



Mentoring and Career Development: What's the Relationship?

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Development of a Research Career

Nature vs Nurture?

Early career researcher:

If they're any good, they'll attract their own funding

Mid career researcher:

If they were going anywhere, they would have arrived by now

Late career researcher:

Research – well everyone knows it's a young persons game...



Developing the Individual The Early Career Researcher

- **Great supervisors may not be the best mentors**
- **An organisational approach to ECR development works better than relying on individuals**
- **Support travel, awards, any activity which supports a discipline profile, ticking boxes ‘away from the research project/bench’,**
- **Provide support and avoid the ‘conflicts of interest’**

Mentorship

- **Part 'core business'**
- **Part 'intuitive listening'**
- **Always confidential**

Role of the Mentor Core Business

- **Outcomes focussed: Papers, papers, papers..**
- **Opportunity focussed: Awards, awards, awards...**
- **Mix of Realism and Aspiration : ‘Be prepared to compete – often’**
- **Generosity: Enhancing connections- developing the network – canny collaborations...invitations to speak**
- **‘Unsympathetic’ – when required!**

Identifying the Gaps

State Profile: Advisory / government / committee / industry roles

National Profile in Discipline:

Professional society - executive role/program committee/ conference organisation

Research Councils and Panels - membership/Chair

National Steering/Advisory Committees

Did you get asked back??

International Profile:

Impact of published work- is it optimal?

Invitations to speak on the international stage

Does anyone know you?

The hard yards.....

Helpful Questions- Identifying the Gaps

Do you talk about your research to colleagues?

Do colleagues talk about you as a leading researcher?

Are you engaged in busy work – always on the committee- rarely a Chair?

Is there recognition that you speak with authority, credibility and judgement ?

The Mentor: Helping Recognise 'The Plateau' in Time

- **Salary and grant income consistently earned by a 'senior' colleague**
- **Doing a mix of 'sound' and 'good' work**
- **Lots of publications – not senior author**
- **Gradual acceptance of senior 'support' role in a research team led by an acknowledged leader**
- **Life is busy – writing at night or travel overseas is tough**



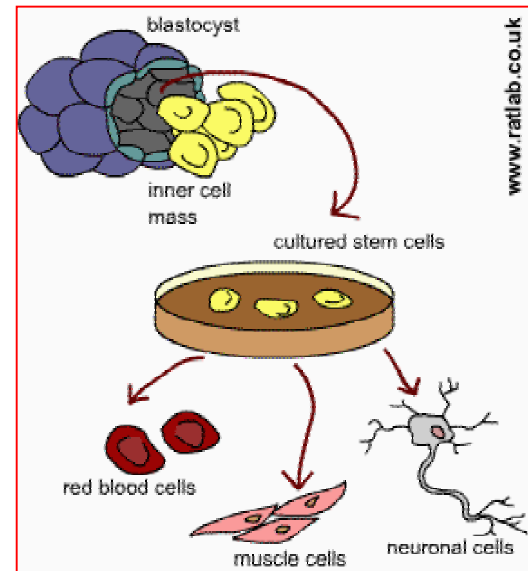
Mentor – Overcoming Plateau Issues ?

- **Salary earned by senior colleague, but building small or larger grant base**
- **Working across projects – ownership established of a line of work**
- **Good ratio of senior:coauthored work – high ranking journals**
- **Included in ‘initiating’ discussions- recognition as a ‘peer’**
- **Life is busy – but careers have these intense phases**



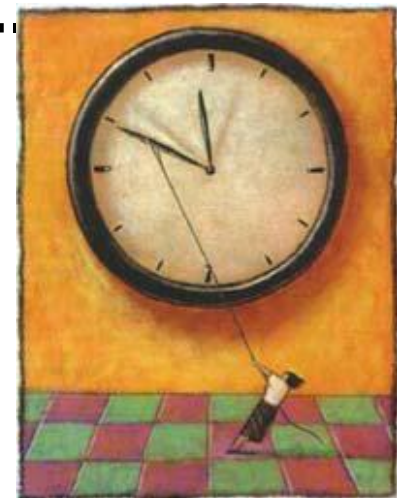
Early Career Academic?

- Teaching specialist
- Teaching and research specialist
- Research specialist



Research *and* Teaching Unhelpful Myths?

- Teaching is a 'load' which distracts from 'research time'
- It is important to 'count' research hours
- Avoid all additional 'responsibilities'....



Developing the Culture Track Records and Reality Checks

ECR: Maintaining an overview of 'critical windows' for fellowships 1-2 years ahead of time.

Mid Career:

- **Tailoring the plan- not a criticism of the past, optimism for the future**
- **The pragmatism of collaboration and copublication**
- **Mapping out a plan to capture the coauthored papers**

**Late Career: A defining review /scholarly summary
– finishing careers on high notes**

Opportunities

- **Risk assessment of your 'research portfolio'- should be some managed 'high risk' but watch exposure**
- **Go to meetings – the importance of the introduction – talk 'up'**
- **Build your own network and travel**
- **Understand the relationships and dynasties in the field**
- **Take any opportunity to peer review and be peer reviewed**

Your Morale - Strategies for Coping

- **Parallel processing an art form**
- **Which activities/committees can you miss?**
- **Maintaining an effective support crew in the research office, lab etc**
- **Keeping in contact with your research community as an academic not an organisational leader**
- **Be wary about career plateaus- busy, useful – but limited creativity opportunities**
- **Where is your decompression chamber?**



Mentoring- The Focus

- **career advancement**
- **grantmanship**
- **publishing**
- **teaching**
- **enhancing professional visibility**
- **networking with other scientists and practitioners**
- **overcoming barriers to career success**