How to choose a right lab_ HK

Based on my experience and many students I have met, many students having a difficult time in choosing a right lab for her/him. Therefore, I would like to provide a few guidelines that might help graduate students to consider through their rotation.

Before the lab rotation

Go over the list of professors at the school website and try figuring out who are the most interesting faculties to you. You may have 3-10 people on your list. School provides an introductory course where faculties present their own researches. Do not miss this opportunity and find out details about what he/she is doing.

From the list you generated, try looking up everything you can about the lab. Check their publications and the methodologies they employ. For example, our lab employs *C.elegans* Genetic tools, Immunostaining(microscopy), Genetic Engineering(CRISPR-Cas), Molecular Biology (qPCR, RT-PCR) and Biochemistry(Western blot). It would be useful to look in the information from the school website (http://health.tju.edu.cn/) and lab webpage if they have one (mine is http://kimlab.website2.me/).

Once you figure out several labs for your rotation, think about your research project in the lab. It would be advisable for students to pick a project that is not far off their interests, but at the same time, that allows them to learn something new since this will be your major research focus for the next several years. Keep in mind that it is very likely that your planned project is not your actual research project for various reasons. Therefore, be sure to meet with the professor and discuss the actual content of the rotation with the professor beforehand especially if you want to do something particular for your grad school.

During the rotation

Learn general lab rules and guidelines and explore a new lab environment. Although lab guidelines are more less similar among many labs, there is some individuality especially SPST comprises of Biology and Chemistry based lab.

Find time with your professor every day and engage in conversations as much as you can. It is very important to find a comfortable mentor/professor and one most important feature of lab rotation is to figure out who is your best match during the rotation period. You have to figure out if you see yourself prosperous in the group.

If you liked your rotation period, discuss your future plan with a professor and express your research interest for the next footage.

I hope you find a right lab for you. Every lab is a unique workplace with its own environment, you have to figure out if the lab fits best. Unfortunately, I have seen many students change their labs after multiple lab rotations including myself. However, we have to admit that finding a right lab can be a difficult decision and may require multiple rounds of a trial. Keep in mind that finding a right lab is difficult and you pay an extra attention to that. It is definitely more valuable than getting ‘A’ for a three-credit course.