
Career_Mentoring III – an intersectional approach to mentor young female* researchers

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Résumé

Mentoring is understood as a reciprocal relation characterized by appreciation and respect, to the success of which all involved actors – mentees, mentors, trainers, coaches, and program coordinators – contribute equally. The roots of mentoring lie in the need to address structural disadvantages and discrimination against women in their academic career planning and development. In this understanding, mentoring contributes to "social justice & diversity", aiming to make invisible barriers visible and surmountable.

It has been observed, that for some time the concept of intersectionality increasingly builds the theoretical background of gender equality measures like mentoring (Kimberlé W. Crenshaw, *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics*, 1989 U. Chi. Legal F. 139 (1989)). Affiliations such as gender, socioeconomic status, age, origin, etc., are considered in their mutual, overlapping influences and intersections. Disadvantages or dimensions of discrimination are not simply "added", but the underlying structural gaps are identified. This needs a precise analysis of the inequalities of an academic career and the power relations that play a role in it. Formularbeginn An academic career is highly demanding, and alongside scholarly qualifications, contextual factors such as access to networks, promoting relationships, or informally acquired knowledge play central roles. These accesses are unequally distributed, not only along the dimensions of gender, but also social background, gender diversity, age, origin, etc.

But how do we put this in the practice of mentoring? The practical implementation of intersectionality poses some challenges. There is a need to precisely evaluate who really should be supported by mentoring. And how to prevent perpetuating traditional, male dominated mechanisms of excellence. And finally, how to bring all this "down to earth" in designing and implementing a mentoring program. The talk will focus on this area of tension, on both, underlying theoretical conceptions and impacts on the practice of mentoring.

All of this is discussed using the example of Career_Mentoring III, a joint mentoring program of the Austrian universities Krems, Linz and Salzburg. There, an attempt was made to go a substantial step further from traditional mentoring schemes towards an intersectional perspective and practice by integrating the categories gender diversity and social background. The first assessments and results are now available and will be presented and discussed.

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