findings?
- Will I find a job?
- Will someone scoop me?
Major themes of the session:

Making the most your mentor-mentee relationship:

- Explore constructive and troublesome mentorship qualities and how to overcome them (e.g., constructive criticism, open communication, working relationships, advising at different career levels, etc.).
- How to choose a mentor that supports your career goals.
- Identify successful strategies to be a mentor to other trainees throughout your career in STEM.
- Apply what you’ve learned to advise the next generation of scientists.
Case study: Fostering timely and effective communication and feedback

Take a moment to read Case Study #1.

Please pair up with a neighbor and address the following questions:

1) What are the main themes raised in this case?

2) How could have Dr. Weaver’s initial communication with Jason been more constructive?

3) Is there a reasonable length of time for feedback?

Adapted from the case studies in Mentor Training for Biomedical Researchers, manual, part of the W. H. Freeman, Entering Mentoring Series, 2014.
The “Twoness” of the Postdoctoral Scholar

“One ever feels his twoness, -- an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.”

In *The Souls of Black Folk*, W.E.B. Du Bois
### Gender

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<th>Gender</th>
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<th>Percentage</th>
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<td>Female</td>
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### Citizenship

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<td>International</td>
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<tr>
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### Top Countries

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<td>GERMANY</td>
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<tr>
<td>KOREA, SOUTH</td>
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<td>1.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNITED KINGDOM (ENGLAND, WALES, SCOTLAND, IRELAND)</td>
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<td>1.4%</td>
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<td>FRANCE</td>
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<tr>
<td>ITALY</td>
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1 Updated in January 2017
One size does not fit all: UW Postdoc Profile

Race/Ethnicity

- White, 45.0%
- Asian, 22.2%
- Hispanic, 7.0%
- Other, 3.8%
- Missing Information, 19.4%
- Two or More Races, 2.7%
- Black, 1.2%
- Prefer Not to Respond, 2.3%
- Pacific Islander, 0.1%
- American Indian, 0.2%

Note: 19.4% of the postdocs have no race/ethnicity information in the HR system; 2.3% prefer not to respond.
Newly Minted Scholar-Researcher

Postdoctoral Scholar

Faculty Trainee in Apprenticeship
The Minority Postdoc

How do we “merge our double self into a better and truer self?"
One size does not fit all:

International Postdoc Experience

- Postdocs are among the fastest growing group of academic staff in the US, and over 50% of all postdocs in the US are temporary visa holders.
- Social Capital
- Cultural Differences (academic and professional)
- Career development needs
- Visas
- Family and financial concerns
- Understanding of local labor market
How do we best support postdocs?

- Unique concerns of postdocs vs. other academics...

- Unique concerns of URM/Intl postdocs vs. other postdocs...

- How do WE best support the entire postdoc community?
How do we best support postdocs?

It’s not important to teach your trainees to science non-stop even over the weekend; it’s important to train them so they don’t have to

10/8/17, 4:38 PM
Mentoring Roles:

- Advisor
- Coach
- Educator
- Sponsor
- Supporter

National Academies; Kram 1998
Tips for supporting postdocs:

- Ask open-ended questions
- Set clear expectations
- Create connections
- Created a culture of belonging
- Show that being vulnerable is OK
- Stay focused on the why
Tips for supporting postdocs:

Ask open-ended questions

Swan 1991
Tips for supporting postdocs:

Set clear expectations


Managing Up and Down

Treat others like you’d like to be treated!

Managing UP
- Provide regular, concise and accurate updates
- Seek regular feedback
- Ask questions for clarity and context
- Assume full ownership of your tasks
- Come prepared with solutions not just problems
- Respect your manager’s seniority

Managing DOWN
- Give context when delegating
- Give ownership and autonomy
- Acknowledge good work
- Manage by inspiration, not fear
- Give and seek regular feedback
- Invest in team member’s growth
- Respect team member’s time and personal commitments

Trevis Baker, LinkedIn, 3/5/15
How to create successful mentoring relationships

Take control of the situation
Tips for supporting postdocs:

Create connections
Tips for supporting postdocs

Create a culture of belonging:

- Create a strong sense of belonging
- Self worth
- Sense of achievement
- Overall well-being

Leith Mitchell - Mindfully cultivating diverse, inclusive and well workplaces

Diversity
Acquired & Inherent

Psychological
Safety

Inclusion

Belonging

I feel welcome

I am safe

I am engaged

I commit to being here

I belong here

Edwards, Bai, Mahoney, ASBMB Today, 1/19, p41-42
Tips for supporting postdocs

Show that being vulnerable is OK

“Vulnerability is not weakness. And that myth is profoundly dangerous. Vulnerability is the birthplace of innovation, creativity and change.”

- Brene Brown
Tips for supporting postdocs

Stay focused on the why

“If you want to live a happy life, tie it to a goal, not to people or things.”

- Albert Einstein
Case study: Fostering timely and effective communication and feedback

Take a moment to read Case Study #2.

Please pair up with a neighbor and address the following questions:

1) How should Dr. Crane address Celia’s concerns about the course and being here at Brown?

2) What other concerns might also affect Celia’s graduate experience? How might her background affect her graduate experience? How might the current departmental culture influence Celia’s in this course?

3) What are some ways you, your department, and the Graduate School can support her today (i.e. existing structures)? If no, structures exist, share your ideas.

Adapted from the case studies in Mentor Training for Biomedical Researchers, manual, part of the W. H. Freeman, Entering Mentoring Series, 2014.
What traits do you look for in mentors?

**Personal**
- Brilliant
- Calm
- Caring
- Compassionate
- Empathetic
- Engaging
- Enthusiastic
- Ethical
- Fair
- Generous
- Gentle
- Honest
- Humble
- Humorous
- Insightful
- Inspiring
- Loyal
- Optimistic
- Passionate
- Respectful
- Selfless
- Warm
- Wise

**Professional**
- Accessible
- Articulate
- Collaborative
- Collegial
- Communicative (verbal & written)
- Comprehensive
- Intellectual
- Knowledgeable
- Love: research & science
- Skilled
- Talented
- Teacher
- Unconditional
- Visionary

Mentoring Teams:

- Research
- Life
- Peer
- Career
- Support

Postdoc

NASEM 2018
My Mentoring Network
(Adapted from materials at WEBS 2011/ www.facultydiversity.org)

- Readers (see Intellectual Community)
- Department Colleagues
- Professional Editor(s)
- Accountability for what MATTERS!! (subtopics may apply)
- Role Models
- Sponsorship/Promoters
- Access to Opportunities
- Intellectual Community (ex: Paper or Grant Readers)
- 0-25% Complete
- 25-50% Complete
- 50-75% Complete
- 75-100% Complete

External
- Internal
- Emotional Support
- Friends
- Family
- Other

- Safe Space
- Other

ME and MY Priorities
Thank you!

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