

# Cultivating Mentors, Workshop A: Action Plan

**Goal**

**Action Steps**

**Resources**

**Progress Check**

**Date:**

## Actionable Practices

### Practice Positive Feedback

- Remember that mentorship and education are about supporting a person in their development and not just developing the work itself.
- Do not underestimate the importance of positive feedback. Critical feedback is better digested when given with positive feedback as well. We need to focus on what we want to grow as well as what we need to fix. Be specific. Vague compliments like “good job” or “nice work” won’t stick as much as criticism. Start by finding specific details or elements that DO work.
- Be concrete with critical feedback.
  - Consider framing or couching critical feedback in relationship to a person’s strengths. (“I want your \_\_\_\_\_ to be as strong as your \_\_\_\_\_.” Or “You have a real knack for \_\_\_\_\_, which will be better supported if we improve your \_\_\_\_\_.” Or “\_\_\_\_\_ is really working well. So now let’s focus on \_\_\_\_\_.”)
  - Offer some tangible ideas in how to engage a problem area. (If a student needs to know the literature better...where should they start? If their writing is unclear, could you mark specific passages and offer suggestions?)

### Know Your Power and Your Own Blindspots

- Take inventory of your power and privilege.
  - Recognize the lived experience you do not have and know that in those identities, you are not an expert. Trust the expertise of the person who has a lifetime of experience living in their social location.
  - If you receive feedback that points out a blindspot, this is a gift given at a risk and cost to the giver. Accept it with humility. Breathe. Soften defenses. Apologize. Resolve to educate yourself and do better.

### Leverage Intrinsic Motivation

- An important role for a mentor is to leverage a mentee’s intrinsic motivation.
- The Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching, and Learning delineates 4 pillars of deep learning and intrinsic motivation:
  - *Competence* - give students/mentees tasks that are appropriate challenges (this requires knowing where they are as a whole person)
  - *Autonomy* – give them choice (balanced with guidance and direction in making and following through with choices)
  - *Purpose* – keep them connected to a bigger sense of why this is important, to bigger ideas and trends
  - *Community* – give them opportunities to share what they’re working on with others, connect their interests and work to additional resources—including humans.

### Foster a Sense of Belonging

- Research shows that local culture affects publication and retention rates for URM students in particular. If we are handling the above 3 takeaway points, we are well on our way to creating a culture of belonging for these students.