Mentoring Students

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Background

- Ph.D. in 1981 from Florida State University
- 2 years in industry, 1 year at research lab
- 20 years teaching at university level
- Chair of department
- Research: assistive technologies for persons with visual disabilities

Source for Talk

ADVISER, TEACHER, ROLE MODEL, FRIEND
ON BEING A MENTOR TO STUDENTS IN SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

NATIONAL ACADEMY PRESS, Washington, D.C. 1997

Why

- Main goal of a mentoring relationship: to advance the educational and personal growth of the student.

- Benefits to you, the mentor:
  - Can be a very satisfying part of academics
  - Can be fun
  - Can lead to lifelong relationships

► http://www.nap.edu/readingroom/books/mentor
Your Mentors

Think about mentors you have had.

What made this person feel like a mentor, rather than a friend or teacher, to you?

What

- Mentoring is about relationships.
  - Takes time to develop
  - Can’t be a good mentor to every student
  - Two-way street

As a Personal Relationship

- Get to know students beyond their academic performance and interests
- Let students get to know you as a person, beyond just Computer Science
- Should not try to be a mother to your students
- Must not be their professional counselor

As a Professional Relationship

- Help students to make good and informed college decisions
- Discuss career options with students
- Help students make contacts for future work
How

► In Theory:
  ▪ Share technical expertise, wisdom, and life experiences with student
  ▪ Make effort to know and respect goals and interests of student
  ▪ Be a good listener
  ▪ Make effort to empathize with students

How (cont)

► In Practice:
  ▪ Interact with students outside of your office sometimes – e.g., coffee, seminar, walk across campus
  ▪ Touch base with students on a regular basis
  ▪ Give students some amount of dedicated time, where interruptions are minimized
  ▪ Give students information for them to make decisions, rather than deciding for them.

Other Practical Advice

Who to Mentor?

► Students who seek you out
► Advisees/students that you “click” with
► Students recruited to a research team

► How does being the only female faculty member come into play?
Watch Out For

► Amount of time you’re spending with your mentees – too much or too little?
► Distinction between friendship and favoritism
► When students need professional counseling
  ▪ Find out about counseling services, and other services, available at your school
  ▪ Ask directly if student is in immediate danger