

Ideas for work based mentor activities



Lunch

Take your student out to lunch. Establish from the beginning that this will be an adventure for both of you. Decide on a dining experience that might be a new experience for your student. Use every aspect of the meal as a teaching tool. This is a great opportunity to try new foods. Encourage your student to try one thing new on the menu. Find something that they like, and encourage them to try a variation of it. Read through the menu together and explain unfamiliar terms—demonstrate the appropriate manner in which to question the waiter on various things. If you are at a fancy restaurant whose place settings consist of multiple utensils, use this as an opportunity to inform the student of the time and purpose of each. If you don't know, this is a great chance to ask the waiter to give you a tutorial. Create a learning experience!



Conference call/meeting

Allow your student sit in on a conference call/meeting with you. Think of some of the terms and ideas you will be using, and have your student write those terms down. Their assignment during the meeting is to listen for those terms/concepts and to take notes to try and deduce from the conversation what those terms mean. This is a great opportunity for a ten-minute follow up conversation between the two of you to discuss what actually happened. Even if the student doesn't fully understand what is happening in the meeting, you are giving them the opportunity to practice their deductive reasoning skills, as well as a chance for them to observe appropriate behavior in a meeting.

There are several possible variations on this activity. Have the student sit in on another meeting and give them the assignment of observing and taking notes on how people interact with each other. Take notes on body language, communication styles, etc. and follow up with a debriefing after the meeting to discuss your collective observations.



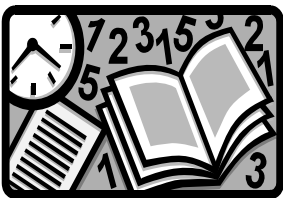
Office Tour

Take your student on an office tour. This may seem to be an obvious activity, but make it into a learning experience. Talk with your student before the tour and discuss what you want to model/practice on the tour. For example, one objective might be to practice the proper way to introduce new people in the office environment to one another. Practice a good handshake, a confident self-introduction, and good eye-contact. When you introduce the student to a colleague or superior, model the behavior of the conversation: (e.g. “John President, (use first and last name of boss) this is Sally Student (use first and last name of student), Sally Student, this is John President. John is my boss. etc” Student should be encouraged to respond with something like, “It’s nice to meet you, thank you for allowing me to work here this summer”.

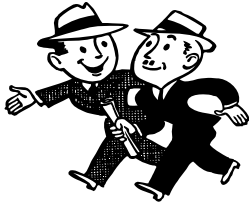
The tour gives a chance for students to practice adult conversation with people they do not know. The great part of being a mentor in this situation, is that you can help if conversation lags by modeling small talk. It sounds silly, but these are important interpersonal skills to master in a work environment.

Lastly, if your office has interesting art or architectural features, you can use this tour to discuss these items, or if you don’t know what they are, enlist a more knowledgeable coworker to join you all on the tour!

Read a book together

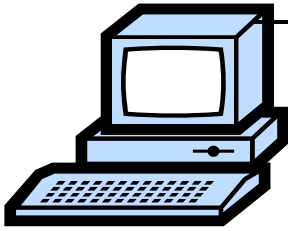


One of our early PFF mentors whose area of expertise was investments assigned a book on that topic to his student. They independently read a chapter or so a week, and spent some of their weekly time discussing the book. Find a book that you are interested in that might be appropriate for your student to read with you. Fiction and literature are good genres as they present good writing skills that are important in the workplace. Read a book together and talk about it. This activity re-enforces good reading habits in the workplace and may also project the importance to detail when doing so. In addition, it also fosters good discussion and communication skills



Go outside and take a walk

Prepare your student by setting the stage that the purpose of this walk is for you to hear about their dreams and the things they love. **LISTEN** to them, ask questions. Spend 20 minutes on a pretty day listening to your student. Feel free to share your career path and the things that you value.



Computer Training

Sign up to take a computer training class with your student if provided by your company. Learn something new with them and challenge each other throughout the summer to use what you have learned.



Read the Paper

During a session together, take the current day's paper and read an article or an editorial. You may want to allow the student to select an article they are interested in. Discuss the controversial or interesting items. Feel free to introduce them to individuals you may know who are involved in the news. If news occurs near your office, you may choose to visit that particular location or site (provided it is appropriate and positive). Make current events come alive.