

Advancing Research Mentoring Practice

Example Syllabus Designed by Amber Smith & Nancy Ruggeri

Meeting Time:

Mondays; Jan 23, 30, Feb 6, 13

2:00 pm - 4:00 pm CT

Room 117 WISCIENCE, 445 Henry Mall

Facilitators:

Amber Smith, Ph.D

amber.smith@wisc.edu

Associate Director, WISCIENCE

Nancy Ruggeri, Ph.D

nruggeri@wisc.edu

Director, Research Mentor and Mentee Education

WISCIENCE

Overall Session Goal

Seminar participants will work with a community of peers to develop and improve their mentoring skills.

By the end of the seminar, participants should be able to clearly articulate a personal mentoring philosophy to anyone inside or outside their discipline and have multiple strategies for dealing with mentoring challenges.

Session Content

The content of each seminar is designed to address the key concerns and challenges identified by research mentors. The topics include:

- Aligning Expectations
- Maintaining Effective Communication
- Assessing Understanding
- Enhancing Cultural Awareness in Mentoring
- Cultivating Ethical Behavior
- Fostering Independence
- Promoting Mentee Self-Efficacy

Much of the content is adapted from *Entering Mentoring: A Seminar to Train a New Generation of Scientists*; created by Jo Handelsman, Christine Pfund, Sarah Miller, and Christine Pribbenow, with support from Howard Hughes Medical Institute Professors Program (PI: Jo Handelsman). The *Entering Mentoring* Seminar materials were adapted with funding from the National Science Foundation (Grant # 0717731; PI: Christine Pfund). All curriculum is freely available through the [Center for the Improvement of Mentored Experiences in Research](#).

Seminar Format and Facilitator Role

Experiential learning and facilitated discussion form the structural foundation of this seminar for research mentors. The content and process are based on core principles in mentoring, but the outcomes are based heavily on the contributions of seminar participants as they integrate their diverse experiences into the seminar materials and activities. The case studies and reading materials provide a tangible starting point for discussion but you are encouraged to move from hypothetical examples to your own experiences with your research mentees. Our role as facilitators is to enable you to take ownership of your own learning by helping you to engage in self-reflection and shared discovery and learning. We will do our best to guide you towards meeting the learning objectives of this seminar, but importantly, our role is not to be an expert on mentoring.

Seminar Materials

All seminar materials can be found [\[here\]](#).

Attendance Policy

You are expected to attend all of the seminar sessions. If you must miss a meeting, you will be responsible for the material you missed (reading assignments, homework). Please make prior arrangements with the facilitator for the week you will miss which may include submitting your assignment to the facilitators before the session you will miss. In order to successfully complete the training, you must attend at least 75% of the sessions.

Accessibility

If you have circumstances that you believe will affect your engagement (for example, visual, hearing, or learning disabilities, or language differences), please let us know as soon as possible so that we may work together to develop strategies for adapting assignments and in-person activities. Please let us know if you have any trouble accessing the Google Drive folder. Please don't hesitate to let us know if you require assistance or accommodations for any reason. We look forward to working with you to meet your learning goals.

Learning Objectives for the Advancing Research Mentor Practice Seminar

Overall Seminar Objectives

Participants will work with a community of peers to develop and improve their mentoring strategies. By the end of the seminar participants should be able to clearly articulate a personal mentoring philosophy to anyone inside or outside their discipline, and have multiple approaches to addressing mentoring challenges.

Objectives for Each Seminar Topic

Introduction

Mentors will have the knowledge and skills to:

- Learn about other mentors in the group and begin building a learning community
- Reflect on group dynamics and ways to make the group functional
- Establish ground rules for participation
- Prepare to establish effective research mentoring relationships with their mentees

Aligning Expectations

Mentors will have the knowledge and skills to:

- Design and communicate clear research project goals
- Listen to and consider mentee expectations in the mentoring relationship
- Consider ways in which personal and professional differences may impact expectations
- Communicate expectations for the mentoring relationship
- Align mentee and mentor expectations

Maintaining Effective Communication

Mentors will have the knowledge and skills to:

- Provide constructive feedback
- Communicate effectively across diverse dimensions including varied backgrounds, disciplines, ethnicities, positions of power, etc.
- Engage in active listening
- Use multiple strategies for improving communication (in-person, at-a-distance, across multiple mentors, and within appropriate personal boundaries)

Enhancing Cultural Awareness

Mentors will have the knowledge and skills to:

- Be aware of cultural diversity in themselves and others
- Expand understanding of cultural diversity in mentoring relationships (how cultural diversity dynamics can complicate mentee and mentor experience)
- Recognize the impact that conscious and unconscious assumptions, preconceptions, biases, and prejudices have on the mentor-mentee relationship and acquire skills to manage them
- Develop a culturally responsive mentor-mentee compact

Assessing Understanding

Mentors will have the knowledge and skills to:

- Assess mentee understanding of core concepts and processes and their ability to develop and conduct a research project, analyze data, and present results
- Identify reasons for a lack of understanding, including expert/novice differences
- Use diverse strategies to enhance mentee understanding across diverse disciplinary perspectives

Fostering Equity and Inclusion in the Research Context

Mentors will have the knowledge and skills to:

- Identify resources to enhance success of culturally diverse mentoring relationships and research teams.
- Identify concrete strategies for learning about and addressing issues of equity and inclusion in research teams.
- Identify elements of their own research context (physical space, research process, scholarship production, etc.) that may be more or less inclusive depending upon decisions made by research mentors and team leaders.

Cultivating Ethical Behavior

Mentors will have the knowledge and skills to:

- Articulate the ethics issues they need to discuss with their mentees
- Clarify their roles as teachers and role models in educating mentees about ethics
- Appreciate the power dynamic inherent in the mentoring relationship.

Fostering Independence

Mentors will have the knowledge and skills to:

- Define independence, its core elements, and how those elements change over the seminar of a mentoring relationship
- Employ various strategies to build their mentee's confidence, establish trust, and foster independence
- Create an environment in which mentees can achieve goals

Promoting Mentee Research Self-Efficacy

Mentors will have the knowledge and skills to:

- Define self-efficacy and its four sources
- Identify signs of self-efficacy in relation to research related tasks.
- Articulate their role in fostering mentees research self-efficacy.

Articulating Your Mentoring Philosophy and Plan

Mentors will have the knowledge and skills to:

- Reflect on the mentor-training experience
- Reflect on intended behavioral or philosophical changes
- Articulate an approach for working with new mentees in the future