Faculty Focus

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Mentoring Edition

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Welcome

Melody Bowdon

Melody is Director of the UCF Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning, and Associate Professor of Writing and Rhetoric. She received her Ph.D. in English from the University of Arizona and joined the UCF faculty in 1999. She has served as Senior Research Fellow for Florida Campus Compact since 2005 and is currently co-editing a collection called *Higher Education*, *Emerging Technologies, and Community Partnership*. She has received teaching awards on the campus, state, and regional levels.

Welcome to the 2010-2011 academic year at UCF. I hope that in addition to figuring out parking and copy codes and class rolls you're enjoying the buzz of energy that accompanies the beginning of the year. This is a particularly exciting back to school season for me as I start my first fall semester in the position of Director of UCF's Karen L. Smith Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning. During my eleven years as a faculty member in the UCF Department of English, I spent a great deal of time at FCTL attending and leading workshops, collaborating with colleagues on various initiatives, working on scholarship of teaching and learning projects, visiting with friends, and checking email between classes. I hope many of you will incorporate the center into your routine this year and join us for faculty focused activities old and new.

After my many years of engagement with FCTL, I thought I had a thorough awareness of most of its activities, but each day in this new position allows me to see not only the range of efforts that FCTL supports (from research partnerships to specialized training events and community outreach) but more importantly the incredible projects being successfully completed across this campus. The ground-breaking research projects, innovative teaching approaches, and powerful service that are impacting our campus and communities from local to global scales are impressive and inspiring.

The Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning is here to support all of these efforts. This year we are redoubling longstanding efforts to encourage growth and excellence in all areas of faculty development. We hope that new programming will engage faculty from all of UCF's colleges. New initiatives and collaborations will offer unprecedented faculty assistance in the areas of writing, research, and mentoring, the emphasis of this volume of *Faculty Focus*. Established efforts will continue to support curriculum development, encourage effective use of technology in the classroom, and promote a strong faculty community.

When you visit the center for the first time this fall you may notice that the Office of Information Fluency has moved from the Teaching Academy into the FCTL space; this new arrangement is allowing even greater collaboration among faculty members campuswide who are committed to incorporating excellent communication and research training into their curricula.

Beyond spatial reconfigurations, our planning teams are putting together some exciting innovations for the annual winter and summer conferences as well as launching some new events throughout the year. We will continue the tradition of working with a great group of Faculty Fellows in 2010-2011. They will lead Course Innovation Projects, informal workshops, one-on-one consultations, conference presentations, and other activities throughout the year. See the list of their names and projects on page 14 for more information.

Be sure to check out the calendar on FCTL's website for a schedule of events for the year. Keep FCTL in mind as you are planning your classes, research and professional activities. On behalf of the capable and committed FCTL staff I wish you a pleasant beginning to the new year, and I hope you find the following reflections on mentoring students helpful.

Mentoring: A Critical Step in Enhancing the Success of Our Graduate Students

Christopher D. Geiger

Christopher D. Geiger is a tenured Associate Professor of Industrial Engineering in the Department of Industrial Engineering and Management Systems at UCF. He joined the department as a tenure-track Assistant Professor in January 2004. Chris regularly gives talks and hosts workshops at UCF and at national meetings on topics related to graduate student mentoring including how to prepare a curriculum vita and how to prepare for an academic job search. Over the past six years since joining UCF, Chris has supervised and successfully graduated seven doctoral students—two are currently Assistant Professors of industrial engineering; four are currently in high-level industrial positions; and one is working as a technical consultant for a Fortune 500 company.

Experience is not what happens to a man; it is what a man does with what happens to him. ~ Aldous Huxley

Are Graduate Programs Experiencing a Crisis?

Research confirms what most faculty members and graduate program directors already know: that many students enroll in their respective graduate programs with little understanding of the nature, culture and demands of pursuing graduate education. In fact, many graduate students initially are unsure of what they will do with a graduate degree upon finishing. Current research reports that the long-term nationwide attrition rate in doctoral programs is as high as 50% and even higher in some smaller graduate programs and academic institutions. As you can imagine, this situation leads not only to a significant waste of federal, university, corporate and personal funding but also a waste of effort for the half of students who never complete their degrees. Other investigations reveal that students who do complete their studies and receive their degrees take up to twice as long as they need to complete the degree requirements. Unfortunately, many of the graduate programs at our own university are experiencing attrition rates that are close to the national average. It is essential that we, as graduate faculty, collectively address the needs of our graduate students to slow and ultimately reverse this rate of attrition and improve the success of our students. Some studies suggest that the success of graduate education and the success of our graduate students greatly depend on several systemic and systematic changes to graduate programs. The most widely accepted and implemented change is to create a culture of effective mentoring from faculty to student. In other words, my dear colleague, we should not see this as a crisis, but, rather, we should see this as an opportunity to develop more effective and engaged mentoring of our graduate students.

Current Practice of Graduate Student Advising and Research Supervision

It is important for me to mention that there is a difference between graduate student advising and graduate student mentoring. Advising focuses on the activities and requirements of obtaining a graduate degree, while mentoring focuses on the relationships, commitments and resources that help graduate students find success and fulfillment in their academic and professional pursuits. Note that mentoring activities and thesis and dissertation advising activities are similar, but not all advisors are mentors.

Studies have shown that few professors receive formal training in the art of mentoring before becoming research supervisors to graduate students, yours truly included. Like many of my esteemed colleagues at UCF, I received my doctoral degree from a reputable graduate program at a major university and engaged in cutting-edge, meaningful research as a doctoral student. When I graduated, the primary qualification and credential for supervising thesis and dissertation students was to hold a doctoral degree (or perhaps have equivalent research experience). It was also necessary to be active in scholarship or research. Sadly, during that time, the aptitude for advising and mentoring was rarely considered when faculty were hired. The qualifications and hiring criteria have not changed much subsequently.

The most common practice of junior faculty, and perhaps even some senior faculty, in advising and supervising the research of graduate students is, first, to reflect upon what the faculty learned during their own doctoral studies. Those faculty members, then, supervise graduate students based on their own experiences. This introspection of faculty of their own experience is a valuable exercise, but, alas, it is not enough, as this approach is limited to a sample size of one, which may or may not be typical. We have to be more than just advisors and research supervisors to our graduate students. It is imperative that we establish and nurture mentoring relationships with our students. Research confirms that deliberate mentoring of graduate students leads directly to increased retention and stronger institutional loyalty among not only students but also among the faculty mentors.

The Role of an Effective Mentor

As a faculty member and research supervisor, a mentor is not always a role to which one aspires; it is a role into which one is often thrust when advising students. The mentor provides the student with an environment of mutuality and reciprocity, where the faculty member benefits as much professionally and personally from the relationship as does the student. The two are involved in reciprocal and simultaneous support, where both benefit and contribute to the process. To be an effective mentor, four attributes seem paramount to me. A mentor should

not only be a good listener and an effective communicator, but a mentor should also be empathetic and inspiring. Like any relationship between a mentor and a mentee, it takes time and energy to establish trust and mutual respect. However, I believe a good mentoring relationship provides benefits and satisfaction to both parties that merit the time and energy spent.

As mentors, our overall goal should be to promote the personal and professional development of graduate students by coaching and inspiring them and by sharing knowledge and experiences with them, including personal successes and challenges. However, effective mentoring is not a matter of good fortune. It is a matter of awareness. It is a matter of intention. It is a matter of a genuine desire to see our graduate students succeed. I truly believe that mentoring can occur at any moment and in any place, and an effective mentor recognizes and seizes these moments. As mentors, we should hope to imprint a positive, lasting impression on students' actions in life both professionally and personally and to pass along practical skills to help them navigate through and endure the challenges of life and to achieve their goals.

Summary and What's Next

The effective mentoring of graduate students by faculty members is a key component of a successful graduate program, and has a profound effect on graduate student development and graduate education persistence. It can make all the difference between not only recruiting good students but also retaining students who will be well-prepared to enter or continue in their profession and embark upon pathways of excellence with their confidence soaring. Let this be our clarion call to establish the climate and culture of graduate student mentoring at UCF that embraces a philosophy about students and how important they are to our institution.

For the 2010-2011 academic year, I am serving as a Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning Fellow in the area of mentoring graduate students in the STEM disciplines. I am aware that there is no single formula for successful mentoring, and I am also aware that mentoring practices vary from faculty member to faculty member and are perhaps valued unevenly across the graduate faculty. However, as the FCTL Fellow on mentoring graduate students, my goal is to create a culture of effective graduate student mentoring, where this culture promotes mentorship and encourages and fosters meaningful student-faculty relationships. In addition, this culture will create an atmosphere that fosters the reinforcement of good mentoring where academic leaders are supportive of faculty mentoring activities. To this end, several formal and informal mentoring workshops are being planned during the 2010-2011 academic year for UCF faculty and administrators. Specifically, the workshops will be for:

- university faculty members who are preparing for their first relationships with students
- existing faculty who want to sharpen their mentoring skills
- senior faculty leaders, department heads and other university administrators who oversee student-faculty relationships, mentor junior faculty and search for methods of creating a mentoring culture within their unit.

If you have questions about the upcoming mentoring workshops, please e-mail me at cdgeiger@mail.ucf.edu. Also, if you would like to participate as a guest speaker, panel discussant, or if you would like to attend the workshops sharing your best practices or hearing best practices, please contact me.

Six Strategies for Successful Graduate Mentoring

Julia Pet-Armacost

Julia Pet-Armacost is currently Associate Dean for Planning and Knowledge Management in the new College of Medicine at the University of Central Florida. She is a tenured Associate Professor in the Industrial Engineering and Management Systems (IEMS) Department.

Mentoring a student means building a special relationship with the individual. As faculty members, we have many opportunities to mentor students—from advising undergraduate students, to chairing a master's committee, to serving as a member of a master's or doctoral committee, to chairing a doctoral committee. For me, one of the greatest gifts and greatest challenges is to mentor a graduate student. It is a wonderful experience to build that special relationship and to help the student grow as a researcher and a teacher and to shine as an individual.

As a mentor, one of the first steps is to do your homework. I have found it absolutely essential to have accurate information about program requirements, deadlines, and procedures in order to provide good advice to the student. It is also important to know what services are available for students. A good mentor can either provide accurate information and advice, or knows to whom to send the student for such advice.

Mentoring means caring for the individual student—understanding when the student needs help and then providing him or her with the appropriate level of assistance. This means going beyond just understanding how well the student is performing in academic studies. It means understanding the student's life situation, assisting the student with personal challenges, and celebrating the personal triumphs.

Mentoring takes time and patience. It requires careful listening to the student. For me, it is hard to separate good mentoring from good teaching. A teacher is concerned with helping

the student to learn and providing an environment where the student can participate in his or her own learning. This means setting high standards, but not requiring perfection all at once. It means allowing the student to make mistakes in order to learn. It means providing the right level of guidance to allow the student to become a self-learner—to not give away the answers, to not tell the student exactly what to do or how to do it, but rather to lead the student through a series of questions, requiring him or her to think through the problem. I believe it is critically important to provide the right level of guidance to allow the student enough freedom to think and learn independently. This type of mentoring takes a lot of time and patience. It also requires careful listening to the student.

Mentoring requires giving encouragement and constructive criticism. When reviewing the student's work, I always make a point of trying to make positive statements about the work the student is doing well. I tend to first go through the student's work and find the things that need to be corrected. After "grading" the work, I try to always make a point of going back through and pointing out the good things that the student did. I also try to provide guidance where the student needs assistance. This does not mean just telling the student that he or she made a mistake and then expecting the student to get it right the next time, but rather helping the student understand what he or she needs to do to get it right.

Mentoring of a graduate student also means selfless sharing of your ideas to help the student shape his or her research focus. This allows the student to build and expand on your ideas so that these become the student's work. I get great joy when I see one of my students begin to challenge my own thinking. It is great to see the excitement and joy in the student's eyes when creating something new or discovering the solution to a problem.

And finally, mentoring means being committed to work with the student all the way through graduation and beyond. It gives me great pleasure to participate in the hooding ceremony, to see the graduate standing tall and proud of what he or she has accomplished, and then to meet with the graduate's family. But it doesn't end there. Mentoring continues through the student's career—providing professional advice and helping the graduate succeed in his or her career. Mentoring is a lifelong relationship with the student.

Recruiting and Supporting Graduate Students in Engineering

Essam Radwan

Essam Radwan currently serves as the Associate Dean for Research and Administration in the College of Engineering and Computer Science. He received a BS degree in Civil Engineering with honors from Cairo University, Egypt and aMaster's and Doctorate degrees from Purdue University. He taught at Virginia Tech and Arizona State University during the period of 1978-1990. Through a national search he was recruited to UCF to chair the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering and he remained in that position until 2003. In 1998 he was appointed to be the founding Director of the federally established transportation center, Center for Advanced Transportation Systems Simulation (CATSS).

The relationship between a student and a professor is sacred. It is built on respect and trust and if successful, it can have a life of its own. My personal experience with recruiting and mentoring students spanned over 32 years in three different universities. I spent half of this period in administrative posts, which limited the number and type of courses I taught. Graduate level courses represented the bigger share of my teaching schedule; complementing this with heavy involvement in sponsored research dictated that I worked more with graduate students than undergraduate students.

I believe that recruiting good graduate students and then granting them a degree that they are proud of is an important ingredient of any successful graduate program. In the engineering field there is a healthy mix of domestic and international students and one needs to explore good strategies to attract both types. For the domestic students, my best recruiting happens from the undergraduate senior level transportation engineering course that I teach. An effective recruitment strategy is to offer the bright students who have an inclination to go to graduate school part time employment on a research grant. This strategy exposes the students to research concepts, gives them financial support, and allows both of us to get to know each other better. For international students, my best recruiting took place while attending conferences held in foreign countries like China, India, Egypt, and Lebanon. I realized that a face-to-face interview of these potential candidates is the best approach.

Over the years, I experimented with numerous mentoring strategies and discovered a few that have served me and my students well. One of the effective strategies is to set aside regular time slots to meet the student one-on-one to discuss progress towards his or her degree. This process offers the

student the opportunity to share ideas and thoughts, do a reality check about academic progress, and more importantly strengthen that bond that ties the student and the advisor. Equally important are group meetings with other students in the graduate program and organized seminars. Such events are intended to provide maximum interaction among the group and create an environment for possible creativity and innovation.

Publishing research findings in archival journals is the heart and soul of academia. It is an excellent vehicle to share knowledge and ideas with one's peers and colleagues in the profession. While this activity is important for young faculty it is equally important to graduate students and post doctoral candidates. To facilitate this process, good mentoring should encourage students to jointly work on ideas that will generate scholarly technical articles. Ph.D. students in particular should be able to generate archival journal publications from their dissertations on or before graduation and be the lead author on these papers. As the lead author, the student becomes intimately involved in addressing reviewers' comments, demonstrates leadership, and broadens his/her professional network.

Attending national and international conferences to present research findings is as important as publishing in journals. Resources are needed to support this effort and can be generated from budget items in research contracts and grants, travel grants offered by the graduate college at UCF, and other fellowships offered by professional organizations in the engineering field. For example, in the transportation engineering discipline there are several organizations and professional societies like the American Society of Civil Engineers, the Institute of Transportation Engineers, the American Society of Highway Engineers, the Women in Transportation Society, the Society of Women Engineers, and the Florida Engineering Society. These entities offer scholarships to support graduate students at universities.

Mentoring is different for master's students than for doctoral candidates. If the master's is the final degree the student is seeking and the student has no interest in pursuing a Ph.D. later on then perhaps a degree based on course work only would suffice and they would have no need to complete a research thesis. The goal for this master's degree program, therefore, is to deepen the knowledge in the student's discipline and prepare them to progress in their future careers. Emphasis on becoming a registered professional engineer is essential as a long term goal.

The doctoral degree goes beyond deepening the knowledge of the subject matter to offer the Ph.D. candidate the opportunity to intensely research a specific topic, complement the learning in minor technical areas, present and publish their work, and teach a course or two in their area of expertise. As an advisor of Ph.D. students I make every effort to offer all my students the opportunity to teach one course (preferably at the undergraduate level), assist me in writing one proposal seeking funds from a sponsor, stay on for at least one semester as a post-doc to gain academic experience and interview at other institutions for a possible academic career or visiting scholar positions, and get involved in professional societies, committees, and other events.

The freedom that I provide my students to pursue their ideas has been successful in inspiring their independent thinking. This created personal respect and a sense of accountability, which has been a great asset for me personally and for my students. I believe that the "lead by example" model that I have with my students throughout my career has been inspirational. I would like to quote a statement from one of my Ph.D. graduates who wrote, "I think it is the core of how you deal with students and make them find their own way rather than imposing a way on them. I call it 'supervised freedom'."

Making a Difference Through Undergraduate Mentorship

Sherron Roberts

Sherron Killingsworth Roberts is an Associate Professor of Language Arts and Literacy. Sherron has been fortunate to have her research regarding literacy as social practice, innovative pedagogy, the role of children's literature, and professional development published in several journals. She is also a published poet and continues to explore the uses of poetry for therapy and peaceful classrooms.

As I read Malcolm Gladwell's (2008) fascinating book, *Outliers: The Story of Success*, I kept thinking that many times the hurdles that our undergraduates face are not primarily the academic ones. As a first-generation college student myself, I remember the notion of a credit hour befuddling me. Back then, no simple Google search, Wikipedia, or nameless entity existed to provide me with the clarity of a definition. For days, I worried about figuring it all out, and I finally asked a friend home from college. Gladwell tells the sad story of a true genius, Chris Langan, who dropped out of college and simply gave up after receiving a standard letter informing him of a problem with his financial aid. He did not make one call or send one correspondence; he did not talk to an advisor, or a professor, or another student. He threw in his academic towel. I cannot help but think that some level of personal mentoring could have made the difference. Mentoring makes a difference in the lives of our brightest and best, like Chris, helping them to better navigate the unique landscape of university life. In many cases, being clued into the academic culture, understanding the boundaries, accessing the catalog with its myriad of rules, asking questions, or chatting with a professor or a friend can make a real difference in the personal lives and career paths of our students.

When asked to reflect about my mentoring experiences at UCF, I recognized that mentoring has always been a major part of my everyday work life. While I now serve as a mentor to undergraduates in several capacities, I started my career as a sixth grade language arts teacher instructing gifted students. On a daily basis, I found that my role began to look more like mentoring and less like teaching. Yes, my gifted students needed direct teaching in regard to certain concepts, but what they really needed was mentoring: mentoring to help them learn how to learn and mentoring to help them reach their full potential as a learner. *Mentoring is believing in each student's potential and using my mentoring skills to help my students reach that potential.*

Much of my work with Honors in the Major HIM students, with Minority Programs in Education students, or with National Merit Scholars in the College of Education reminds me of working with those highly gifted sixth graders. They still possess a love of learning and natural curiosity. Respectfully, the undergraduates I mentor still possess the same analytical mindset and an attitude of a lifelong learner… not to mention the questions! "Oh, the beautiful questions that begat even more questions" (e. e. cummings). In an attempt to address these beautiful questions, I love working closely with my undergraduates on various academic projects because I can often encourage and coach them to present their projects, or even publish their work. Over the years, many of my students graduate with a presentation or two, and even a publication already on their resume. Making a presentation at a UCF forum such as the H.A.P.P.Y. Hour Showcase or at a national convention, seeing their name in gold font on the black spine of an undergraduate thesis or on an article in a state journal starts my students on a different journey with a new level of expectations about their professional lives. Often, the results of mentoring make a real difference and these accomplishments set these graduates apart from others in this fiercely competitive economy. *Mentoring is a pride-filled process to encourage my students to surpass even their own expectations.*

As I clap for my students walking across the stage at graduation, see my HIM students receive their medallions, or as I show my current students the publications of former students, I feel such a sense of accomplishment. Some of my happiest professional moments intersect with the stimulation of mentoring my undergraduate students in their quest to find personal satisfaction and academic success. My academic preparation, my years of experience, and the mentors who boosted me along my way have given me a high level of expertise, knowledge, and skills, which are now mine to pass along. However, I know that by placing myself in a position to mentor students, I also put myself in the position to learn a great deal from them. *True mentoring is a win-win situation because mentors and mentees both benefit.*

Not only can I make a real difference in the personal lives and career paths of my students; mentoring undergraduate students has made a real difference in my life as well.

Beyond the Technical Knowledge: Mentoring Graduate Students

Necati Catbas

Necati Catbas is an Associate Professor and Associate Chair of the Civil, Environmental and Construction Engineering Depart -ment. His research interest is structural health monitoring with emphasis on development, integration and implementation of sensing, information and simulation technologies for civil infrastructure systems. He has been recognized with teaching and research awards including the UCF University Excellence in Graduate Teaching Award, the Teaching Incentive Program Award and the Research Incentive Award.

The dictionary definition of the word mentor is "a wise and trusted counselor or teacher," while the origin comes from one of the great works of literature by Homer. We often mix the use of the words mentor and advisor. In academic life, the role of mentoring is beyond faculty advising which can be limited to guiding academic progress. One of the most rewarding experiences I personally have in my academic life is mentoring students. It is a professional relationship with a special personal aspect that develops, evolves and hopefully enriches academic experiences of both the mentor and the mentee. The styles of mentoring may vary and each mentoring relationship should be tailored to the student's goals, needs, learning styles and willingness to be mentored. There are a number of great publications on being a mentor; here I would like to share my personal views and experiences.

I believe that we have the great responsibility of educating and mentoring our students and in my case preparing future engineers. Doctoral students in the graduate programs are especially expected to be the leaders in their fields. I see the doctoral students as individuals who are my closest students, colleagues, friends and mentees, to whom I owe my best support during their time with me. I subscribe to the belief that a university is to be a community of professors and students learning and growing together. Of particular importance to achieve this is advising and mentoring our doctoral students that we as faculty members can and should provide, which extends beyond the technical issues of specific subjects.

As faculty, we all have professional pressures, time constraints and particular goals to achieve for our academic endeavors. How does mentoring fit in this picture? Does mentoring really help us? My experience is that it helps even more in terms of personal fulfillment and satisfaction when seeing students succeed. I do not think that there is a single formula for being a good mentor. It requires commitments of both the mentor and mentee and some kind of chemistry and understanding that can help overcome the challenges and resolve difficulties.

Especially for the graduate students, I would recommend my fellow faculty to be as proactive as possible from the very beginning when choosing prospective graduate student mentees. In my opinion, bringing in graduate students with whom you communicate in advance, discuss your expectations and also explain what you can offer them is the first step towards a successful mentor-mentee relationship.

Building a research group as a supportive learning community is also a critical component in mentoring students. I enjoyed and benefited from such a group as a doctoral student some years ago with my fellow students and post-doctoral associates. Shared goals, collective efforts and fellowship help reduce pressures, increase productivity in a more enjoyable manner, and develop life-long friendships. The post-doctoral students in my research group greatly help me in mentoring junior graduate students as well as undergraduate students. In addition to regular weekly meetings with my advisees and mentees, I find it very useful to have some kind of social activities together from time to time. Each student has a different personal and cultural background and such activities make the professors more approachable. It might be a little challenging to provide feedback and sometimes criticism, but providing constructive criticism professionally, listening carefully and more importantly praising their good work shows that this is done to hold them to high standards in order to help them improve.

I have enjoyed the fellowship of my graduate student mentees and have learned a lot from them also. Throughout their stay as graduate students, I do my best to set examples to help them understand the importance of social interactions as well as how to learn and live values within the academic environment that we share. I think it is very important for the graduate students to make decisions in life consistent with their goals and values, to recognize their capabilities and limitations, and to make their life expectation and results match.

In my research group, I challenge my students to be the best that they can be with all the support that I can possibly give. While setting high standards for our mentees, we should also know that they are individuals like all of us who have their own personal lives and challenges, and they should know that we are always ready to help them whenever they need us as their mentors.

What Does Mentoring Mean to Me? Fostering Student Development

Vicky Zygouris-Coe

Vicky I. Zygouris-Coe is Associate Professor of Education in the School of Teaching, Learning and Leadership in the College of Education. She has studied and taught in Greece, England, and the US. Her interests lie in literacy, teacher education, and online learning.

We make a living by what we get; we make a life by what we give. ~ Winston Churchill

Mentorship has a strong historical tradition throughout the world. To the Greeks a mentor was like a modern-day foster parent, a person who was responsible for the physical, social, intellectual, and spiritual development of young people. In honor of my Greek heritage, I believe that a mentor is someone who is assigned the awesome responsibility of passing on the torch of learning to the next generation.

Mentoring is a synergetic relationship that enables purposeful conversation, setting and achieving goals, making decisions, and solving problems. The purpose of mentoring is development. I consider my role as a professor and mentor to be an integral part of my professional identity, goals, and mission. I firmly believe that our students are an invaluable asset to UCF, my college, and my program area; they are the future of the academy and the reason the academy exists. One of the most rewarding parts of being involved in academia is the opportunity to mentor students in pursuit of their academic goals. I am dedicated to educating and mentoring students in graduate education studies and educational research. My goal is to help students become successful education scholars, engage in research, and advance the field of education. In addition, I try to build a bridge between the doctorate experience and the professional life of a university professor.

The mentoring I received from my professors while completing my Ph.D. program of study—the trust, recognition, and invaluable learning practices I experienced—have shaped my academic mission and role. I am passionate about what I do. I get excited about learning, problem solving, and finding solutions to educational challenges. My students know that I expect the best from them—my standards are high but attainable; they know that I take graduate studies very seriously, that I do not support shortcuts, and that with their collaboration, I will do whatever possible to help them learn, succeed, and excel.

I strive to exemplify high learning, research, and ethical standards; communicate as clearly as possible about program, discipline, and research requirements; and model scholarship.

Effective mentoring should involve a stimulating intellectual, emotionally safe, and risk-free environment. I believe that as a mentor I have to create opportunities for my students to succeed and I need to be there to support them as needed. I work diligently to ensure that students who complete a doctorate program at UCF's College of Education will be well-trained; well-equipped; and will possess the skills, knowledge, dispositions, and values that will allow them to become significant contributors to knowledge generation and quality education.

Mentoring is a process rather than a series of events. If the relationship proves to be successful, both mentor and mentee will benefit from the experiences, sharing of ideas, and interactions that can lead to personal and professional growth. I usually like to first "clear the air" on the following items before I commit my time to the relationship, and I also seek feedback from my students on their preferences. Clear communication of goals and expectations by both parties helps to facilitate a productive mentoring relationship.

- Establish a time and place to meet.
- Explain preferences about means and frequency of communication (E-mail, Skype, Phone, etc.).
- Negotiate roles and responsibilities of the mentor and the mentee.
- Clarify expectations about scope of feedback, assistance, and how often feedback will occur.
- Discuss preferred learning styles.
- Determine if the relationship will be on a formal or informal basis (depending on learner characteristics).
- Consider what level of commitment you are prepared to make.
- Establish ways to review the relationship at regular intervals.

Mentoring requires a commitment of substantial time and effort. The success of the mentoring relationship hinges on mutual trust and respect, intellectual dialogue and negotiation, and a risk-free environment. As a mentor, I provide constructive feedback on an ongoing basis, and constructive criticism when needed to foster professional maturation. I am committed to teaching the conventions of the discipline, as well as promoting students' careers by providing opportunities for independent work and recognition. It is important to me that my students know what to expect of me, what I expect of them, what are our goals and outcomes for the mentoring relationship, and how we will be evaluating progress.

From my experiences, the following are good mentor characteristics I would like to continue to learn about and practice:

- Value the mentoring relationship.
- Before you become a mentor you first have to become a mentee.
- Communicate hope, empower others, and learn together.
- Allocate appropriate time to mentoring and helping others grow.
- Be willing to share, not hoard (knowledge, skills, or expertise).
- Be willing to risk investing oneself in others.
- Exhibit a motivating, positive learning attitude.
- Develop expertise in the field.
- Provide guidance and appropriate constructive feedback.
- Exhibit how to set and meet personal and professional goals.

I value the learning partnerships I have had with my graduate students. Teaching is more than just disseminating knowledge and information. I teach people, not just content. Mentoring is an enriching and potentially life-changing process. After all, change happens with one person at a time.

Behind every successful person, there is one elementary truth: somewhere, somehow, someone cared about their growth and development. This person was their mentor.
~Dr. Beverley Kaye

Mentoring Students: At the Heart of UCF's Mission

Bill Self

Bill Self is an Associate Professor in the Burnett School of Biomedical Science in the College of Medicine. He obtained his Ph.D. in 1998 at the University of Florida studying molybdoenyzme regulation in Escherichia coli and subsequently was a Staff Fellow (post-doc) at the NIH in Bethesda studying the biology of bacterial selenoproteins before joining UCF in 2003 as an Assistant Professor.

What is a mentor? Well first let's ask *Merriam-Webster*:
Mentor (Noun); Derived from Latin, from Greek Mentōr; Date: 1616

1 (when capitalized): a friend of Odysseus entrusted with the education of Odysseus' son Telemachus
2a : a trusted counselor or guide
2b : tutor, coach

Since we are ourselves not direct acquaintances of Odysseus, I suppose the second definition of mentor fits. As faculty we mentor many types of students and trainees, and based on our area of expertise, this mentoring can take many forms. I will describe my mentoring philosophy for graduate students, and then discuss how this specifically relates to mentoring undergraduates, since I feel they should be treated separately from graduate students, and because mentoring undergraduates is at the heart of the UCF mission to achieve excellence in undergraduate education.

First of all I would like to state that my mentoring philosophy is clearly a work in progress. As a young faculty member (at UCF just under seven years) I am constantly trying to improve my mentoring of students at every level based on past successes and failures. In addition, my mentoring is based on what I have learned as an undergraduate, graduate student and post-doctoral fellow. I feel very fortunate to have had excellent mentors with slightly different approaches, one more directed (doctoral mentor) and one more hands-off (post-doctoral mentor). It is from these experiences that I have formed my own strategy for mentoring students.

Mentoring graduate students–Two schools of thought

I see the spectrum of mentoring from two potential extremes; 1) heavily involved in the student's day-to-day existence to an extreme where the student is simply doing what they are told to do, so called "hand-holding" and 2) a "*laissez-faire*" approach, of simply letting the student sink or swim no matter what their particular background is coming into our graduate program. I try to position myself somewhere between these two extremes, probably leaning more towards the *laissez-faire* approach. My post-doctoral mentor at the NIH was definitely of the "*laissez-faire*" school as only those who chose to work independently and thrive were successful in her laboratory; whereas, my doctoral mentor was more in line with my current balanced approach. I also try to balance the "carrot vs. the stick" in terms of mentoring. I want students to become stronger scientists by their own will, and thus I know that my badgering them is not likely to work long term to get things done. I try to guide them using some basic principles: 1) Work hard (get things done to get answers to questions) but don't equate lots of time spent in the lab with hard work if you can't accomplish anything; 2) Read the current literature to keep up with advances and understand how your project fits in this area, and 3) Focus on the significant aspects of one's work while moving towards publication (i.e. don't get distracted by one experimental result you can't quite explain).

Be an example: I try to work one-on-one with students in the laboratory as much as possible. I work hard and hope that this example is enough to make them also work hard (this doesn't always work with this generation–I still don't know why). Telling someone to come in early and then not doing it yourself will not usually pan out in the long run.

Endeavor to persevere: obtaining a "thick skin" is part of being a scientist, so the sooner you can deal with failure (i.e. rejection of a manuscript or grant proposal) the better. However, don't ever get used to failure—it should sting every single time. Even when a project seems to be going nowhere and negative results are common, if you vigorously ask questions using the scientific method, you will eventually succeed in uncovering new knowledge and maturing as a scientist. Ultimately you are judged by your scholarly works, but your contribution to the field also includes those you have mentored, and their contributions directly reflect on your ability as a mentor.

Build a good environment: I have tried to recruit students, staff and post-docs with the best credentials and talent, and this has led to a 'multi-cultural' laboratory. To facilitate a positive atmosphere and draw upon this diversity we regularly have social gatherings (usually at my house) that are potluck, or go out to lunch when we publish a paper (co-authors only!) Bringing together people from different backgrounds over food almost always leads to forging a bond that crosses so-called "barriers." This helps to build a positive environment in the lab—always a plus when trying to tackle tough questions in newly emerging areas like we are in my group.

Undergraduate student mentoring

It is best to differentiate the mentoring of graduate students from undergraduates for this discussion, although most of the basic tenets described above hold for all levels of mentoring. For biomedical research one of the primary reasons for this delineation between graduate students and undergraduates is a lack of basic knowledge of the core concepts of biological systems that is needed to fully understand the basis of a project. I feel that undergraduates should contribute first by learning basic techniques and also learning how a research lab functions. As a mentor you will begin to notice whether the undergraduate truly feels comfortable in the lab or whether this is just an exercise in getting research experience on a resume. Once you as a mentor observe real interest and curiosity in science displayed by the student, and when the student has mastered a few fundamental techniques, then and only then should you give them a simple yet significant experiment to tackle (or question to answer). You can describe to the student the rationale for the experiment in the larger picture, but be sure that the focus is on one simple question that is asked and should be answered by carrying out the experiment. This gives you the opportunity to carefully analyze the results and to explain the critical nature of appropriate controls and statistical analysis that is so often lost in today's training, perhaps through incompetent mentoring. Use each experiment, from the experimental design stage to the final analysis of the results, as an opportunity to teach the scientific method and thus to mentor. If done properly with a bright and curious undergraduate, you will make a fundamental difference in this student's career, and perhaps build a foundation for a career in science.

Steps in successful undergraduate student mentoring:

1) Evaluation – Evaluate each student critically to determine their level of interest in research, their innate ability and their core curiosity.
2) Fundamentals – Use research as a tool to teach the scientific method so that good science is the foundation of all training.
3) Development – As the student matures, allow freedom to develop independent critical thinking skills so that the student can truly become an independent scientist.
4) Learn – Each time you mentor someone you learn and gain experience into what works and what doesn't for each kind of person.

I always feel that every student I choose to mentor will come into my laboratory with certain interests, background and innate ability. My primary goal is to facilitate each student's own ability to grow and mature as a scientist and leave at a higher level than they came. This is the most fundamental aspect of mentoring that occurs in the academy, and as such relates back even to the classical philosophers during the days of Homer's Odysseus.

To Be a Better Mentor

J. Manuel Perez

J. Manuel Perez is Assistant Professor of Chemistry and Nanoscience Technology. He completed his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Chemistry at the University of Puerto Rico, followed by a doctoral degree in Chemistry at Boston University. He then completed postdoctoral training at the Massachusetts General Hospital, Harvard Medical School. He joined the faculty at the University of Central Florida's Nanoscience Technology Center in 2005.

As we all start a new academic year, often times we ask ourselves the following question: "How can I improve my teaching skills both at the undergraduate and graduate levels?" Even though this an important question, in addition to finding better ways to be an effective teacher I challenge you all to ask yourselves this semester: "How can I be a better mentor for my students?" The answer to this question is not an easy one and it depends on the subject matter and the specific field of study. As a junior faculty member at UCF, I ask myself this question constantly. During my first years at UCF, it was particularly challenging for me to develop the proper mentoring and supervisory skills. Since most of us don't develop these skills during our graduate and postdoctoral training, I had to learn by trial-and-error how to mentor my students both in the classroom and in my research laboratory. I don't want to sound presumptuous in trying to give you advice on how to mentor your own students, but I want to share with you my own opinions and experiences mentoring students at UCF.

As with any kind of human relation, the relationship between the mentor and the mentee has to be one based on trust, mutual respect and the willingness of both parties to learn from one another. To me a mentor is an individual with the capacity of positively influencing a person's life. I have been fortunate to have excellent mentors in my career that have not only been involved in teaching me, but have also been able to advise me and inspire me to set high goals for myself as well as to encourage me to persevere. Now that I have the opportunity to be a mentor myself, I have come to realize that mentoring is one of the most rewarding experiences in life. As a mentor, I do my best to inspire my students by being an example and also by making them part of all aspects of my research and academic endeavors. I allow them to come up with their own ideas. By doing this, they not only learn how to be independent researchers, but also experience the rewarding satisfaction of seeing their ideas work or fail, and then trying again. I am also directly involved in their projects, and I directly supervise their research and academic progress. I receive great satisfaction from seeing them improve with time and seeing their projects progress. It is important to meet with them to discuss research progress and to train them on how to critically analyze results with a high standard of scientific integrity. In addition, a fundamental aspect of any student's career development is the opportunity to learn how to interact and network with national and international scientists. As a mentor, I strongly support and facilitate the student's networking capabilities that are important for the career development of any scientist. To achieve this goal, I allow my students to attend national or international conferences in nanotechnology or biomedical research. Another important skill of any successful scientist is the ability to express his or her ideas not only orally, but also in written format. The development of effective technical and scientific writing skills is fundamental for the successful career of any scientist. For this reason, as a mentor, I am committed to providing my students with the necessary training and opportunities for them to develop proper writing techniques and skills. As part of this training, I regularly discuss writing styles and ethical guidelines. Overall, the main components of my mentoring philosophy are to teach, to advise, to inspire and to be an example to my students while helping them reach high levels of personal and professional success.

Years ago, right before I started graduate school, one of my mentors gave me a copy of the book *Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman!*, an account of the life of Dr. Richard Feynman, the 1965 Nobel Laureate in Physics. Little did I know at the time that I eventually would not only finish my Ph.D. in chemistry, but obtain a faculty position in nanotechnology, a field that Dr. Feynman himself is credited for championing. My mentor, who had been encouraging me to go to graduate school, dedicated this book with the following statement: "Manny, always remember that it is supposed to be fun." He was referring to the fact that the study of science, the scientific process and the pursuit of knowledge must be a rewarding and enjoyable process. Reading this book by Dr. Feynman helped me through graduate school, especially at times when I was in doubt of finishing. I learned to always look at the fun side of science. As a scientist, there is no better feeling than the "eureka" moment, particularly after multiple stumbling blocks and disappointments. As a mentor, I always try to help my students develop the necessary skills to persevere, to set high standard for themselves and to see the fun side of science or whatever they want to do in life.

Mentoring Students: A Never-Ending Process

Suzanne Martin

Suzanne M. Martin is a Professor of Exceptional Education in the Child, Family and Community Sciences Department, in the UCF College of Education. She currently directs a federally funded leadership personnel preparation project that uses mentoring as one of its key components.

Welcome back to another academic year. What a year 2010 has been so far! We have so many wonderful programs and opportunities at UCF it is always a challenge to get everything done. Yet one area of my work is never ending, always fulfilling and, yes, time consuming—it is mentoring.

Much of the literature concerning mentoring describes the mentor as someone who has earned the respect of peers, employees, and/or community members and is viewed as a positive role model. Mentoring can take on several forms and may be designed to accomplish a number of outcomes. The benefits of mentoring have been well documented. Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009) state that research supports professional development when it is collaborative and collegial. Daresh (2003) defines mentoring as "ongoing-in which individuals in an organization provide support and guidance to others who can become effective contributors to the organization". Similarly, Heller and Sindelar (1991) define mentoring as advice given by a respected and experienced individual. Yet, there is little empirical research on best practices for mentoring administrators. No matter what the definition, a quality mentoring program requires careful planning and on-going evaluation to ensure that the goals of the mentor and mentee are being met.

My entire career has been built on the premise that if I am able to help others succeed to the highest level of their abilities, then I will be successful as a teacher, a colleague and a person. A cornerstone of providing this assistance is a high quality and highly interactive mentoring partnership, which I believe is a combination of science and art, knowledge and action, and professional and personal growth for both the mentee and the mentor. A successful mentor must understand, respect and build upon the experiences and knowledge of each mentee. Ample and well-defined opportunities should be provided for mentees to practice, reflect, evaluate and continuously increase their professional knowledge and competence. These opportunities should be grounded in the most current and valid research-based knowledge and practical wisdom. Equally important is consideration of the attitudes and beliefs that the mentee holds about herself, students, and the many and varied contexts which influence student learning and development. The positive correlations among increased professional competence by the mentee, increased student learning and, ultimately, higher professional and personal rewards and self-esteem for the mentee need to be emphasized as a fundamental motivational tool.

One example of putting these principles into action is my experience over the past five years as director of a federal grant to prepare urban school administrators for leadership positions in improving exceptional education programs in their school districts. These bright and dedicated doctoral candidates have had opportunities to network online with each other and many national experts, attend Harvard University summer seminars in which I also participated, and maintain web-based portfolios, all in addition to intensive and extensive interactions with me and a diversity of colleagues on the UCF campus and at their local school district sites. These school leaders will now serve as mentors to a broad range of educators in their districts, using many of the same strategies practiced in our program to expand their impact on improving exceptional education programs.

Knowledge and its effective use are enhanced by collegial sharing of ideas across the total spectrum of issues bearing on improving educational policies and practices. Mentoring can play an essential role in maximizing the effectiveness of this sharing. My personal mentors have aided me greatly from my initial entry into the profession through attaining the international Presidency of the 55,000 member Council for Exceptional Children. In turn, I have always striven as a mentor to model commitment, respect, competence, caring, high moral and ethical behavior and a sense of humor. Mentoring often addresses aspects of the roles and responsibilities of leaders that are not covered in textbooks or lectures—knowledge and skills that can only be gained by investing time and energy into the mentoring relationship.

The mutual benefits of mentoring are limited only by one's imagination. Working with talented practitioner and policymaker partners gives me a chance to cultivate my own leadership and interpersonal skills. All of our horizons are expanded through new networks of mentors, mentees and their contacts. Without a doubt, the privilege and challenge of mentoring has significantly enriched my professional and personal life.

References:

Daresh, J. (2003). *Teachers mentoring teachers: A practical approach to helping new and experienced staff.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Darling-Hammond, L. & Richardson, N. (2009). Teacher learning: What matters? *Educational Leadership, 66*(5), 46-53.

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The Sport of Effective Mentoring

Ramarao Desiraju

Ramarao Desiraju is Professor of Marketing at the UCF College of Business. His research focuses on incentives-related issues in channels, alliances and sales forces, and on optimal pricing and other marketing strategies used by manufacturers and retailers.

Wayne Gretzky famously noted once, apparently in response to a reporter's question on the secret of the sportsman's success, "*a good hockey player plays where the puck is. A great hockey player plays where the puck is going to be*." While mentoring doctoral students may not be in the same league as playing professional sports, Mr. Gretzky's comment is nevertheless relevant.

The key to helping doctoral students reach their goals revolves around identifying the individual needs of each student successfully. One often hears comparisons between a student navigating the dissertation stage and someone finding her way through a dense forest. In that context, it appears to me that a mentor can facilitate the process by engaging in three sets of activities: those related to (i) providing academic guidance —e.g., in identifying and tackling original research questions, along with writing and presenting the findings effectively; (ii) establishing an empathetic social group that understands the student's trials and tribulations during this period; and (iii) helping the student become a part of a valuable professional network. The unique circumstances of each student will dictate, naturally, the combination of mentoring activities that will be most helpful. I will attempt to elaborate on these below, albeit briefly.

First, like Mr. Gretzky, effective mentors are good at anticipating a reasonable way out of the forest (a.k.a. the dissertation). Such a mentor encourages the student when she or he is making progress, but raises thought-provoking questions at critical junctures of the student's analysis. This approach promotes independent thinking and any "Aha" moment in the analysis will be particularly joyous to the student. Based on my own experiences as a student, I know that such moments can ignite a career-spanning passion for research.

Further, relatively early in the training process, the mentor should start a dialogue with students on the apparent difficulty of acquiring excellent communication skills. Subsequently, it will be easier for the student to understand why she or he has to rewrite that draft so many times! Students seem to find the feedback more useful when we can show gently how the arguments in his/her "best" draft can be sharpened. Among all my interactions with doctoral students—and I have been teaching in our program since its inception in 1999 and served as the coordinator from 2003-2008—I would rank this as one of the most essential points of discussion.

The effective mentor can address the other needs, alluded to in (ii) and (iii) above; e.g., by being available on a regular basis, lending a patient ear, arranging and participating in informal get-togethers, and helping the student make professional connections; the latter via conference presentations of joint research projects, formal letters of recommendation and informal introductions, including asking appropriate colleagues at conferences to attend student presentations.

The student clearly plays a crucial role in determining the quality of the mentoring relationship. Given the uniqueness of each student's background, along with the feedback and guidance she or he has received from other sources (e.g., diverse courses and faculty), different students are likely to be at distinct stages on the learning curve. Anticipating each student's needs accurately and delivering the necessary support activities are not always easy or straightforward. Nevertheless, I believe that effective mentoring during the dissertation stage has the potential to transform good doctoral education into an outstanding experience for the student. Providing such mentoring is one of the most enjoyable responsibilities of a faculty member and it is at least as challenging as anticipating the future location of a hockey puck!

My Views on Being a Mentor: Sharing the Joys and Challenges

Elizabeth Mustaine

Elizabeth E. Mustaine is Associate Professor in Sociology. Her areas of research and teaching are criminology, violence, and the law. She has been teaching at UCF for 16 years. During that time, she has worked with many undergraduate, master's, and doctoral students. She appreciates the support and guidance of her mentors and tries to pass that along to her students.

To me, mentoring is one of the most important and pleasurable aspects of teaching graduate students. Who among us cannot say that we would have been or done better if only we had had a good mentor? Or, perhaps we know that we are the successes that we are today because we did have a good mentor?

The pleasure and satisfaction that I get when I see one of the students I have mentored has finished her degree and is happy in her job, or when a student I have worked with passes

his comprehensive exams and finally feels confident about knowing the material, or when a student feels proud of herself because her first paper presentation was a success, is something that cannot be rivaled. I get a great sense of fulfillment and pride when I am at graduation and a student's parents come up to me and say that they will always be grateful for the self-assurance and confidence that their daughter has because I took the time to work with her; or when a class is over and a student tells me that he always thought he was a bad writer until he took my class and I took the time to make comments and suggestions regarding how to improve his paper, and now he is presenting it at a national conference. The work involved in mentoring is always outweighed by the joy of seeing the results.

But, being a good mentor is difficult, because there are many areas and skills one must excel at it. Among them are that mentors must have tremendous patience; they must listen carefully and offer sage and useful advice. In order to do this, mentors invest themselves into the work and lives of others. I try hard not to push for a particular direction, but instead help my mentees find the right path for their lives. Sometimes this can be hard. For example, I may know that a particular student would be a great university professor, but what she really wants to be is the director of a nonprofit community organization. In this, I have to let her follow the course that she wants her life to take.

Being a good mentor also takes time. The only way to provide helpful and insightful advice and guidance is to truly care about your mentees. You have to care enough about them to have really listened to them, and thus, know them as students, scholars, and people. This also has to be a two-way street: mentors must also open up about their own personal experiences in order to help their mentees make good practical decisions. I use my experiences to educate and guide my mentees. I have an open door policy, and am happy to stop what I am doing when a student comes by. My students and I talk about many things: some of these are relevant to being an academic, and some are just germane to life. I know that graduate school is hard enough without having "life issues," so I try to listen and encourage my students no matter what their concerns. In this capacity, I am open and honest about my own successes and mistakes (and I've had plenty of both!) I find that discussing my experiences (particularly my own missteps) often provides an eye-opening moment for a mentee. They hear about real life situations and learn about navigating through difficult or unfamiliar circumstances.

Another important quality of mentors, in my view, is that they are constructively critical, challenging, and supportive. When I point out ways that my mentees can improve, I also encourage them about who they are now. Mentors provide challenges to their mentees; they make certain that their mentees have the experiences they will need to succeed in their chosen career paths, without being too critical or overwhelming. I regularly publish with my mentees or otherwise work with them to get their research out in the public forum. My students publish and present their work from the beginning of their graduate programs. Often they are nervous and lack the confidence to think their work is worthy of presentation at a national conference or publication, but I challenge and cajole them, offer a patient ear, and eventually they give it a try. They usually find it was not as intimidating as they expected.

I believe that one of the most important things a mentor can do is to be the biggest fan of her mentee. When you know, without a doubt, that you have someone in your corner, life, educational, and career challenges are much more readily and forthrightly tackled. And, the payoff (for both of us) is always worth it. I know that without my mentor, I would probably be a gardener at Disney; someone who wishes she were an academic, rather than someone who is one.

Graduate Student Mentoring: Scaffold Students to Success with High Expectations and Respectful Relationships

Rosemarye Taylor

Rosemarye Taylor is Associate Professor of Educational Leadership in the College of Education. She specializes in systematic leadership for change and improving learning for all students. She is pictured here with successful mentee Dr. Gonzalo La Cava.

When Educational Leadership Ed. D. students ask me to be their mentor I always ask, "Why me?" They usually respond with comments like, "I can count on you to respond quickly and honestly," "You give helpful feedback," "You are respected in the educational community," and "I know you will make sure my work is good." These comments communicate that we have mutual respect and the students are looking for high expectations, along with adequate support to achieve at a high level.

When I think about mentoring I consider it to be another student learning opportunity to implement a scaffolded, gradual release model to independence. This is the instructional model I use both in the classroom and in mentoring. Like teaching, mentoring is contextualized to the individual. Although graduate students generally are successful as students and in the workplace, independence as a graduate student depends upon the specific course or context. My approach is to teach and mentor directly using inquiry and high-level thinking followed by the provision of models of the expectation, and then followed by guided practice. When students demonstrate mastery or understanding of the skill, concept or content, I move them to independent practice accompanied by high expectations.

When mentoring, I give different support depending upon the expertise and skill of the student and the difficulty of the task, but the goal is always independence and success for the student. For example, students may indicate that they have not previously been given feedback on their writing, so many need a high level of support with the increased expectations for writing and may need to be made aware of UCF's writing resources. Other students are excellent writers and need extra assistance in mastering research or statistics concepts and may be advised to join a student study group, seek one-on-one tutoring, or review video on the procedures until competency is developed. Another mentoring example of scaffolding to independence is assisting students with developing a professional resume or vita beginning with instruction, providing good models, and guiding the resume development with feedback until an acceptable one is presented.

The graduate students come to UCF, but the rest of their lives are not left behind—just like in the work place. Ninety percent of educational leadership students work full time and attend graduate classes part time, usually taking two classes each semester and more in the summer. The combination of working full time, going to graduate school, establishing themselves as professional leaders, and being family members often creates challenges financially, physically and emotionally. These factors frequently result in students seeking support from their mentors related to things connected to graduate student success, but not necessarily academic in nature. To demonstrate, let me share that in a recent doctoral cohort of 19 students over a 2-year period, one was diagnosed with cancer, two got divorced, one's partner moved out, one was investigated by the employer with charges being dropped, one lost her job, one had a baby and then got married, one's brother died, one's spouse had a serious accident and was in the hospital for several months, one accepted a job in another state, two were promoted, and one demoted, creating unique contexts for each to seek mentor support. These kinds of contexts lead me to believe it is important to listen and empathize with students' unique circumstances so they develop their own strategies to continue and do not drop out of the program. To demonstrate, below are nine questions that have been posed in the last year in mentoring discussions:

- Should I take a semester off when my baby is due?
- I'm getting married and going on a honeymoon. Is it okay to miss class?
- My partner left me since I spend so much time on graduate work.
- How do I select my dissertation topic and how do I select the committee? I don't know if the faculty will want to work with me.

As in teaching, reflecting, asking questions, probing, and being available to the mentees builds the trusting relationship that they need to develop solutions for themselves so that good decision-making becomes a part of their skill set to model with others.

To be a valuable mentor I believe I have to be available to the students and respond in a timely manner to requests. The relationship is grounded in respect on the part of each—the mentor and the mentee. While high expectations never vary, they are accompanied by differentiated support, which continues to build the respectful relationships. Students want mentors who are available to them and coach them forward to the next step in their graduate programs and careers. After graduation, mentees maintain the relationship and provide feedback on how the mentoring experience continues to be influential in their profession and mentoring of others.

Announcing the Faculty Center Fellows for 2010-2011

- **Engaging STEM**: Linda Walters, Professor of Biology. Spring Course Innovation Project on bringing service-learning into science, technology, engineering, and mathematics courses.
- **Issues in Advanced Online Teaching**: Beth Young, Associate Professor of English. Book clubs and work groups throughout the year.
- **Large Class Management Strategies**: Alisha Janowski and Pam Thomas, Biology Instructors. Fall Course Innovation Project providing strategies for handling the challenges of large classes.
- **Mentoring Graduate Students in STEM**: Christopher Geiger, Associate Professor of Industrial Engineering. Workshops and consultations throughout the year.
- **Service-Learning**: Terry Thaxton, Associate Professor of English. Workshops and consultations throughout the year.
- **Video Teaching**: Joyce Nutta, Associate Professor of Teaching and Learning Principles. Fall Course Innovation Project.
- **Writing for Publication**: Anna Jones, Associate Professor of English. Fall and Summer Faculty Development Cohorts based on Wendy Belcher's *Writing Your Journal Article in Twelve Weeks: A Guide to Academic Publishing Success*.

Other opportunities and programming:

- **Teaching with Technology**: Kevin Yee, FCTL Fall Course Innovation Project.
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Submissions

The *Faculty Focus* is a publication for all instructors at the University of Central Florida. This includes full-time and part-time faculty and teaching assistants at all UCF campuses. Its purpose is to provide an exchange of ideas on teaching and learning for the university's community of teachers and scholars. It is envisioned that this publication will inspire more dialogue among faculty whether in hallway discussions, departmental meetings, or in written articles. This represents an opportunity for faculty members to reach their peers throughout the growing UCF community. The *Faculty Focus* invites you to contribute your ideas on teaching and learning in a short essay.

See the guidelines for submission online at <http://www.fctl.ucf.edu/Publications/FacultyFocus/submission.php>. Please send your submissions to fctl@mail.ucf.edu.

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