

The IUPUI high-impact practice taxonomies support instructors in the iterative development and improvement of courses that engage students in active learning.

Download all of the taxonomies at [scholarworks.iupui.edu/handle/1805/21503](https://scholarworks.iupui.edu/handle/1805/21503)

#### ABOUT PEER MENTORING

Peer mentors are a community of current undergraduate students who possess strong interpersonal and group skills and a willingness to serve a diverse group of students. All mentors receive specific training from their program area, enroll in mentor development course each semester they mentor and receive formative and summative evaluations of their work.

#### CONTACT INFORMATION

##### IUPUI Peer Mentoring

Andrea Engler, Ed.D.  
Executive Director of  
Student Transitions and  
Mentor Initiatives  
-----  
[aengler@iupui.edu](mailto:aengler@iupui.edu)

Mark Minglin  
Executive Director of  
Academic Success  
Programs  
-----  
[mminglin@iupui.edu](mailto:mminglin@iupui.edu)

February 19, 2018

# Peer Mentoring

## IUPUI HIGH-IMPACT PRACTICE TAXONOMY

---

### Description

This taxonomy outlines the knowledge, skills, and techniques used during the stages of a successful mentoring relationship from beginning to end. This taxonomy lays out the process for an effective learning and mentoring relationship specifically in higher education. This taxonomy draws upon appreciative and strength-based learning theory as well as mentoring and coaching literature. The taxonomy describes five stages in detail necessary to support and challenge the student to develop self-efficacy and success. Specifically, the taxonomy is a guide to support student development, growth, to gain new perspectives, enhance skills, self-responsibility and self-regulation.

### Purpose

This taxonomy seeks to provide a clear guideline and holistic mentoring approach for peer mentors to utilize in their interactions with their students.

1. To guide the mentoring relationship through the stages
2. To apply the appropriate skills and strategies when mentoring
3. To guide mentoring conversations and progress of the mentoring relationship
4. To ensure a successful and impactful mentoring relationship

### Definitions

**Peer Mentoring:** “First, [mentoring] is an intentional process of interaction between at least two individuals. . . . Second, mentoring is a nurturing process that fosters the growth and development of the protégé. . . . Third, mentoring is an insightful process in which the wisdom of the mentor is acquired and applied by the protégé. . . . Fourth, mentoring is a supportive, often protective process. The mentor can serve as an important guide or reality checker in introducing the protégé to the environment he or she is preparing for. Finally... an essential component as a mentor is role modeling” (Shandley, 1989, p. 60).

**Appreciative Mentoring:** The intentional approach by the mentor to create transformative change through a positive frame of guiding and building up the individual's strengths to create goals, actionable plans, and sustainable learning (Engler, 2017).

**Strength-based Learning:** Strengths-based learning helps students to identify their greatest talents, and to then develop and apply strengths based on those talents in the process of learning, intellectual development, and academic achievement to levels of personal excellence (Anderson, 2004).

### Suggested Citation

IUPUI Mentor Development Committee (2017). Peer Mentoring Taxonomy. Retrieved from <https://scholarworks.iupui.edu/handle/1805/21503>.

## Levels of Impact

ATTRIBUTE	HIGH IMPACT	HIGHER IMPACT	HIGHEST IMPACT
<p><b>Rapport Building:</b> Plan and prepare yourself mentally and emotionally for the interaction and meeting you will be having with your students. Have a plan for beginning the conversation and telling them why you are meeting with them. During the beginning of each meeting, set the stage for how you can be of help to your student. Get to know them as individuals and strive to create common ground in which you can connect and build a relationship. Strive to move the conversation beyond transactional (hi, how are you? I am fine, and more towards an interaction/dialogue that feels more like a conversation than a monologue and transaction.</p>	<p>Connect with students through conversation by devoting ample time to get to know them, asking follow up and clarifying questions, show empathy for the student's experience</p> <p>Establish boundaries/ground rules and confidentiality by discussing expectations for the mentoring relationship.</p> <p>Build trust in the relationship by suspending judgement, acknowledging emotion, and practicing authentic communication.</p>	<p>Be intentional and take time to establish the necessary groundwork of trust, identify areas of mutual interest and commonalities, minimize interruptions, and set the stage for open, honest, and authentic conversation. Seek to understand your student's motivations. Establish agreements that frame the work of your mentoring relationship. Strive to move the conversation beyond transactional and more towards an interaction (conversation).</p>	<p>In addition to high and higher levels of rapport, hold unconditional and positive regard for your students; maintain a humble demeanor, and champion the student's progress.</p>
<p><b>Identifying Areas of Growth:</b> During this stage of the relationship and conversation, you are intently listening (pay attention), questioning, and clarifying with the student about areas they might need to work on, develop new perceptions about, practice new skills, incorporate into their routine, and seek additional assistance. Acknowledge their feelings. Do not take their responses at face value, seek more information, and rely on your rapport to move the conversation along. During difficult times, "go fishing," ask specifically about a time when. Ask them to describe how they approached something, ask them to share what has surprised them about college so far....Ask them to describe how they are feeling/doing/what they are thinking about the community and the people they have encountered so far. Connect the dots for them like creating a concept map. What area(s) does the student need to be challenged/encouraged? If you receive a non-committal response, try something else or chunk it together differently, or choose another topic.</p>	<p>Create a learning environment in which students can explore and express possible learning opportunities by asking relevant questions, actively listening and providing feedback.</p>	<p>Ask clear, specific, open, and relevant questions that tap into the student's unique experience while being sensitive to their feelings and comfort level. Seek deeper insights, clarify, make connections from the information provided by the student, and reflect through dialogue opportunities for growth. Encourage the student not to exaggerate, generalize or catastrophize as the mentor guides the student towards commitment to explore/develop alternate pathways.</p>	<p>Clarify your understanding and validate important insights, feelings, and needs that demonstrate active listening.</p> <p>Role w/ resistance/ambivalence to change (staying the same) or committing to an area of growth.</p> <p>Ensure that the student is choosing the element to carry out and commits to the area of learning and/or change. Make observations not evaluations to gauge their commitment.</p>

**Goal Setting:** Once you have enough information in the “Identifying Areas of Growth” stage and have received a level of commitment to work on a particular area(s), you can approach setting a goal with your student. Your job is to serve as a guide in this stage. Begin with starter goals – something simple, preliminary, would be a good start. Ask your student to help develop the idea of what the goal might look/sound like. Write down the idea. Keep checking it to be sure you have it right. Be sure that they are buying in. It is the student who has to do the work to move forward and grow (so they need to be on board). Once the starter goal is identified, then start building on it to make it more specific and real. Do not forget to help assess how realistic the goal is. Measure the importance of their goals and methods of accountability for their goal achievement. Help the student to keep track of their growth and progress overtime. Do not forget to supply a whole lot of encouragement.

Explore students’ level of confidence, motivations and aspirations.

Mentor helps the student to create 2-4 SMART - clearly stated learning goals beginning with starter- then specific and eventually stretch goals.

Negotiate goals and work through the analysis of their relevance.

Periodically reflect on goals to ensure relevance to mentee.

Determine success criteria through negotiation, laying out objectives, prioritizing the skills needed to learn them, potential resources, and a target date for completion.

Praise students for their efforts and focus on the positive changes.

**Facilitating Awareness and Growth of the Student:**

A great time to check in, revisit the goal(s) you set at the previous meeting. Explore what and why these have been successful for the student (what have they learned?) what are their insights? Ask about what they are doing different this week that is helping them be successful and identify things that they might need to change. Share praise. Provide feedback about their learning/effort, ask challenging questions, and provide your student a healthy dose of encouragement. Tell your students things that you have observed about their growth (or lack thereof), share observations (not evaluations) about your students work/interactions in class and how they are doing in their mentoring meetings.

Maintain a climate of engagement and common expectation of the mentoring relationship.

Ask challenging questions while providing thoughtful, candid, and constructive feedback.

Keep focused on achieving the determined learning goals, not just day-to-day challenges.

Periodically reflect on the learning.

Ask questions to stimulate discussion about your student’s motivation and aspirations.

Help your student to identify assignments, challenges, and tasks that push them out of their comfort zone, and areas where they need to gain confidence and competence as it relates to the learning goal.

Ask “why” questions for each potential area of growth.

Manage stumbling blocks - pay attention to your hunches, intuition, and feelings.

Provide positive and constructive feedback.

Strike a balance between over-praising and under-praising according to the student’s needs, so that praise is not empty to avoid lacking changing and growth.

**Closure of the Learning Session & Evaluation of Learning:** How do you want to leave things with this student? Where does the student still need a push? Do they need a new goal? How can you describe for them “how far they have come?” What can you do to help the student plan for a successful conclusion to their semester and plan for the next semester? Ask about their perceptions. Determine what you want to share with the student and how to finish on a high note. Give your student a push and help them to be on their way.

Plan for closure of the relationship

- Revisit Purpose
- Plan scenarios for closure
- Establish process for acknowledging the time for closure

Structure the closing conversation

Focus on the application of learning with the student

Mentor reflects on what was learned from the mentor/mentee relationship in an appreciative style (Evaluates own performance)

Mentor celebrates the learning of the relationship

Mentor applies what they have learned through the mentor/mentee relationship for growth and development as a mentor.

## References

- Anderson, E. C. (2004). What is strengths-based education? A tentative answer by someone who strives to be a strength-based educator? <http://strengths.uark.edu/documents/what-is-strengths-based-education.pdf>
- Barkley, E. F., Cross, K. P., & Major, C. H. (2014). Collaborative learning techniques: A handbook for college faculty. John Wiley & Sons.
- Daloz, L. A. (2012). Mentor: Guiding the Journey of Adult Learners (with New Foreword, Introduction, and Afterword). John Wiley & Sons.
- Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis (2017). UCOL U-202 Mentoring: Appreciative mentoring for student learning course syllabus. Indianapolis, IN: Engler, A.
- Mezirow, J., & Taylor, E. W. (Eds.). (2011). Transformative learning in practice: Insights from community, workplace, and higher education. John Wiley & Sons.
- Shandley, T. C. (1989). The use of mentors for leadership development. *NASPA Journal*, 27(1), 59–66.
- Zachary, L. J. (2000). The mentor's guide: Facilitating effective learning relationships. John Wiley & Sons.
- Zachary, L. J., & Fischler, L. A. (2014). Starting Strong: A Mentoring Fable. John Wiley & Sons.