



The Joys and Benefits of Mentoring Legal Apprentices

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And please see our blog on legal apprenticeships – www.LikeLincoln.org

Nine months after taking on supervision of two legal apprentices, I have collected a list of reasons that mentoring apprentices can be a wonderful thing for an attorney to do. The reasons have revealed themselves to me over time, and some were even unexpected:

1. **Being Part of a Community:** Attorneys who mentor apprentices become part of a growing community of supervising attorneys and apprentices who are developing best practices, sharing resources, and figuring out this whole apprenticeship thing together.
2. **Improving Counseling Skills:** Teaching the law to apprentices will improve an attorney's skills in explaining complex legal topics, which will improve client counseling skills and an attorney's own understanding and retention of the law.
3. **Revisiting Basic Law Topics With New Eyes:** Teaching the law will help an attorney to revisit legal questions and topics that the attorney may have forgotten or begun to take for granted. As an added benefit, the attorney will revisit the material with the eyes of an experienced practitioner, which gives new context to the material.
4. **Diversifying Competencies:** Apprentices may bring new skills and/or cultural and linguistic competencies to an attorney's practice.
5. **Building Capacity to Serve Clients:** Cultivating particular areas of expertise in apprentices could have great benefit to the attorney's practice and allow the attorney to serve a greater number or more diverse group of clients.
6. **Finding Good Company:** An attorney will potentially enjoy the company of and will likely find joy in helping an apprentice to develop their skills and knowledge.
7. **Learning and Growing from Feedback:** Apprentices will be able to closely observe the work of the attorney, and the attorney will likely grow and mature in response to feedback and input offered by apprentices.
8. **A Good Conversation Starter:** Telling people that you mentor people who are becoming lawyers without going to law school is a great conversation topic to bring up at parties and at the dentist.
9. **Breaking New Ground and Doing Something Good For the Profession and the World:** Every attorney who supervises apprentices has the opportunity to break new ground in the methods and topics of legal education. On top of that, you have the satisfaction of knowing that you are training someone who will contribute their skills to the world, You get respect for being a bad-ass who is sticking it to the archaic and exclusive legal education system
10. **And Sometimes, It's Purely Wonderful:** For reasons that are hard to prove or explain, it's just fun and deeply satisfying to supervise apprentices.