

Beatriz Luna, PhD Mentoring Style

I have been mentoring graduate students since 2002 supporting their intellectual development and productivity to ensure a successful career. My overall mentoring approach is to engage mentees in a trajectory of exciting scientific discovery by engaging in high-level scientific discourse, respecting and having great appreciation for their unique perspectives and inquiries to support their research and professional goals. My mentoring begins when I interview candidates describing my work and the opportunities in my lab emphasizing that as someone who cares about supporting young scientists, they should think about what they are really passionate about regardless of their choosing my lab or another and that I will support their decision.

Once in the lab, I immediately engage them in what their scientific trajectory will be finding out what aspect of our vast areas of inquiry, they are interested in. I discuss the relevant scientific issues that are of importance to the field within the scope of my laboratory's area of research and encourage them to forge their own innovative path. I motivate them to instead of taking the safe next step in research, to fearlessly follow their own innovative ideas because this is what moves science forward. I tell them to think about our discussions and that I want to hear about the idea that made them excited but they thought may be too risky, and that is the one that will inform their research project. It is crucial that they construct their unique scientific line of inquiry and that they 'own' their projects. Importantly, I provide them with the resources to accomplish their goals and ensure that they achieve their aims at the highest standards, as evidenced by the great number of mentee publications in high impact journals. I am not a micromanager and give them my full confidence that they are pursuing their goals. As a result, my students work tirelessly, not because I am demanding this but because they are so enthusiastic and motivated to pursue their scientific goals.

I hold several platforms to engage my graduate student's growth. I hold Monday research update meetings to review what was accomplished the previous week and the aims for the following week identifying areas where they need specific support. In addition, my mentees attend weekly Lab Meetings with the whole lab including research assistants, faculty, postdocs and the lab manager. Here, we review the subject testing in the past week and everyone in the lab is encouraged to think together to solve problems and support optimal research. Once graduate students are in their last year, they will lead some of these meetings, so they can have the experience of leading a lab. Finally, we hold weekly Journal Meetings, where mentees take turns presenting their work, present an impactful research article that is relevant to their research, or invite an outside speaker. I ensure that the discussion is respectful, productive, and motivating. Journal Meetings helps them develop productive discussion skills, expertise in all the lab projects, and importantly, supports collaborative work between mentees evidenced by our publications which typically include more than one student. I particularly enjoy when I find out that students have been talking to each other on their own and have come up with a new project, are helping each other with new analyses approaches, or informing their project based on the others findings. When unique research questions emerge, I organize a 'think

tank' meeting with the relevant grad student(s) inviting experts in the field to come to the lab and together obtain a new understanding on scientific mechanisms and approaches.

I also hold monthly scientific discovery and professional development one-on-one discussions with each mentee where I engage them as colleagues to discuss the conceptual implications of their research and next steps, as well as planning their professional trajectory. I plan with each student the next steps in their professional development early on to ensure post-degree employment as evidenced by the exceptional trajectories of my mentees. These meetings are critical in my schedule regardless of my own large number of responsibilities. We also engage in discussions as needed throughout the day using the lab's instant messaging (Slack) and they all have my cell phone number for any support that they may need. I also support my graduate students presenting their work in related conferences as reflected in the large number of conference presentations they have given.

During the pandemic, these meetings were continued through zoom. I also established a daily morning check-in through slack by having each person set a theme (e.g., rainy day, robots, dogs with clothes) that all had to upload a gif in response. This provided a fun way to make sure everyone felt involved and accounted for. We have started coming back into the lab a few days a week and it has been very well received by all. We have been having our think-tank meetings with individual students to put the 'pieces together' of their project supporting their publication or the completion of their milestones. Our white boards are again filled with our new ideas and our collaborative solutions. Our last journal meeting was highly intellectually motivating for all and fun as some mentees returned to bringing baked goods.

I promote my mentees by introducing them to other leaders in the field at conferences or when investigators visit the lab. When I give talks (1-3/month), I always include the photo, name, and rank of each graduate students' respective work that I am presenting giving them full credit for their work. I also provide letters of support for awards and grants during and after their tenure with me. Because of their productivity and visibility, my mentees are highly sought after with a range of options to ensure best fit and success. In fact, many of my colleagues are waiting for my students to graduate and competing to invite them to do postdoctoral work including prestigious institutions (e.g., Berkeley, Stanford, U Penn). My mentoring continues after mentees leave the laboratory providing advice on their continuing research efforts and important career decisions beyond providing letters of recommendation, to personal discussions on best next steps. Finally, I have also supported them in times of special needs including supporting them in times of personal hardship, successfully encouraging and assisting one mentee obtain US citizenship, and rescuing a previous research assistant from a failed experience in a lab to obtain his PhD in my lab. In 2010 I was awarded the Department of Psychiatry Emerging Mentor Award. I was humbled when I was surprised by quotes from my mentees on how much I had impacted their trajectories.

I always point out that one of the favorite tasks in my career is the mentoring of young scientists and playing a role in their intellectual growth. The relationships with my

graduate students are one of trust, respect, and friendship where we have fun together in scientific discovery. There is deep scientific discussion but also humor and levity supporting an atmosphere of inclusion and harmony. We often refer to the lab as a family and we keep in touch throughout.

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