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Student Independent Research: Setting Learning Goals, Being an Effective Mentor, and Assessing the Outcomes

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The Teagle Foundation has provided funding for a new three-year Colloquium project that will help faculty members enhance the effectiveness of independent research project experiences at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. The project is part of a larger Teagle Foundation effort to explore the ways in which insights from cognitive science and neuroscience can be applied to college level teaching and learning. Five Brown faculty members will be joined by faculty colleagues from the Rhode Island School of Design, Connecticut College, and Wellesley College in a working group that will meet regularly to develop a set of discipline-specific models of good practice for independent research projects based on general principles of human cognition. Each model will include learning goals, mentoring methods, and effectiveness assessments, and will serve as a reference example for related departments to develop their own models. This work contributes to the larger agenda recommended by Brown's *Task Force on Undergraduate Education* for each program to specify its own educational goals and assessment methodologies as a way of improving the curriculum.