Embedding peer mentors as a strategy to scale high-impact practices, support guided pathways, and promote equity
Becky Wai-Ling Packard, Mount Holyoke College

Agenda

1. Scenario discussion

2. Sources and types of peer mentors
   Goal
   Infrastructure

3. Contribution to and location within HIPS, guided pathways

4. Equity and inclusion considerations
   Selection, recruitment, preparation

5. Pitfalls to avoid and strategies to improve effectiveness
   Feasibility: scope, sourcing; placement of investment
   Legitimacy, preparation, on-going support
   Relative investment in learners, mentors, faculty
   Assessment plan

6. Reflection and time to gain feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concern/Barrier</th>
<th>Strategies to Overcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This article recommends that professors combine high standards with an explicit communication of belief in the student to achieve a higher standard when giving critical feedback. This reduces ambiguity regarding the intent of critical feedback particularly within a cross-race interaction.

Peers can provide positive buffering to identity and belongingness even in situations where the field itself (and professionals within them) are less diverse.

This book synthesizes research to include formal program design, peer mentoring strategies, and inclusive climate in departments. Includes conversation starters for difficult mentoring conversations with students and among colleagues.

If peer mentors are not validated by their faculty and trained for their role, they may be perceived as less credible and have a negative experience in that role.

Proposes attributes, objectives, and metrics for improving and assessing mentoring, to include research, interpersonal, and career attributes.

*Explains inclusive pedagogy training of peer mentors and initial data on outcomes. Curriculum at: https://sites.google.com/mtholyoke.edu/mage-training-curriculum*


*Supplemental instruction by peers is more effective than tutoring in many contexts because the approach normalizes and integrates academic support in a pro-active, targeted manner.*


*Documents what researchers call “comfort feedback” or the false reassurance that certain students (such as women in math) do not need to worry about poor skill development or performance. Well-intentioned mentors and instructors may undermine student persistence with this type of feedback.*


*A good piece to raise policy questions at the institutional level for supporting mentoring of students in equitable and effective ways.*


*Highlights the importance of how an influential peer mentoring message is crafted. Help-seeking is improved when first-generation (and continuing-generation) panelists connect the advice provided to their own experience.*


*Many peer mentoring initiatives include a training course to prepare peer mentors effectively, and the peer mentors also grow and thrive from their participation.*


*Explains the LA-STEM program and how the peer mentoring operates effectively. In the LA-STEM program, they have a pathway to recruit underperforming students after their first year of courses, and they enlist multiple forms and sources of mentoring.*