

Mentoring Statement

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Mentoring is a vital component of a student's professional development. However, the mentor-mentee relationship is reciprocal, as the mentor also benefits from the knowledge exchanged with students. Because of the importance of the mentor-mentee relationship, I strive to make mentoring a top priority of my professional career. My approach to effective mentoring can be summarized with three words: communication, experience, and independence. This means that I keep a continuously open line of communication with students so that what I expect from them and what they expect from me is abundantly clear. This includes an explanation to students of the importance of the work I require of them, and students providing me an overview of their career aspirations. In addition, I incorporate a once weekly email mechanism developed by Campbell and Lom (2006) to communicate with students, wherein I ask them five basic questions: 1) what did you accomplish this week? 2) What do you know? 3) What don't you know? 4) How will you find out what you don't know? and 5) What are your frustrations? I am also highly-engaged when mentoring students, so that I can address in a timely manner any issues students may have. Another part of my mentoring plan is allowing students to gain independence as they gain experience, a strategy that promotes confidence. Although I allow student independence to increase with their experience in the tasks they perform under my supervision, open communication will continue so that responsibilities remain evident. This mentoring framework built on communication, experience, and independence creates students that are knowledgeable, capable, and confident to pursue their professional careers.

References

Campbell, A.M., and B. Lom. 2006. A simple e-mail mechanism to enhance reflection, independence, and communication in young researchers. *Life Sciences Education* 5: 318-322.