



Does Having Been Mentored Affect Subsequent Mentoring?

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ABSTRACT

Background: How to be an effective mentor is typically not taught formally because good mentoring is thought to beget good mentoring, but there is little concrete data to support that connection.

Purpose: Scholars in the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Nurse Faculty Scholars (NFS) program were surveyed to find out if the mentoring they received influenced their subsequent mentoring.

Method: The qualities that form the Mentorship Effectiveness Scale were used to investigate if the experience changed scholars' views of mentoring; open-ended questions provided an opportunity for scholars to describe additional insights.

Results: Thirty-nine out of 93 scholars (42%) replied. Scholars were influenced by the mentoring they received: they were now more inclined to give guidance on professional issues, provide constructive critiques, suggest resources, acknowledge mentees' contributions, and challenge mentees to extend their abilities. Scholars' experiences made them more aware of the power of mentoring, provided them with insights into how they might do the same, convinced them that mentoring shouldn't be confined to one advisor, made them realize that one style of mentoring doesn't work for everyone, and improved their likelihood of using an individual development plan when they mentored.

Conclusions: Effective mentoring does seem to beget effective mentoring because the interaction with mentors seems to leave a lasting impression and the perceived obligation to "pay it forward."

Mentoring has been found to engender favorable outcomes in productivity, attitude, health, collaboration, and work culture (Hafsteinsdóttir, van der Zwaag, & Schuurmans, 2017). A review of articles between 1985 and 2006 found that the effect size is generally smaller for youth-mentoring programs like Big Brothers and Big Sisters, and larger in advancing workplace and academic outcomes (Eby, Allen, Evans, Ng, & DuBois, 2008). Mentoring in nursing has certainly grown in popularity as a means for achieving research and academic success (Haddi, Lindquist, & Buckwalter, 2013; Maas et al., 2006; Travis & Anthony, 2011).

The National Advisory Committee (NAC) of the Nurse Faculty Scholars (NFS) program, which was charged with shaping this Robert Wood Johnson Foundation commitment to the development of junior nursing faculty, saw mentoring as a means of enlarging each scholar's assets for sustainable academic success and regarded it as the key component in forging a scholar capable of integrating teaching, research, and practice/service in her or his person. Since mentoring involves a broad array of activities, from supporting and teaching to providing feedback and challenging, there was less focus on developing

one relationship and more on building a mentoring network which is increasingly recommended (DeCastro, Sambuco, Ubel, Stewart, & Jagasi, 2013; Martina, Mutrie, Ward, & Lewis, 2014).

Accordingly, the program required each scholar to have several mentors. The approach to mentoring included many of the key components outlined by Nowell, Norris, Mrklas, and White (2017): program coordination, an orientation to the program, selective matching of mentors with scholars, clear performance expectations and goals, and overall facilitation of networking. The success of the program was judged by scholars' evaluations, the perceptions of mentors and deans, and summary data. Since there are suggestions that the experience of being mentored can affect a person's own mentoring (Zannini, Cattaneo, Brugnolli, & Saiani, 2011), the study reported here pursued the question of whether the mentoring received by the scholars affected their mentoring: Did the scholars' perceptions of their desired mentoring attributes vary by earlier and later cohorts? To what extent did the mentoring received affect the scholars' judgments? If the mentoring received affected their subsequent mentoring, what had the biggest effect on them? Are the scholars using the individual development plan

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(IDP) template provided in the program when mentoring others? What additional thoughts do the scholars have about how the mentoring they received affected their subsequent mentoring? In order to understand the responses to those questions, the NFS program first needs to be described.

Building a mentoring network

The NFS program, which included seven cohorts of scholars, expected each scholar to have three mentors. A School of Nursing Mentor (also known as primary mentor), who was selected by the scholar, took responsibility for making sure that the scholar learned how to juggle the tripartite responsibilities of academia in a particular university. The University Research Mentor, who was also selected by the scholar, was expected to be someone outside of the School of Nursing; that mentor was charged with helping the mentee develop a sustainable externally-funded program of research and make appropriate inter-professional connections. Both of these mentors contributed their services as part of the applicant university's contribution to the program. The National Mentor was a senior nursing leader located elsewhere, who was appointed by the National Program Director in consultation with the scholar and the NAC; that mentor was expected to provide overall career mapping and help the mentee build a programmatic research focus, and received a modest honorarium for services rendered (McBride, Campbell, Woods, & Manson, 2017).

New scholars attended an orientation along with their primary mentors to learn what was expected of them. Special sessions were scheduled at this meeting for these mentors so they could exchange ideas about what constituted a successful mentor-mentee relationship. Various written materials—a statement of expectations, the components of a model mentoring contract, and a bibliography on mentoring—provided the starting point for these discussions. For the next three years that each cohort was in the program, scholars continued to come once a year with their primary mentors for the annual sharing of developmental progress during which there always were two sessions just for the primary mentors to continue to share their insights and concerns.

Because short-term and longer term planning is a feature of scholarly mentoring (Abedin et al., 2012), scholars created an individual development plan (IDP) that was reviewed and refined at the orientation. Each developmental objective—build a program of research; develop into a master teacher; lead in professional service; and have your authority externally confirmed—required the scholar to identify actions that would achieve the objective, the expected time it would take, resources needed along the way, and the standard for measuring success. Scholars developed their IDP with input from their primary mentor. The expectation was that mentor and mentee could both use the IDP as an ongoing resource in setting goals and reviewing progress to date. This document was updated quarterly and in the second year of this award, scholars used the IDP to describe progress and challenges at the annual national meeting where they received feedback from peers, other mentors, and the NAC.

After reviewing early mentor evaluations that were submitted by scholars anonymously for each of their three formal mentors, it was clear that some of the mentor relationships—particularly the research and national mentors—were not as successful as we had hoped, in part because socialization to their roles was only accomplished via written materials. To remedy that situation, we specifically tasked the primary mentor with the responsibility of helping the scholar work with the other two mentors and encouraged periodic three-way meetings across mentors to ensure coordination of efforts. We also provided orientation phone meetings for research mentors and national mentors, since we did not have the resources to bring them together in person. These calls provided an opportunity to review the goals for and design of the program, mentoring expectations, common problems, and lessons learned. We also discussed what to do if the relationship proved not to

be a good fit.

Though the NFS program focused on these three formal mentoring relationships, the concept of building a mentoring network was also encouraged in two other ways. The leadership training deliberately fostered peer mentoring by providing scholars with opportunities to interact with each other within their cohorts and to network across cohorts via shared research interests and group activities. The NAC also took an active role in leadership training and provided some mentoring, for example, NAC members encouraged sub-groups of men and minorities to discuss how those identities influenced their career success.

The NFS program was successful in encouraging academic success as judged by scholars' own evaluations (Hickey et al., 2014), the perceptions of their mentors (Swanson, Larson, & Malone, 2017) and their deans (McBride, Campbell, Barr, et al., 2017; McBride, Campbell, Woods, and Manson, 2017), and summary data (Campbell et al., 2017). While much of what was done in this program can be replicated in schools of nursing, mentoring is an investment sometimes “relegated to collateral duty status” (Johnson, 2016, p. 4) because it involves faculty in a time-consuming relationship-building process (McCloughen, O'Brien, & Jackson, 2014). Because it is an investment and there is growing interest in how mentors learn how to be effective, the scholars in the program were later surveyed to see if having been mentored went on to affect their subsequent mentoring. How to be an effective mentor is typically not taught formally because good mentoring is thought to beget good mentoring much the way that good parenting is thought to lead to good parenting, but there is little concrete data to support that connection.

Methods

The NFS program had measured mentoring effectiveness using the Mentorship Effectiveness Scale developed by the Ad Hoc Faculty Mentoring Committee at the Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing (Berk, Berg, Mortimer, Walton-Moss, & Yeo, 2005). It was one of the only evaluation tools available when the NFS program was developed. Since the scholars were familiar with this scale, the same 12 characteristics of effective mentoring that formed that scale were used in this study, but scholars were asked to make different judgments about each quality. First, they were asked if the mentoring they received in the program made them more or less likely to value each quality in their mentoring. Each item was rated on a five-point scale ranging from 1 = much less than way to 5 = much more than way. Scholars were then asked to make a separate judgment as to whether the change was due at all to the mentoring they received. Four responses were possible from “not shaped by NFS mentoring” to “very much shaped by NFS mentoring.”

After the scholars made these determinations, they made overall judgments about how much each of their three mentors affected them on a five-point scale ranging from “did not affect my mentoring” to “had the utmost effect on my mentoring.”

Three open-ended questions were asked in order to obtain some additional data: If the NFS mentoring affected your own mentoring in any way(s), what had the biggest effect(s) on you? Are you using the IDP template provided in the program or a modified version of the IDP when mentoring others? What additional thoughts do you have about how you were mentored in the NFS Program, particularly the consequences the experience had for how you now try to mentor?

The study was approved by the Johns Hopkins University Institutional Review Board as part of overall evaluation of the program over the course of its existence (2007–2017). Each of the possible 93 scholars participating in the program was invited to participate in the study by email.

Data analysis

When scholars were asked how highly they now valued each

characteristic in the Mentoring Effectiveness Scale, “much less that way” was coded as 1, “less that way” was coded as 2, “no change” was coded as 3, “more that way” was coded as 4, and “much more that way” was coded as 5. Earlier cohorts (Classes of 2008 through 2011) versus later ones (2012 through 2014) were compared using Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances because improvements had been made over time in the program to clarify what was expected of the various mentors but the data came from a non-normal distribution. In those instances when scholars didn’t make judgments about each and every item, the mean was calculated dividing by the number that actually responded to the item.

Means and standard deviations were also calculated for each characteristic for the total group, as well as their judgments of whether their rating was shaped by the mentoring they received. Respondents could say that their rating was “not shaped” by the mentoring they received, “somewhat shaped,” “quite shaped,” or “very much shaped.” But it is only the percent of scholars that checked the last two categories that were considered to have made an impact on the scholars. Scholars rated the impact each of their mentors had on them using a five-point scale, but it was only the top three ratings of their three mentors—“had considerable effect,” “had a great deal of effect,” “had the utmost effect”—that were considered in calculating whether the mentor had indeed affected the scholar’s subsequent mentoring.

The answers to the second open-ended question regarding the use of the IDP template were reviewed and then coded in terms of yes or no usage so a percent of scholars using that tool could be calculated. The anonymous responses of each scholar to the first and third open-ended questions were separately recorded then reviewed by two of the authors for key words and repetition of common concepts, after which the most representative ideas were winnowed to a manageable few. Verbatim quotes from different scholars were then selected to illustrate those themes.

Results

Scholars in all seven cohorts participated in the survey. Thirty-nine out of a possible 93 scholars (42%) returned the survey. This relatively low return rate may have had to do with survey fatigue because scholars were asked to participate in several queries as the program was ending. All three mentors clearly shaped the scholars’ subsequent mentoring, but they were more influenced by their primary mentor (71.8%) and research mentor (66.7%) than their national mentor (56.4%). That difference may have been due to the fact that the most influential mentors were based at their universities so they presumably interacted more with them, whereas the national mentor was in contact episodically via phone and email and only seen when at the same professional meeting.

Table 1 lists the 12 mentoring characteristics associated with effective mentoring and provides means and standard deviations for the total sample, as well as the percent of the sample who said their view of each characteristic was shaped by the NFS experience. The ratings made of each characteristic were in a tight range between 4.00 and 4.51. Generally the scholars wanted to develop all of the qualities in their mentoring and this desire was substantially shaped by the mentoring they received. As a result of their experience with mentoring, scholars seemed to be particularly inclined now to provide direction and guidance on professional issues (e.g., encouraging networking). This was the characteristic with the highest mean rating (4.51) and the one most thought to have been shaped by the mentoring received (89.7%). Scholars also seemed to be more determined ($\geq 75\%$) to provide constructive and useful critiques of their mentees’ work, acknowledge mentees’ contributions appropriately (e.g., nominating for awards), suggest appropriate resources (e.g., electronic contacts, source materials), and challenge mentees to extend their abilities (e.g., risk taking, trying something new). Demonstrating professional integrity was least affected by the mentoring received, no doubt because that was

Table 1
Does having been mentored affect subsequent mentoring?

Characteristics	N	I try to be more that way	Shaped by mentoring received
Accessible	39	4.21 (0.656)	74.1%
Professional integrity	39	4.15 (0.904)	48.7%
Content expertise	39	4.00 (0.725)	61.5%
Approachable	37	4.43 (0.728)	69.2%
Supportive	38	4.16 (0.789)	61.5%
Constructive critique	38	4.32 (0.739)	76.9%
Motivational	38	0.34 (0.669)	71.8%
Professional guidance	39	4.51 (0.556)	89.7%
Answer questions	39	4.00 (0.795)	64.1%
Acknowledge contributions	39	4.26 (0.715)	79.5%
Suggest resources	39	4.26 (0.677)	79.5%
Challenge mentee	39	4.46 (0.505)	79.5%

Note: First column names mentoring quality; second column states number responding to item; third column is mean for sample (range is 1 to 5) and the number in the parentheses is the standard deviation; fourth column is percent of sample who said that their mentoring was either “quite shaped by NFS mentoring” or “very much shaped by NFS mentoring.”

presumably front and center in scholars’ earlier professional development. The differences between the more recent cohorts (2012–2014) and the earlier cohorts (2008–2011) were not statistically significant.

Thirty-seven of the scholars answered the first open-ended question. Box 1 provides verbatim quotes from different scholars illustrating the two larger themes—the power/importance of mentoring; characteristics of good mentoring—that most characterized their thoughts about how being mentored had affected them. Scholars said that the experience had helped them appreciate the importance or power of mentoring, and as a result strengthened their commitment to “pay it forward” in their interactions as faculty, particularly in their work with graduate students. One person talked about now feeling empowered to offer that sort of experience to others. The importance of mentoring was reaffirmed even when a scholar had a negative experience because the mentor’s behavior was a lesson in what not to do when you are a mentor.

Effective mentoring provided scholars with new insights into how they might do the same working with others. They began to think about the characteristics of a good mentor. As a result of their experience, the scholars tended to have a more complicated view of mentoring with more appreciation of the fact that one mentor cannot be all things to any mentee, an insight that may have been comforting because it removed expectations for having to be all-knowing to be any good. If anything, effective mentors encouraged their mentees to get out of their comfort zone, seek out new opportunities, and network with others.

The major tool used by the NFS program to track goal achievement was use of an IDP which required scholars to list their objectives in research/scholarship, teaching, professional service, and pursuit of external recognition of their efforts. Because of the centrality of the IDP to the program’s mentoring, scholars were asked whether they were using a similar template in their mentoring, and 24 out of 39 (62%) said they either use the same model or a modified version, particularly in mentoring graduate students and junior faculty.

Thirty-five scholars had additional thoughts about what they had learned. Box 2 provides verbatim quotes from different scholars illustrating the three larger themes—mentoring doesn’t come from just one person; diversity is important; further model development is in order—that emerged. The mentoring they received convinced them that mentoring shouldn’t be confined to interactions with just one senior advisor because no one person can meet all of an individual’s learning needs. If anything, the truth of this statement was brought home to those scholars who had an unsuccessful relationship with one mentor but a valuable experience with another. Closely related to this insight was scholars’ realization that one style of mentoring isn’t going to work

for every mentee. Some mentees can profit from a hands-off approach and some need much more structure. Understanding that mentoring styles should vary and build on a careful assessment of the mentee's needs and goals also led some scholars to realize more fully that students and faculty in their universities aren't very diverse, and that ought to change. Reflecting on their experience also led some scholars to wonder about further model development, e.g., developing a refined model for growing master mentors.

Discussion

Did the experience of being mentored shape the scholars' own mentoring? The answer has to be a resounding “Yes.” Access to three kinds of mentors, including one outside of nursing and one at another university, enabled each scholar to experience different personalities and approaches, most that worked and some that did not. The successful interactions led the scholars to want to model effective behaviors and the unsuccessful experiences led the scholars to think about how they might improve on matters in their faculty situation.

All of the scholars had experienced mentoring before in their doctoral and/or post-doctoral programs. While mentees value support and accessibility at all career stages from undergraduate education to assumption of the faculty role (Eller, Lev, & Feurer, 2014; Nelson et al., 2018; Sawatzky & Enns, 2009), there were some aspects of mentoring that the scholars seemed eager to incorporate into their mentoring now more than before, for example, challenging the mentee and offering professional guidance about next steps. This inclination was borne out in the open-ended comments when scholars said the mentoring they received gave them “the push to go further and reach higher” and more appetite for “risk taking.” Scholars have commented elsewhere on how their national mentors provided them with a “big-picture approach that junior faculty often struggle to find and may be unable to obtain reliably or safely by someone at their own institution” (Ruppar & Szanton, 2017, p. 324). The importance of challenging the mentee and professional guidance may be more developmentally meaningful when the focus is less on learning research basics and more on weaving all of that learning into an innovative program of research.

Some suggestions were made about how the quality of the mentoring might have been further improved. The recommendations included identifying “master mentors” and being more prescriptive about the format and content of interactions with the national mentor which is in keeping with ongoing attempts to prepare mentors for their role and to list the competencies that mentors should possess (Byrne, Topping, Kendall, & Golding, 2014; Halvorson et al., 2015; Huybrecht, Loeckx, Quaeysaegens, De Tobel, & Mistiaen, 2011). Good mentoring can be learned (Sood, Tigges, & Helitzer, 2016), but most mentors are selected as a result of limited information and choices, with word-of-mouth reputation counting as the most influential factor. While this program proactively tried to promote good mentoring and certainly proceeded in the belief that more needs to be done to encourage effective mentoring, the reality is that there will always be some mismatches that result in the mentee only learning what not to do. What may be most comforting about the findings of this study is that exposure to several different mentors limited the adverse consequences of a lone mentor not working out and resulted in new insights about mentoring to all respondents.

Limitations

More than half of the scholars did not fill out the survey, so interpretative caution is in order because of the limited response. One has to wonder if those who chose not to respond had an appreciably different experience, though that seems unlikely given some of the other positive evaluations of the program. In this study, the Mentoring Effectiveness Questionnaire served as a heuristic device for focusing the scholars' attention on desirable qualities, but the instrument does not focus on

the specific competencies associated in recent years with effective mentoring (Fleming et al., 2013). Moreover, the emphasis on desirable qualities ignored what some have called the darker side of the mentoring relationship when a mentor is neglectful, fosters dependency, and/or is jealous of the mentee's achievements (Green & Jackson, 2014).

Conclusions

Despite the limitations of this effort, this study confirms the value of junior faculty building a mentoring network rather than relying on one advisor to help them achieve all of the research, teaching and service goals of that developmental period. Interdisciplinary and inter-university connections can be facilitated by linking junior nursing faculty with inter-professional colleagues associated with existing research centers at the home university and with other nursing faculty perhaps via the regional nursing research society (e.g., Midwest Nursing Research Society, Western Institute of Nursing, Southern Nursing Research Society, and Eastern Nursing Research Society). Interested emeritus faculty might also be involved in the development of mentoring networks.

Since mentoring can take many forms—formal, informal, peer—and even involve contact with the mentors of other colleagues, the model proposed by this study is one whereby mentoring can morph into networking and networking can yield additional life coaches. This view is inherently heartening because it gets away from the dated view that the mentor who recommends that you go and talk to someone else is inadequate because she or he doesn't know everything, and encourages a more collegial approach.

Effective mentoring does seem to beget effective mentoring because the interactions with mentors seemed to leave a lasting impression and the perceived obligation to “pay it forward.” But ineffective mentoring does exist and can prove useful if the recipient sees it as a learning experience. Faculty are regularly expected to serve as mentors to students and junior faculty, because the assumption is made that successful individuals can help others to be successful, but that isn't necessarily the case. Pololi et al. (2015) studied faculty at 26 academic health centers and found that 43% of the 2178 respondents had inadequate mentoring, which had a direct effect on whether they left their institution. What is emerging is the notion that effective mentoring can be facilitated by some combination of clear expectations, agreement regarding roles and responsibilities, use of an individual development plan, regular communication between mentor and mentee, and faculty-development workshops (Brody et al., 2016; Bruner, Dunbar, Higgins, & Martyn, 2016). Reflection about the experience by mentors and mentees alike in journals or interest groups is another way of facilitating learning.

Faculty development is important to every nursing program because it promotes job satisfaction and academic productivity (Hulton, Sawin, Trimm, Graham, & Powell, 2016; Shollen, Bland, Center, Finstad, & Taylor, 2014; Wang & Liesveld, 2015) and can lead to a continuing cycle of positive reinforcement—an investment is made in faculty which helps individuals to be prolific and successful and those outcomes presumably lead those individuals to feel appreciated and want to do the same for others. There is a shortage of nursing faculty and schools regularly have difficulties with recruitment of qualified individuals, and it may be comforting to know that an investment in mentoring can not only lead to the desired faculty achievements, but also to the development of more effective student and faculty mentors in the future. Resources invested in mentoring may truly become the investment that keeps on giving.

Declarations of interest

None.

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Box 1 Biggest effect of mentoring on scholars.

Power/importance of mentoring

- I think the most considerable influence the mentoring had on my own mentoring practices was reiterating the importance of mentoring relationships, structuring the relationship, and the power of these relationships
- I felt encouraged – maybe some way; somehow- I could be the change. I am still persisting and hoping to “pay this all forward” It changed my viewpoint ultimately changed despair to hope
- The other thing that had the biggest effect on me was seeing how the National leaders who were a part of the RWJF NFS leadership always had time to answer our questions and give us advice, no matter how busy and how famous they became. This really made an impression on me and taught me that paying it forward is very important throughout my career
- Through my own effective mentoring by my primary and research mentors, I began to feel empowered to offer that sort of experience to others
- It made me aware that having a more structured mentoring process is much more beneficial than just meeting whenever the mentee or mentor feels like it
- The example of mentoring really demonstrated to me the intensity required to really make a difference in the career of another
- It definitely reminds me just how important it is to have a mentor you can trust and who believes in you and sees something in you, even when/if you can't see it yourself. This inspires me to do the same for students and junior faculty coming up behind me and to be on the lookout for opportunities to provide others with the kind of support I've had
- It helped me see the impact I can have on future scholars
- One of the national mentors (not my own) had a strong impact on me through what I perceived to be *negative* behavior that I would never want to emulate.

Characteristics of good mentoring

- Helping me to see what was holding me back
- The availability and support of my mentor
- Her modeling inspired me to be ethical, candid, encouraging, transparent, confidential and supportive to my mentees
- It made me more aware of different ways of mentoring and the way people think. It also made me think more about how to be encouraging
- ... taught me to deliver feedback in a positive way while maintaining encouragement
- My mentors helped me to prioritize time and energy for what would advance my career and the discipline
- I was able to learn from the mentor-mentee experiences of my peers which were different culturally than what I had. I approach my students from diverse backgrounds with an extra measure of honor because of activities I did within the RWJF NFS program. Honestly, I think expanding that awareness has had the biggest effect on my mentoring- specific tasks designed for reflection on mentoring have made me more sensitive to how effective or ineffective I am as I mentor others
- I learned several very important lessons from her. 1) Mentoring sometimes comes in the form of simply listening and being

present. 2) Mentoring includes putting your mentee's name in the hat for new opportunities and requiring your mentee to stretch outside her comfort zone. 3) Mentoring doesn't have to take over your life

- Through formal and informal interactions with these faculty leaders, I gleaned mentorship techniques and qualities. I believe the best way to mentor is through example
- My mentors were each excellent in their own ways, but recognizing the areas where one was not as strong or was lacking was particularly instructive. Sometimes you can't see a mentor's missing quality until you see it in another mentor
- More mindful about creating networking and expanding mentoring opportunities for my mentees by introducing them to my colleagues; I am also connecting my mentees with my mentors
- Having a national mentor...makes me think how to help my mentees network in the profession and advance their career development

Box 2 Additional thoughts.

Mentoring doesn't come from just one person

- My relationship with my primary mentor turned...Thankfully, I had an excellent national mentor who has modeled fabulous mentorship to me
- It is important to remember and to tell mentees that one mentor can't cover all areas and should not try
- I rarely perceived that my mentors thought they had all the right answers or solutions or advice...I frequently perceived that they were as open to learning as I was in the relationship, that they had my back, and that they would work with me to arrive at the best solutions...My mentoring felt like team work, not a hierarchical relationship...I try to emulate that as I mentor others
- Recently... I met up with another RWJF scholar...He brought his post-doctoral fellow and I brought my PhD student. The four of us had a very nice discussion and I found that our RWJF NFS networks are being reproduced as we facilitate networks for others
- I think there is a danger that we think our students should have one primary mentor and that they ought not to extend beyond that boundary...In some ways the RWJF NFS experience has loosened my grip on my students; I'm more interested that they get what they need so they can do great work than building my own fiefdom.
- In addition to the official NFS mentoring, peer interaction served as a great way to learn from others and improve myself

Diversity is important

- I try to be more conscious of other people's ways of processing information and that it might be very different from my own, so the needs of me as a mentor are different based on these differences that I learn/perceive regarding my mentees
- I had one negative experience with a mentor...This lesson taught me how important it is to focus on the mentee with whom I am working, and to really target any suggestions to that person
- My mentoring from my research and national mentors was fairly hands-off, so I've attempted to assess my mentee's needs and style to assess the degree to which I should push
- I am more deeply committed to supporting the diversification of the student and faculty bodies

Further model development is needed

- While I value my experience in the NFS program GREATLY, I mostly learned from negative examples. Nevertheless, those were helpful in helping me sort out my own approach and understanding through a mentee's eyes the mentoring experience. I wonder about a model in which "master mentors" were identified by RWJF and tasked with a group mentoring model
- My national mentor seemed to be available when I truly needed her, but only if I contacted her with a problem. We were never able to connect otherwise. I would recommend that future programs have a plan for the national mentor and the program participant to connect at minimum every 2–3 months along with some recommended discussion points (e.g., synthesizing research/service/teaching, maintaining research productivity, etc.).

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