



Mentoring Disabled Students

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Basic Question

- Is there anything different about mentoring disabled students?



Zach
Lattin

Sangyun
Hahn



Lindsay
Yazzolino



Jessica
DeWitt



My Personal Background

- The Early Days (1943 - 1961)
 - I grew up in Berkeley, California as one of four children of deaf parents.
 - Both my parents had successful careers as teachers of the deaf at the California School for the Deaf.
- College and Grad School (1961 - 1971)
 - St. Mary's College of California (Math)
 - UC Berkeley (Math)
- Career in Computer Science (1971 - present)
 - University of Washington, Seattle



Background Continued

- Involvement in Deaf Community began 1980
 - American Sign Language courses (1980-81)
 - DBNet (1985)
 - Gallaudet University (1986)
 - MobileASL Project (2005 – present)
 - DHH Cyber Community (2007 – present)
- Involvement with Disabled Students began 1993
 - DO-IT Project (1994 - present)
 - ASL at University of Washington (2005-present)
- Involvement with Blind Students began 2002
 - Blind graduate student, Sangyun Hahn (2002-present)
 - Tactile Graphics Project (2003 - present)
 - WebInSight Project (2005 – present)



Vertical Mentoring Workshop for the Blind in STEM (2006)

- 45 Blind high school, college, graduate, and professionals including 6 Ph.D.s
- All speakers were blind
- All breakouts organized by blind participants
 - College students mentored high school students
 - Grad students and professionals mentored college students
- Technology was highlighted for accessibility



Academy for Advancing Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Computing (2007)

- 10 Deaf and hard of hearing students
 - Intro programming class (9 weeks)
 - Animation project – more than 130 hours
 - Visits with deaf and hard of hearing mentors
 - Research talks
 - Career building and mentoring
- Staff includes
 - Deaf program coordinator
 - Deaf TA
 - Deaf program assistant



National Federation of the Blind Youth Slam (2007)

- 200 blind youth and 40 blind mentors
- 4 days in early August 2007
- Computer Science Track
 - 15 blind high school students with 5 blind mentors
 - Build Instant Messaging Chatbots in C#
 - Learn about computer science



No Difference

- The role of the mentor is to help each student reach his or her potential in research.
- Each student is an individual having his or her own keys to success.
- It is usually best to try to fit a research project to the student, not the other way around.
- Challenge the student to be creative and not rely on the advisor for answers.
- Always be encouraging and recognize accomplishments.



Yes, Difference

- Do's
 - Check accessibility needs
 - Be inclusive in group meetings
 - Learn about the particular disability from the student and from others who have the disability.
 - This is actually not that simple because of confidentiality of medical information.
 - Recognize that you do have to change your behavior some with a disabled student
- Don't's
 - Don't pity
 - Don't overcompensate
 - Don't hide disappointment with poor performance



Policy

- National, or at least regional, programs to build up the pipeline are needed.
 - Large enough numbers do not exist at the institution level.
 - Mainstreaming of disabled students in the past 30 years has spread them thinly around the country
- Partnerships must be developed between adult organizations of disabled persons and these programs.
 - National Federation of the Blind
 - National Association of the Deaf



Mentoring Resources for Students with Disabilities

- DO-IT
 - <http://www.washington.edu/doit/>
- AAAS Entry Point
 - <http://ehrweb.aaas.org/entrypoint/>
- NFB National Center for Blind Youth in Science
 - <http://www.blindscience.org/ncbys/>



Organizations for Minorities

- National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE)
 - <http://national.nsbe.org/>
- Society for Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS)
 - <http://www.sacnas.org/>
- Tapia Conference
 - <http://www.richardtapia.org/2007/>