

HARRY POTTER AND THE TOXIC MENTOR

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using muggle-born witches and wizards of Harry Potter to understand good, bad, and toxic mentorship of first-generation students

SORTING HAT

- Google “buzzfeed sorting hat”
- Take the quiz!
- Sit with your house

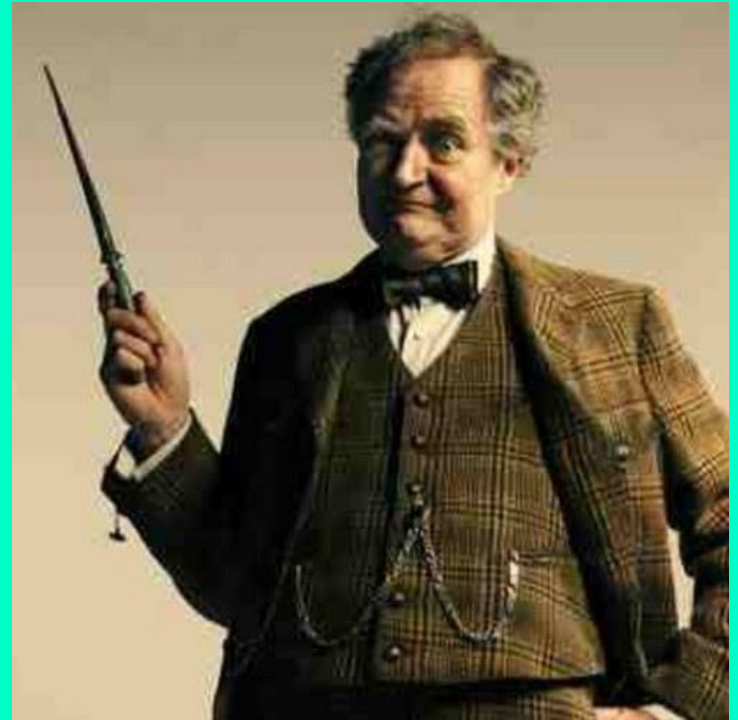
Google search results for "buzzfeed sorting hat". The search bar contains "buzzfeed sorting hat" and the search button is visible. Below the search bar, navigation tabs include "All", "Shopping", "News", "Videos", "Images", "More", "Settings", and "Tools". The search results show "About 494,000 results (0.37 seconds)". The first result is circled in black and is titled "This Sorting Quiz Will Tell You Which Hogwarts House ... - BuzzFeed" with the URL <https://www.buzzfeed.com/eleanorbate/accurate-af-sorting-quiz>. The snippet below the title reads: "Feb 2, 2017 - And finally: We know that the **Sorting Hat** takes into account your preferences. So which Hogwarts house do you feel you identify with most ... You visited this page on 5/23/19." Other results include "Sorting Hat - BuzzFeed" and "Answer These Moral Problems And The Sorting Hat Will ... - BuzzFeed".

FIRST GENS AND MUGGLE BORN: OUR LENS

- We define first-generation as those “whose parents have had no college or post secondary experiences” (Saenz & Barrera 1).
- The experience of Muggle-born students provides us a lens with which to examine mentorship from the viewpoint of the first-generation student.
 - Hermione Granger & Harry Potter



- Both Muggle-born & first-generation students:
 - Lack cultural fluency
 - Are vulnerable to potentially destructive mentorships
 - may find themselves overlooked when it comes to mentoring relationships due to subconscious (or even conscious) biases about their abilities



Professor Slughorn

MENTORSHIP



- A mentorship is, primarily, a *relationship*.
- A good mentor can be hard to define.
 - According to Cho et al., a good mentor has experience with the work and challenges that their mentees may face, has admirable personal traits (such as “enthusiasm, compassion, and selflessness”), and supports the personal/professional balance of their mentees (456-8).
- While a mentor might be good for one individual, any number of reasons-- such as personality, goals, etc.--might make them a bad mentor for another.
- Personal investment is mandatory in a good mentoring relationship; it is also part of what enables it to cross into toxic.
- One of the most salient features of mentorships between faculty and students is they typically involve a power differential.

GOOD MENTORSHIP

- McGonagall is, herself, a half-blood, born to a muggle father (Reverend Robert McGonagall) and a witch (Isobel Ross).
- Initiates mentoring relationships.
 - Quidditch
- Challenges, yet supports mentees; clearly communicates expectations.
 - Hermione & the Time Turner
- Support v. Favoritism
 - Largest single deduction of house points in the series from her own house.
- Emotional Investment



BAD MENTORSHIP

- Snape's primary modes of teaching/mentoring are based on intimidation and bullying; particularly ill-suited toward mentoring muggle-born students
 - born to a pure-blood witch and an abusive Muggle father, he was largely neglected by both parents
- Lack of healthy emotional investment
 - Love for Lily Potter; Hatred for James Potter
- Clearly favors more "traditional" wizarding students.



TOXIC MENTORSHIP

- Mentorships that are the most *destructive* share many qualities with the mentorships that are the most *productive*.
- Cultivates & nurtures emotional connections, but manipulates them.
- Asks mentees to do emotional labor for them.
- Abuse of power differentials
- Harry
 - Invisibility cloak, Slughorn's memory, Horcrux potion
- Hermione
 - Time-Turner
- Snape
 - Love for Lily
 - Asking him to Kill Dumbledore



APPLICATIONS TO FIRST-GEN STUDENTS

- First-generation students may not know how to find a mentor or recognize that a mentor is bad or toxic.
- If we want first-generation students to succeed, if we want to retain them through graduation, mentors have to recognize the unique challenges first-generation students face and how their lack of academic cultural fluency makes them particularly vulnerable.

- If a mentor has no experience as a first-generation student themselves, then institutions need to offer training and support so that mentors can be sensitive to first-generation experiences.

GROUP DISCUSSION

- On the following slides you will find 3 fictional scenarios involving a first-generation student & their mentor.
- After reading the scenario, discuss it with your group to determine whether you think the interaction suggests the mentor's behavior is:
 - Good
 - Bad
 - Toxic

SCENARIO 1

- Sarah is a newly enrolled graduate student at Abracadabra University. She is quiet and keeps to herself during class. Professor Robert notices that Sarah seems to be struggling.
- Professor Robert asks Sarah to stay after class where he learns about her first-generation status, her confusion about graduate school, and her interest in researching 18th C. Scottish Poetry, which is Professor Robert's specialty.
- Professor Robert suggests that he and Sarah meet at The Library, a local bar and grille, for lunch to discuss the possibility of her working as his research assistant on his new book project.
- Professor Robert mentions that The Library had been his and his ex-wife's favorite lunch spot.
- While at lunch, Professor Robert and Sarah see Professor Emma, who edits an academic literature journal. Professor Robert invites Professor Emma to join him and Sarah.

SCENARIO 2

- Rebecca is a 2nd year graduate student on the East Coast preparing to defend her Master's Thesis. She has been working with Professor Andrea for the last 2 years.
- Over these 2 years, Rebecca and Professor Andrea have developed a close friendship. Rebecca often babysits for Professor Andrea when Professor Andrea has to attend events or conferences.
- Professor Andrea has been trying to have her third child. Before leaving for a conference on the West Coast, she tells Rebecca that she is 6 weeks pregnant.
- At 3am EST, Rebecca receives a phone call from Professor Andrea. Professor Andrea tells Rebecca that she thinks she's having a miscarriage and doesn't know what to do.
- Rebecca asks her if there's a hospital she can go to. Professor Andrea refuses to seek medical help and tells Rebecca that she just needs Rebecca to talk her through it.

SCENARIO 3

- Professor Dave has been working on a book about the effects of LSD on the sexual behavior of rats. While reading the latest journal volume in the field, he finds that his colleague, Professor Michael, has published an article on this very subject.
- Believing that Professor Michael has stolen his research data, Professor Dave seeks the help of his student, Evan. Evan is also a student in Professor Michael's class.
- Professor Dave asks Evan to apply for a job as Professor Michael's research assistant, telling Evan that it would be a great fit for Evan's research interests. Evan is successful.
- Professor Dave tells Evan that he needs Evan to make copies of Professor Michael's lab notebook so that Professor Dave can prove that Professor Michael stole his research data.

THANK YOU!

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