Mentoring Across Differences

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Origin of Mentor

- Mentor was the son of Alcumus and, as an old man, friend of Odysseus, in whom he entrusted his son and palace when he left to fight the Trojan War.

- Over time, the word mentor has come to mean, in addition to trusted friend, counselor or teacher, a more experienced person.
Effective Mentoring

- Is instructive and developmental (Thomas)
- Is instrumental (Moody) occurs when a senior colleague:
  - Takes time to critique the work
  - Nominates for career-enhancing awards
  - Includes in valuable networks and circles
  - Collaborates on research or teaching
  - Arranges for chairing conference sessions or manuscript submission


Difference

- Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1985)
  - People classify themselves into categories

- Similarity and attraction theory (Byrne, 1971)
  - People tend to be attracted to people who appear most similar on salient demographic characteristics

- Social identification in organizations (Ashforth & Mael, 1989)
  - A) perception of oneness within the group
  - B) categorizations of people; prestige of the group; salience of outgroups
  - C) leads to activities congruent with the group’s identity, stereotypical perceptions of self and others and is reinforcing

For these references, please see last slide
White males and everybody else

- Mentoring across difference not a natural act
- Four major obstacles: (Thomas, 2001)
  - Negative stereotypes
  - Difficulty identifying with the other person
  - Protective hesitation
  - Fear or skepticism of intimacy

Formal Mentoring

- Legitimates/authorizes relationships that might not occur naturally but are vitally important to both parties
- Allows institutions to:
  - Reward outstanding mentors
  - Adjust their work
  - Establish clear guidelines and parameters
  - Monitor its effectiveness
Informal Mentoring is Crucial

Junior faculty say informal mentoring is more important to their success than formal mentoring.

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Scale: 1 to 5
1 = Very unimportant, 2 = Somewhat unimportant; 3 = Neither important nor unimportant; 4 = Somewhat important; 5 = Very important

+ Statistically significantly more important; - Statistically significantly less important
Males compared to females; each racial/ethnic group compared to whites
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Steps/Guidelines

1. Discuss and determine mentoring approaches
   - Dyads, committee/team, networked, multi-tiered

2. Select and assign mentors/teams
   - Those who have the time, skills, desire

3. Train and support mentors
   - Importance of mentoring
   - Unconscious bias
   - Appropriate Q&A for mentors and mentees
   - Mentor and mentor role descriptions
   - Documentation of time and evaluation of process

4. Train and support mentees
   - Orientation, workshops, brown bags, seminars
   - Mentee handbook

5. Establish formal mentoring program policies
   - How senior admin is involved
   - How high quality is ensured across units
   - How the issues of women and minorities will be addressed
   - How departments can monitor workload and junior faculty progress towards tenure

6. Monitor and evaluate mentoring programs
   - Process evaluation
   - Outcome evaluation
   - Mentor-mentee documentation
