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ALL ABOUT MENTORING

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From the Editor
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Adults are no longer at the periphery in the world of higher education. And this is not only the case in the United States, but around the globe. Mainly due to economic and credential realities, new institutions have sprung up, and an ever-growing number of established schools have been pushed to accommodate students whose needs, lives, ideas and prior educational experiences have called out for new academic forms. For quite practical reasons, few institutions can afford to ignore a group, not so long ago considered a "neglected species."

Much of the writing on adult education has reflected this basic pragmatism. It has focused on ways in which colleges must become more flexible in order to respond to the realities of this new and vital constituency. Evening classes, weekend residencies, part-time registrations, professional degree programs, the recognition of non-collegiate learning, business-academic collaborations, and distance learning courses have been spurred on by the recognition that conventional academic ways can no longer hold. The market has demanded something different.

But a world economy in change and the resulting needs of adults in today's society have also provided the impetus for rethinking our academic assumptions. Put in another way, the problem of *how* we do what we do can also stimulate us to think about *why* we do it. Whether such critical reflection was intended or not, it occurs all around us. And it is the abiding uneasiness of institutions, faculty and students faced with all of this change that can give rise to important questioning. We have been given the opportunity to wonder anew about what teaching and learning really mean. The market has offered us a temporary opening we must use to our pedagogical advantage.

Still, the power of the practical (one that we feel so strongly in the push for enrollments, the fear of lost revenues, the unending search for clients, the obsession with new programs; even in the undaunting pragmatism of our students) often overwhelms this questioning and experimenting. (Our "opening" is small, both in size and time.) We tire of trying out new teaching approaches; figuring out a way to give students a real voice becomes extra work; we devise models that mirror traditional ways; educational excellence is equated with standardization; we become skeptical of learning that doesn't conform to ideas we hold sacred; and reproducing what others already do takes precedence over nourishing our distinctiveness. In effect, as individuals and as institutions, we become discouraged -or even quietly cynical -about the very experimenting we can and need to practice together.

Powerful socio-economic forces have put adults on the educational map. These same forces have embedded us in a highly competitive academic world where money, educational market shares, credentials and a preoccupation with the supposed efficiencies of new technologies hold sway. Yet, such a world has simultaneously opened up the possibility of seriously asking about what schools do, how and what teachers teach, and if and how students learn. Even if it were our desire, we could not wish this world away.

But it is the privilege of mentoring to work at the seams. Instead of idealizing an academic past or fixing a perfect future in our minds, mentoring actually takes advantage of the historical uneasiness in which we are embedded as institutions, as teachers and as students. Mentoring depends on adults who have often been pushed into formal educational life. It accepts

the complex challenge of creating educational opportunities with them that respond to their most practical needs (which we cannot neglect); and it promises guidance to students as they struggle with problems they will find demanding (which is our responsibility). In so doing, mentoring confronts us with uncomfortable questions about the knowledge we as professionals have come to trust, the roles we and our students have been trained to assume, and the very purpose of educational work. Mentoring calls on us as special kinds of experimenting educators to keep alive for as long as we can the openings for change we have been given. This is the advantage we should not throw away.

- Alan Mandell

ALL ABOUT **MENTORING**

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Faculty Assessment of Mentoring Roles at SUNY Empire State College
Arthur Langer

Introduction

The purpose of this essay is to present the results and conclusions derived from my doctoral dissertation that examined how mentoring is practiced at SUNY Empire State College. The dissertation (completed at Teachers College, Columbia University this year) was designed to address the research question: How do faculty at an institution that mandates mentoring of non-traditional students as part of its mission actually *practice* mentoring? My work was organized to explore the following subquestions:
1) How does the institution define and establish the parameters of faculty mentoring?
2) How do faculty see the purposes of mentoring?
3) How do faculty see the objectives of mentoring?
4) How do faculty define and describe their roles as mentors?
5) What functions do faculty see themselves serving as mentors?
6) What do faculty actually do to accomplish mentoring?

The following sections will provide the results of the study and how it addressed the research question.

Conceptual Foundations for the Study

The dissertation was built on several concepts and assumptions about the mentoring of adult, nontraditional students. These included the fact that there are a multiplicity of definitions of mentoring, that mentoring adult students is an appropriate educational choice, and that the use of transactional processes of learning in the education of adults is effective.

The literature on mentoring has repeatedly called attention to the fact that there is no single definition of mentoring widely accepted by those who practice mentoring, or by those who study it. To examine this phenomenon, Jacobi (1991) conducted a comprehensive review of mentoring literature in three categories: higher education, management and organizations, and developmental psychology. Her study concluded that although there are some areas of overlap, there is little consistency in the way mentoring is defined both within these categories and across them.

Within the category of higher education, certain assumptions have emerged in the definitions of mentoring offered. These include the assumption that there will be a significant difference between mentor and mentee in both age and life experience. However, the implied hierarchical relationship between mentor and mentee may not be appropriate to the mentoring of adult students, who tend to be older and more experienced than traditional college students.

In the adult education literature, both Daloz (1986), in *Effective Teaching and Mentoring: Realizing the Transformational Power of Adult Learning Experiences,* and Galbraith (1991), in *Facilitating Adult Learning: A Transactional Process,* established that the purposes and objectives of mentoring are tied to the goals of learning by transformation.

Transformation of the individual, according to both authors, occurs best through a transactional process. The transactional process is defined as an educational interface in which teacher and student collaborate in such away that they exchange information useful to both, making the learning experience enriching for both. This style of learning has been identified as particularly appropriate to adult learners and focuses on the development of the learner, drawing on his or her existing strengths and aptitudes as an adult and resulting in a transformation of the individual. According to Daloz and Galbraith, then, the goal of teaching and mentoring, broadly stated, is to help adult learners transform themselves to realize their own full potential.

The functions and actual procedures underlying mentoring have been described particularly in light of four principles of this transactional process: collaboration, challenge, critical reflection and praxis. Researchers have focused on questions such as the nature of the relationship between mentor and mentee, and have made recommendations about procedures to be followed for optimal results. These procedures are the basis of transactions that must occur between the mentor and mentee in order to enhance the effective- ness of the relationship and thus provide a better vehicle for transformation.

The Research Methodology

My study employed three research procedures: so- called "elite" interviews, survey and focus group. Because the phenomena under investigation were complex and multifaceted, the study used a combination of qualitative and quantitative inquiry. Since there was very little theoretical development in this area and very few empirical studies to guide this investigation, the study started with in-depth interviews that established a preliminary understanding of the topic. An elite inter- viewing method was chosen, which allowed participants to be selected based on their knowledge and experience rather than at random (Dexter, 1970). (In this phase of my work, I interviewed 13 mentors from three different ESC downstate centers.)

Building on these interviews, I used a survey to reach out to collect data from a broader ESC mentor constituency. While there are three types of survey methods -mail, telephone, and face-to-face -this study used a mail survey because it allowed me to minimize sampling error at a relatively low cost. It also allowed respondents to take their time in answering complex questions, and thus provided responses which were more accurate. The quantitative data supplied by the survey were then verified and illuminated through the use of a focus group. This focus group allowed participants to reflect on and respond to survey findings at a personal level. (Note: My survey was sent to 42 mentors - 64 percent of the total sample, responded.)

The SUNY Empire State Mentoring Model

This section addresses the study's findings for each of the research questions, presenting the overall model of mentoring that emerges at SUNY Empire State College. Some of these findings will be discussed in greater depth in subsequent sections.

SUNY Empire State College has created a program that allows its faculty to practice mentoring in a wide variety of ways. The institution does not attempt to standardize mentoring practice among mentors, and the faculty mentors who participated in the study perceived no need for standardized practice, for either consistency or quality reasons. These results are consistent with the literature that describes varying definitions of mentoring in higher education. While various scholars (like Jacobi and Daloz) have attempted to define the scope of mentoring in higher education, this research suggests that SUNY Empire State College has created its own unique model.

While this model does indeed embrace many of the definitions of mentoring in the higher education literature, it also has a number of unusual aspects. In particular, because of the nature/needs of mentoring of nontraditional students, mentoring at ESC incorporates some of the definitions of mentoring in businesses and corporate settings. For instance, these students tend to be very goal-oriented with respect to their academic requirements -they are eager to attain their degrees - and mentoring activities tend to support this. Business mentoring models (e.g. , Zey, 1984) also reflect this same kind of goal orientation. Hence mentoring at SUNY Empire State College appears to be a kind of "hybrid" of higher educational and business mentoring models.

The findings from my initial research suggest that student demographics will ultimately determine how mentoring is

defined at an institution of higher education. This reality supports the notion that mentoring programs will continue to vary in their design, with "hybrid" models being developed that cater to the constituents of each institution.

According to the results of my research, ESC faculty view the purpose of mentoring as consistent with that defined in much of the higher education literature. According to this literature, one important purpose of undergraduate mentoring has long been to assist undergraduate students who are considered "at risk" (Kerka, 1995). Thus, many of the mentoring programs in undergraduate institutions have targeted at-risk groups such as African-Americans, Hispanics and women. The one-to-one relationship between a mentor and mentee is seen as a way of increasing retention of these student groups, as well as of those students who find traditional educational environments as alienating or hostile (Johnson, 1996; Moses, 1989; Sedlacek, 1983; Ugbah & Williams, 1989). Undergraduate mentoring at ESC is consistent with the literature in that it focuses on an at- risk group defined as "nontraditional students." These students can be considered "at risk" because they are unable to obtain undergraduate education in a traditional four-year program. While many undergraduate mentoring programs are focused on improving student retention, the SUNY Empire State College model serves nontraditional students primarily by providing access - access that allows students to continue to work while they complete their studies. ESC mentors seemed very sensitive to the special needs of their adult students. For example, over 50 percent of survey respondents believed that it was "critical" to allow students to articulate their own learning goals. This aspect of ESC mentoring represents a practical approach to mentoring that satisfies the particular needs of nontraditional students.

In summary, this part of my study showed that in the view of ESC faculty, the purpose of mentoring is to provide a specialized approach to delivering education to a defined segment of the undergraduate population, a segment that lies outside the mainstream traditional student body.

Probably the most important deviation from the higher education mentoring literature I found concerned the objectives of mentoring. This study found that attainment of academic degrees by students was considered a more important objective than personal development, particularly among male faculty respondents. For example, only 37 percent of male survey respondents rated "facilitate growth and development of students" as "critical," and only 28 percent of males gave a "critical" rating to "foster student self-awareness." This finding was somewhat surprising considering the emphasis placed on personal growth and development in much of the existing literature on mentoring. For example, the issues of imparting wisdom (Shandley, 1989) and role modeling (Moses, 1989) were not mentioned by SUNY Empire State College respondents as important components of mentoring. Faculty mentors did seem concerned with the progress and success of their students, but not particularly in terms of their personal development. The lack of emphasis on the personal aspects of the mentoring relationship represents a significant difference from one of the mainstream opinions about what makes mentoring successful. The results, therefore, raise questions about whether the practice of mentoring in higher education should be seen as a nurturing process that requires an in-depth personal relationship for the process to be effective.

I also found that ESC faculty see their roles as mentors primarily as academic rather than personal. Survey respondents consistently gave higher ratings to academically-oriented terms such as "teacher/instructor," "facilitator," and "academic advisor" than to less academic terms such as "friend" or "therapist." In fact, responses to the elite interviews suggested that this pattern was likely to emerge in the survey. For example, when questioned about serving mentees in the capacity of a therapist, elite interview participants reacted negatively to this idea, one suggesting that he was "not qualified" to perform this role, another that it was "not appropriate." This finding also seems consistent with the respondents' focus on helping students attain degrees rather than on their personal development.

Another interesting result from the study, consistent with the finding discussed above, suggested that ESC mentors are not as collaborative and egalitarian with their students as the literature suggests they might be (Galbraith and Zelenak, 1991; Daloz, 1986; Weber, 1980; Shapiro, Haseltine, and Rowe, 1978) .The higher education literature paints a picture of a collaboration between mentor and mentee with the purpose of enhancing the student's intellectual development. The picture that emerges from the current study is one of professional educators working in a practical mode to help students complete their course requirements. While mentors reported enjoying their relationships with mentees, their primary focus seemed to be on assisting students with their academic programs rather than forming strong peer-type connections.

According to my research, the most salient function performed by ESC mentors in support of their roles is the development of strong relationships with their mentees. Respondents felt this function was a critical ingredient to the

mentoring process (80.9 percent of respondents rated it as either "critical" or "very important"). What was interesting about this finding was the importance of enjoyment in the practicing of mentoring; that is, the personal satisfaction it generates for the mentor.

Faculty mentors also indicated that fostering learning by students was a key function. Eighty-one percent of survey respondents rated "promote more active and meaningful learning by students" as "critical" or "very important." In order to help promote such learning, faculty mentors endorsed the function of being "student-centered," with 73.2 percent rating it as "critical" OR "very important."

On the other hand, mentors rated their administrative functions as less importance because of the apparent barriers to building better relationships with students this kind of work created for them. Administrative functions were clearly less enjoyable to faculty mentors, and therefore, rated lower in importance as a function of success.

The study found that mentoring is accomplished at ESC in two key ways: through ongoing contact between mentors and mentees, and through the mentor's efforts to make the experience productive for each individual student. Mentors reported that maintaining contact with students was of primary importance as the vehicle to judge their mentees' academic progress. They also placed great value on knowing their students -their individual strengths, their concerns and their professional goals. This knowledge enables mentors to integrate academic activities with a student's own interests and goals, to make education as relevant as possible to the student's needs. This practice seems consistent with the College's declared philosophy of "student-centered education." However, results of the study also suggested that faculty mentors expect mentees to take a strong initiative and involvement if the process is to be successful. While the literature implies that mentees must be attentive and dedicated (Cohen, 1995; Brookfield, 1990; Mezirow, 1990; Daloz, 1986), the mentors whose attitudes I studied felt that the student's role was as equally important as their own, and that because of this requirement, a mentoring educational experience was not for every student.

In summary, the model of mentoring that emerged from the answers to the research questions is one that is driven largely by student needs and demands. Institutional directives play little or no role in guiding the activities of mentors, and there seems to be no value placed on standardizing mentoring practice across the faculty. ESC mentors are free to decide which methods of practice are best for each of their students and, as such, have developed practices that deviate from some of the norms established in the literature. Overall, my research found that the main objective of mentoring was to help students to reach specific goals, in most cases the attainment of a degree. Mentoring at SUNY Empire State College, then, is student-directed and goal-driven.

The Transactional Process

This section of the essay addresses the transactional process of learning at ESC and how it compares with the existing literature on transactional and transformation learning theory. A number of adult education scholars (Cohen, 1995; Galbraith, 1991; Daloz, 1986) have pointed to the transactional process as a key method for working with nontraditional students. This study presents a good opportunity to review the concept of transactional learning and its relationship to actual mentoring practice at Empire State College.

I found that ESC mentoring does takes place in a transactional mode, in the sense that it is accomplished through regular and ongoing interactions between mentors and mentees. Transactions take place in a number of ways: through meetings, assignments, telephone conversations, etc. Although mentors differed somewhat in their frequency of meeting with students, there seemed to be a strong commitment to holding on- going and regular meetings with mentees, an important element of transactional education.

ESC mentoring also supports the transactional process of learning in that it depends upon active student involvement in the educational process. The College's principle of "student-centered pedagogy" is carried through in the way mentees shape their own programs of study and in the importance that faculty mentors give to the student's role in shaping the mentor/mentee relationship. The current study thus confirms Galbraith's (1991) belief that the student's active involvement in the process is crucial to success in mentoring. The implementation of ESC undergraduate mentoring also correlates with Galbraith's (1991) notion that the mentor is not a friend, but rather a facilitator.

While Empire State College mentoring is transactional in its ongoing nature and its focus on the student, it also shows some marked differences from the notion of transactional education as described in the literature. Scholars such as Galbraith (1991) and Daloz (1986) emphasize the collaborative nature of transactional education; however, faculty participants in my research gave lower ratings to the mentoring role of "collaborator" (40.5 percent of the respondents rated it as either "less important" or "not important"). In addition to the idea of collaboration between student and teacher, the transactional theory of education specifies that students will pass through a number of clearly defined stages in the learning process. The teacher/student relationship also passes through stages of development, from guidance to challenge to critical reflection to praxis. However, my doctoral research did not reveal that mentors see any predictable pattern of development in either students themselves or in the evolution of the mentor/mentee relationship. In some cases, faculty mentors did report that student development was important, but they did not indicate that they sought any particular pattern of development.

Another area in which I found ESC mentoring practices differs from transactional theory is in the nature of the mentor's relationship with the student. In general, transactional theory specifies afar more personal relationship than what seems to occur at ESC. For example, while Daloz (1986) recommends that mentors should at some point share personal experiences with mentees, SUNY Empire State College mentors did not endorse this idea. Respondents also gave low ratings to the idea of meeting students away from the office (90 percent of the respondents rated it as either "less important" or "not important"). In contrast to recommendations made in the literature on transactional learning, then, faculty mentors resisted the idea that forming close personal bonds with mentees was a central part of their mentoring practice.

The literature also suggests that in transactional education, the collaborative relationship between mentor and student develops over time, with the ultimate goal of the "transformation" of the student (Galbraith, 1991 ; Mezirow, 1990; Daloz, 1986). Interestingly, the notion of transformation did not emerge during any stage of the research into mentoring at ESC. While faculty mentors seemed genuinely concerned with the success of their students, there seemed to be little or no emphasis placed on the transformational development of students as individuals. Rather than focusing on the growth of students in a general intellectual or cognitive sense, mentors seemed to be concerned primarily with helping their students achieve practical goals.

The study suggests that there may be several reasons for this focus on goal-attainment rather than general educational development. First, faculty mentors indicated that they experienced significant time constraints and felt strong pressure to meet obligations to students. Under such circumstances, mentors have little time to focus on more than the basics of meeting requirements. Second, and more fundamentally, mentors reported that the students themselves were motivated to seek higher education by practical goals. This implies not only that ESC students are busy, but also that they have clear objectives for their learning and may not be open to experiences outside what they themselves envision.

My findings may call into question the theory of transformational learning with regard to nontraditional higher education students. Transactions *do* occur at SUNY Empire State College in the form of interaction between mentor and mentee, but they do not follow the theory of education as defined in Galbraith (1991) and Daloz (1986). The focus of the transactional method I found at ESC is to meet student needs, and the primary need of these particular students seems to be degree attainment. Faculty mentors did indicate that student growth and development during the process was important, but this growth did not map to the stages of transactional learning specified in the theory. It would appear that because of the needs of the students and because of the time constraints placed on both mentors and mentees, the transformational model of development is not particularly useful as a way to understanding ESC mentoring practices.

Issues of Gender

This next section focuses on the results of the study as it relates to differences between gender of the mentor. Some interesting exceptions to the previous conclusions appear in the responses of ESC's female mentors. Specifically, female mentors gave higher importance to questions that focused on the students' needs and stimulation of cognitive development. The high ratings for these questions suggest that female mentors place more importance on student needs beyond academic progress. The results might also suggest that female mentors may endorse mentoring practices that conform more closely to transformational learning theory. This was best evidenced by the consistently higher ratings given by female mentors to questions such as: "Foster self-awareness," "Allow students to articulate their own thoughts,"

"Create a safe environment for the students," "Challenge students to achieve new perspectives," "Transforms your own view of learning," "Help students become conscious of them- selves," and "Stimulate cognitive development." These higher ratings suggest that female mentors have a somewhat more philosophical and nurturing perspective towards their students than male mentors, particularly concerning self-awareness and interpersonal growth. Surprisingly, the literature does not focus on the differences in mentor philosophy by gender. Furthermore, there was no statistical data available in the literature that elaborated on the male-to-female mentor ratio. On the other hand, studies on mentee differences by gender are more prevalent (Faison, 1996; Cross, 1981 ; Knefelkamp & Stewart, 1983; Moore, 1983; Payton, 1985), most likely because women have been a more targeted group that could benefit from a mentor/mentee relationship.

The Mentor/Mentee Relationship

This section focuses on the results of the research with respect to the mentor/mentee relationship and compares the results to the existing literature. With regard to relationships between mentors and mentees, this study found significant differences with the literature. First, much of the mentoring literature emphasizes the question of different age and rank between mentor and mentee (Blackwell, 1989; Moore & Amey, 1988; Daloz, 1986; Lester & Johnston, 1981). This issue is also linked with the question of role modeling, in which the mentor serves as a model for the student's development. Interestingly, the notion of mentor as an "older and wiser" individual who takes the mentee under his/her wing did not emerge as an important issue in any phase of the research into mentoring at ESC. Faculty mentors seemed to view themselves more as professional educational facilitators for their students than as guides in any larger sense.

Second, the quality of the relationships reported at Empire State College also seemed to be different from those discussed in much of the literature. Tillman (1995), for example, described the mentor/mentee relationship as passionate and emotional. Mentoring literature from the field of psychology (Welch, 1996; Hall & Sandier, 1983; Levinson, 1978) also described the mentoring relationship as powerfully emotional for both parties. As noted earlier, while ESC mentors reported enjoying their relationships with their mentees, there was no sense of strong emotional bonding between them. Some did report forming lasting friendships with former mentees, but this was not the norm. Overall, mentors viewed themselves as performing a job. While they did seem to be committed to their students, this commitment could be described as more professional than personal.

Third, several scholars have described the mentoring relationship as one that is mutually enriching and fulfilling for both mentor and mentee; there is a sense in which the mentor learns as much from the mentoring relationship as does the mentee (Cohen, 1995; Jacobi, 1991; Daloz, 1986). My study of ESC mentors revealed a much more practically-driven mentoring relationship, in which mentors assist their students to reach their goals. As earlier described, mentors did report that they enjoyed mentoring, but there was not a sense in which they themselves felt that they were growing as a result of these relationships. Once again, the emphasis seemed to be on providing professional services for students rather than engaging in any kind of transforming relationship.

These three differences from the mentoring literature suggest that there may be a need to reframe the way mentoring of nontraditional students is understood. While the mentoring literature describes the relationship as a personal and fulfilling one for both participants, ESC mentors seemed committed to serving their students in a professional, not personal, capacity. It was my conclusion that they quite consciously shied away from developing deep personal involvement with their students.

In general, the picture that emerges from this study of mentoring at SUNY Empire State College is one of a practical program designed to help students meet goals rather than foster personal development or personal relationships. The mentoring model that has evolved at ESC is consistent with much of the literature in that it reflects the fact that nontraditional students bring their own perspective and experience to the learning environment (Merriam, 1987). They have diverse reasons for pursuing education, often for professional advancement (Boshier & Collins, 1985). While some literature suggests that the goals of undergraduate mentoring should be the development of skills and career goals (Moore, 1983; Blackwell, 1989), the findings from this research suggest that students at ESC are motivated to develop skills in order to advance careers that are already clearly in focus.

All of these findings raise the question of whether what might be called the "traditional" mentoring model as presented in the literature is appropriate for mentoring of adult students in higher education. The notion of personal intimacy between

teacher and student has become especially problematic in today's environment, and faculty may question the appropriateness of, for example, making the kinds of personal revelations that Daloz (1986) recommends as important to building the mentoring relationship. In addition, mentors *and* students in SUNY Empire State's program (this is something they have in common) are busy adults with little time for going beyond the basic demands of meeting program requirements. In mentoring of nontraditional students, it may not be practical to implement programs that involve the complexities and time requirements of transformational learning theory.

Some Implications for Current Practices and Policies

This dissertation points to several implications for higher educational institutions that operate formal undergraduate mentoring programs. My results suggest that financial restraints represent a profound obstacle for the long-term success of any mentoring program. In particular, having adequate financial support for the administrative infrastructure is essential, so that faculty can maximize their focus on student interaction and minimize the time they devote to administrative tasks.

As a complement to providing strong administrative support, institutions need to stipulate a maximum number of students to be handled by anyone mentor. Without a reasonable faculty-to-student ratio, mentors may be forced to reduce their time allotments and thus the quality of coverage for their mentees. Mentors also need appropriate support to help them keep track of their students. My research also suggested that advancements in technology are not, in themselves, the answer to this problem.

In addition, this study found that many faculty mentors felt overwhelmed by their administrative duties and their teaching workloads, and that they have little time for research or other professional development. To help prevent faculty from "burning out," institutions seeking to develop programs that rely on such a labor intensive process as mentoring, need to provide their faculty with sufficient time to do research. This is important for reasons beyond the scholarly rewards of research. For one thing, providing mentors with time to pursue their scholarly interests will allow them to stay abreast of developments in their fields, which in turn can help them provide more current perspectives to their students. Research time should help mentors develop relationships with other scholars. This study also revealed that faculty mentors have little awareness of one another's mentoring practices and that ongoing ex- change between mentors may be beneficial both for mentors and for the institution as a whole. The kind of "development" that research time could provide is important both for the improvement of the profession of adult educators at large and for the practice of mentoring at any single institution.

As I have discussed above, my research suggested that active participation of mentees in the mentoring process is very important to the success of that process. Institutions developing mentoring programs should, therefore, communicate with students, from the start, that they must actively participate in order for the mentoring relationship to be effective. Acknowledgment of this kind of engagement in the learning process might also reduce the number of mentees who are not successful in completing their programs.

The problem of mentee attrition may also be addressed by institutions formulating follow-up procedures to ensure ongoing dialogue with constituents.

Nontraditional students, particularly those with demanding work and personal lives, have many distractions that can steer them away from their academic careers. Mentees left without patient, careful and on-going support from faculty might drift and lose contact with their mentors.

This research raised a variety of questions and issues about the many dimensions of mentoring, and particularly its practice at particular locations of SUNY Empire State College. More generalizable conclusions could result from the expansion of the sample to encompass the entire institution. Furthermore, the study could be expanded to include other institutions that are implementing different types of mentoring programs for nontraditional students. Such a comparative perspective could be very useful. Research that would include students might provide additional insights into how students experience the process of mentoring. Obtaining such student feedback might also provide valuable information relating to the perceived value of the mentoring experience and the quality of education. Finally, expanded research in mentoring at graduate schools, in psychology and in the corporate environment may continue to provide important techniques of mentoring that can be applied to undergraduate programs. Indeed, the results of this study at ESC showed

that the contemporary nontraditional student requires support more similar to that offered in business settings than in more traditional undergraduate academic programs.

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> It is characteristic of the journey metaphor that mentors may be as gatekeepers as well as guides. They stand at the boundary of the old and new worlds, and as such, they hold the keys for successful passage. They understand the cryptic passwords and... seem to be able to move undaunted among the inhabitants of a frightening world. That they are in a position to make judgments and to select or reject us give them considerable power. Their refusal can be a terrible blow; their acceptance of us, a tonic of magical force. Though some take to it more readily than others, such power makes mentors uneasy. Handling it is delicate work, since to dissemble too soon can lead to confusion and even resentment from students. Yet to accept it too easily or hold it too long denies the student his or her own power.
>
> Laurent A. Daloz,
> *Mentor*, (1999) p. 96

Shrines
Bob Carey, Metropolitan Center

The county of Kent in southeastern England is the home of two of England's historic sites. The first, the cathedral at Canterbury, is the place where St. Augustine (not to be confused with 4th century Bishop of Hippo) began his work of bringing Christianity to England. More specifically, he was the emissary of Pope Gregory the Great and was to establish Roman Christianity in Britain. Ethelbert, the King of Kent, and his wife, Bertha, who was, herself, a Christian, welcomed him, a welcome which included a gift of a tract of land and the buildings that stood on it (they dated from the time of the Roman occupation), the site of what is today Canterbury Cathedral. The Archbishop of Canterbury was, initially, the head of the Church of England (so named after Henry the VIII broke with Rome) and is now the head of the world wide Anglican Communion. The Cathedral houses the shrine of Thomas Becket, one of the English church's martyrs to the faith; it is also the site of the shrine of Odo, an earlier Archbishop and martyr who was slain by Danish invaders. Like most cathedrals, Canterbury took a few centuries to build but now stands finished and venerable in the town whose name it bears.'

Canterbury, as did cathedral churches generally, had a monastery attached to it. The liturgical and prayer requirements of a cathedral kept a sizable Benedictine house occupied, even as its members carried out its more secular but necessary tasks of farming and trade. The monks are gone from Canterbury, though the ruins in the Cathedral Close and in nearby St. Augustine's Abbey give the visitor a clear sense of the size of the cathedral operations and the numbers involved in running it. The most fateful of all the misfortunes to fall on the cathedral and the members of the chapter was the land and cash grab instigated by Henry VIII, "Defender of the Faith;' a title given him by the Pope which, alas, did not prevent him from suppressing the monasteries of the church, carting off their wealth, and sharing out properties he had seized among his friends.[2]

A cathedral is many things. In the case of Canterbury, the building is a composite, its apparent architectural coherence the result of adding on and shoring up and designing to make things fit rather than coming realized from the architect's imagining. One can see portions of wall that date back to Augustine and sections attributed to the restoration undertaken by St. Odo (942-958) which came to naught when the Danes sacked the city in 1011. Some good came out of this when Canute, the Danish king, helped to repair the Cathedral following his conversion. Lanfranc, the cathedral's great Norman champion, helped to give it something like it final shape in the course of repairing the damage caused by fires set during the time of the conquest. Anselm who succeeded him pushed on with the work consecrating the cathedral in 1130. It grew like the oldest of trees and now finished and graced with ornamental preserved ruins, it wears the centuries of its existence with great decorousness. The stones murmur with the low voices of memory, as do the windows, the liturgical amplitude of the services, the tombs, the music of evensong and the density of religious and national memorabilia found in the nave, the undercroft and the many chapels of the place.

However deep and rich its deposit of historical memory, a cathedral exists to proclaim that the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. The Gothic, in particular, in its use of vaults, and light and color is "an image of heaven."[3] Its size, the upward sweep of space, the geometry of pillar, vault and wall are in the service of creating a sense of immutability, of the

unchanging truth of the very gospel the cathedral rehearses in its decorative details and the life of proclamation and prayer that is re-enacted daily within its walls. Here one stands at the center of things; here, the light of understanding shines brightest; the mysteries of the faith once embraced bring one to the clarity of an authoritative proposition.

The textual complement to the testimony of stone, window and liturgy was the tradition of theological reflection and proclamation that explored the way in which one could go to the world of nature and see in details both large and small the evidences of God's handwork, could read His purposes and see, in the design of things, His providence and grace. Natural Theology was a robust tradition in the Church of England during the 18th and 19th centuries. Though in some ways it was a strategy of retreat, it seemed for many, such as the Anglican dons who taught the sciences at Cambridge, to combine the religious truths of Christianity with the growing body of knowledge that science was heaping up on everyone's plate. Science seemed, indeed, to be in the service of showing how God's world worked. Paley's theology which demonstrated that the world is the handiwork of a shaping intelligence and that the self evident "design" of things is, *a fortiori,* proof of God's existence seemed to provide a framework that would allow science, done in correct Baconian, non-speculative terms, to reveal yet more wonders of nature in that further proof of the beneficence of God's design.

That such reasoning was circular, proving what was already believed to be the case, did not give those who used it much pause. The narrative thrust of Christian theology understood the world to exist between creation and the second coming; what happened in that vast interim was accounted for by the fact of God's having acted and continuing to act. Time and change was a drama, the meaning of which was clear, because the God who presided over nature had shown what His purposes were in Scripture. Nature showed what Scripture confirmed. Darwin's account of evolutionary change would suggest that nature was not the book the divines took it to be.

A few miles southwest of London is the village of Down -once spelled with an "e." Down is where Charles Darwin spent most of his adult life, and where he wrote the works that introduced evolutionary theory to the world. The house has been restored and is open to visitors who want to see the place where this singular man framed a theory that, to this day, sets off fierce debates even as its development and reiteration yield new insights into how biological life is organized and develops.

Darwin would seem to be removed from the monkish tradition of Canterbury, but the self-discipline that coping with bad health created makes him an heir. His day moved with the predictability of the monkish hours. His walks on the Sandwalk, a path on the grounds of his home, allowed him to reflect on his experiments and writing and were absolutely predictable, as were dinner and supper and the evening entertainment -billiards or cards or reading aloud with his wife. The days were unchanging in their routines; his friends and supporters, Hooker, Huxley and others who came to champion his theory after the *Origins* was published, would visit periodically. The visits were always purposeful, never for the sheer joy of talking, swapping stories and gossiping; whatever there was of that was tucked into discussions that Darwin's questions shaped and directed. He pulled on people for information; he collected, sorted, queried, suggested. His correspondence and notebooks attest to the unrelenting quality of his curiosity, his wanting to know why something was the way it was.

Darwin's residence at Down, though a large and comfortable house (the result of much remodeling over the years after Charles and Emma set up housekeeping), is simply a large and attractive residence. That this is where Darwin wrote his masterworks is what sets it apart. The visitor has to bring a bit of awe along, have at least a first level sense of Darwin's accomplishment for the place to be evocative in the least. If the visitor knows something about his life, the relentlessness of his curiosity and information gathering, the draining daily battle he waged with poor health, then his study, his books, the tools of capturing and thinking through information from a variety of sources including his own experiments take on a certain luminosity. The extraordinary scope of his work and his achievement make registering admiration a matter of good manners -at the very least. What lingers is the sense of how hard it is to see what goes with what; Darwin's was the genius of holding many things steadily in view until he could describe the one thing they accounted for.

By the beginning of the 19th century, the taken for granted history of the world, a history read in large measure off the pages of Scripture, was being rethought and cast in new terms as the fledgling sciences began to piece together new questions about what the earth and the heavens were and how they worked, and as new knowledge of other peoples and cultures grew. But we must not speak too hastily of change; even as geology (the hot science of the early 19th century) began to create a more complete picture of the meaning of rock formations and the fossils they contained, it was possible

to read the first chapters of the Book of Genesis as true.[4] They were true because they were in the *Bible* and described the work of God; they were true because they could be read metaphorically, the seven days of creation being read to mean an indefinite period of time ("But a day is as nothing in Thy sight"). So the stories were available as statements of belief, as a metaphoric telling of a religious truth and as theologically and historically true. Given the still vanishingly small knowledge about the age of the world and its inhabitants that most people had, it did not matter too much how one read Genesis; it accounted for the world that people looked out on.

But the movement underway in geological studies would continue to gather strength and clarity. The natural sciences, geology first and then biology, would account for change over time; the work would be historical and developmental. It would no longer describe an unchanging order, but account for how change -still happening, still present in the structure of everyday life -occurred. History as change, not history as order would break the bond between scientific and theological accounts of the world. Darwin's theory was in many ways, if not the final cut severing the two, an end point. Science, once perceived as theology's glad companion, would, for many, become something of an enemy. Science, once the provider of example after example of evidences of God's designing care, would become a force needing the restraint of religious tutelage, its truths held at arm's length as "theory" and therefore question-able.

A religious tradition grows by the reinterpretation of its original vision; interpreters do not set out to create new knowledge, to overthrow received teachings; they seek to understand received texts or traditions and what they "reveal" more fully. The interpretive strategy is one of acknowledging the work of prior interpreters and then calling attention to what they didn't see, what they missed, what was there all this time but not seen. Reformers use this strategy, announcing that what the established community and its current authorities are teaching is not really a correct reading of the text.

What a religious tradition cannot explain is change. It can attribute it to God, the Spirit, etc., but it has no way of accounting for the whys of changes that fill our days. Why did this species become extinct? Why are there so many beetles? Why does life end so badly? Darwin did have an explanation -natural selection. It was a "reading" that invited further inquiry, controversy (of that there seems no end -a sure sign of the health of the theory), and that made nature a book that theologians, already bound by their texts and the protocols of their interpretive communities, would never have found nor been able to read.

The question of purpose still remains; it remains be- cause it is central to our own self-understanding and where and how we locate it. The debate between "science" and "religion" is, at the end of the day, a debate within ourselves about how we see the world and our days in it.

Footnotes

1. Hill, D. Ingram, *Canterbury Cathedral* (Bell & Hyman: London, 1986). The details of the
2. cathedral's history are explored in considerable detail in Hill's guide. Hill, p. 23 ff.
3. von Samson, Otto, *The Gothic Cathedral* (Princeton: Bollingen, 1988), p. 8
4. See, for example, Charles Coulston Gillispie, *Genesis and Geology,* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996; Stephen Jay Gould, *Time's Arrow/Time's Cycle: Myth and Metaphor in the Discovery of Geological Time,* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987; Martin J.S. Rudwick, *The Meaning of Fossils,* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2nd. Ed. 1985.

Any choice of pedagogical practice implies a conception of the learner and may, in time, be adopted by him or her as the appropriate way of thinking about the learning process. For a choice of pedagogy inevitably communicates a conception of the learning process and the learner. Pedagogy is never innocent. It is a medium that carries its own message.

Jerome Bruner,
The Culture of Education (1996), p. 63

Memo 2
Gary Goss and James Robinson, Long Island Center

To: The Search Committee
From: Gary Goss and James Robinson
Re: Preliminary Interviews with Two Candidates for Director at the Midlothian Learning Center

Interview One: Count Dracula

It's a dark and stormy night at the Midlothian Learning Center. A bat flies in through an open window.

Goss: Good evening, Count Dracula. How are you?

Dracula: Maybe a liddle peckish. I vill just finish dis tomato juice. Do you have any salt? Vhy do I schmell garlic?

Goss: I understand that you've read the materials on the history of the College, along with the new center and College configuration we sent. Maybe we can start by asking for your reaction to the reorganization?

Dracula: Aha, yess. I can say dis ability by da College to change itself constantly, dis makes me wery comfortable. I love garlic, by the v ay. Do not believe everyting you hear.

Goss: I've heard that garlic is a tonic for the blood.

Dracula: Exactly! Exciting!

Goss: And your reaction to the changes at our College?

Dracula: Constantly changing! Vat a survival strategy! Just like my own!

Goss: So you feel comfortable with change?

Dracula: You vant to see a bat?

Goss: Not really. If you actually are a batman… doesn't that have a certain patriarchal resonance?

Dracula: Oh, no, I am not really a man.

Goss: Are you really a bat?

Dracula: Professor, I can be almost anyting you vant. I can go anywhere and administer anyone in any mode. I haft a

tousand years of dis schape- schifting, you see. For example, suppose you send me in a dory to make deal for uss to teach new historicism to the coast guard. Who iss in a better position to say to a schip's captain, "Hey, sir, we can be anyting you vant. Please?"

Goss: You realize that most of our students work during the day. We need a center director who can remain actively engaged here after dark.

Dracula: No problem. I yam a night person.

Goss: Fine. I hope you understand that much of the center director's job consists of fielding complaints from our students, who are mostly women.

Dracula: Do not be concerned. Women haff no complaints about me -I look at dem and dey adore me. Who knows vhy?

Goss: You agree with our commitment to distance learning?

Dracula: There iss no one more distant dan I am. Dat is a fact.

Goss: We're talking about teaching at a distance. The faculty here -most of them -are used to meeting with students in an office and talking to them face to face. That's not cost effective, of course. Have you thought about how we might teach our students without that sort of contact?

Dracula: I giff you a single example. I meet with a student once and impart just some of my knowledge, a liddle. After dat, anyting associated with me- maybe she looks at da moon, for instance -arouses in her a deep longing for more of dis knowledge, a longing that iss irresistible. She seeks it out. End of case.

Goss: Really? But can you show our mentors how to do that?

Dracula: Gladly. My pleasure.

Goss: Can you help with recruiting? That's always a problem here, getting criminal justice students to actually enroll for degrees.

Dracula: To tell da truth, I just look at a police officer - he vill enroll.

Goss: And retention has been difficult.

Dracula: My retention rate iss today one hundred percent. You can look it up.

Goss: Fine. But there's another potential problem. The rules we follow at this College keep sliding away from us. People have trouble with that. I mean, we started out doing contracts that were individualized to meet the needs of the students. The idea was to motivate the students with their own interests. Then we began to Xerox standard contracts, one size fits all. It was faster. Today we have banks of contracts on computers but no catalog of courses for students to choose from. Instead, we tell them what to take. Tomorrow, who knows?

We once had rules. Now we have impressions of rules.

Dracula: How vonderful!

Goss: Wonderful?

Dracula: It iss a vonderful practice. Consider me. I make up a rule and decide to follow it. But how I follow it, dat is an interpretation of da rule, and who makes the interpretation? Me!

Goss: Well, that does seem -who tells you when you have misinterpreted and followed the rule incorrectly?

Dracula: No one! So I haft never followed a rule incorrectly in my life. What could be nicer? And entire college like me? Sso congenial.

Goss: You lost me somewhere. Is all this -the ability to change your shape, the ability to interpret rules any way you please -how you became immortal?

Dracula: Of course. It iss how your college became immortal. You are flexible. You comprehend dat I read the College materials closely, all the way back to 1971. After twenty-fife years, flexibility iss the principle the College has left. Oat iss what people like you vill be remembered for: flexibility! Oh, you must be wery proud.

Interview Two: LeMonstre
It is a grey winter afternoon at Camberwell Hall where the representative of the search committee of the Midlothian faculty has met to interview the second candidate. The candidate is an unusually tall, big-boned, dark- haired man, not in the prime of life, with a disturbing scar across the left side of his face, a paisley ascot and a bolt in his earlobe. He wears ankle-high Doc Martens and a heavy chain on his left wrist, and is accompanied by a young woman in black with a bull mastiff on a leash.

Robinson: Good afternoon, Doctor. ..Monster, is it? Do I have that right?

LeMonstre: (Visibly nettled) LeMonstre, please. My family descends in part from a minor branch of the Habsburgs, but custom evolves over the centuries, and I prefer the French.

Robinson: Well, that's great. With your accent and looks you kind of remind me of Arnold Schwarzenegger. You're not related?

LeMonstre: C'est possible. (Stares out the window and cracks his enormous knuckles.) A charming spot... what an atmosphere you have created here. The boarded attic windows, the peeling paint, the mud, the untrimmed hedges, the intensified feeling of gentrified decay. It's... (speaking to his companion) ...how would you put it, my dear?

Ms. Shelley: (Quieting the mastiff with a jerk of the leash.) It's a dump. But at least we could park the Mercedes.

LeMonstre: (Smiling approvingly) I can always count on your Anglo-Saxon bluntness, ma petite. It's part of your infinite appeal. (Rubs the scar on his face gently.) But now, professor, as to this position that you have advertised?

Robinson: Oh, yeah, right. Well, we need a dean. The last one sort of...well...(blushes furiously).

LeMonstre: Enough. I understand completely. These things happen in the best places. But let us come to the point, my friend. Just how "badly" do you need a dean?

Robinson: (Wincing) Pretty badly. I mean, we make do. We always manage to get along somehow. But things aren't exactly humming. (Facing the truth) It's. ..rotten.

LeMonstre: Good. I appreciate your candor. It saves time. Now, I assume that this house and its contents are under the supervision of the dean? And that the dean would direct whatever renovations, improvements, consolidations or relocations that might be required within the limits of the guidelines established by the more distant and peripheral authorities?

Robinson: Uh-huh. Except we do have a faculty chair and the whole faculty consults on the big decisions.

LeMonstre: (Smiling) To be sure. Although real power would exist where it has always belonged.

Robinson: I beg your pardon?

LeMonstre: In the commonly understood sense of a seigneurial desmesne, with the usual rights to be exercised fully, though adapted somewhat to local custom, of course. Feudal lordship.

Robinson: (Turning to Ms. Shelley) Could you elaborate on that?

Ms. Shelley: It means he could do what he felt like. And you'd get run over if you tried anything funny. (Mastiff growls menacingly.) Shut up, Jock, or I'll smack you a good one. (Dog subsides, whimpering.)

LeMonstre: It would also mean that, upon my demise, the deanship would be inherited through the male line by my eldest surviving son. Provided, of course, that this did not conflict with Ms. Shelley's prior claim upon center finances.

Ms. Shelley: So the joint comes to me if anything happens to him, see? (Popping a piece of bubble gum into her mouth.) He owes me that much, after all I've done for him.

Robinson: I'm not sure the job description contains all that. (Shuffling through papers on the table.) Where did you say you worked last?

LeMonstre: I didn't. I've been consulting for the last few years -Anwar Sadat, Indira Gandhi -if you refer to my resume you will see for yourself I most recently administered the Tiger Bay Rehabilitation Center for the Foreign Legion. I was given the Order of Merit for reducing the frequency of parole requests. An outpost of civilization, more current than this establishment, and with its own peculiar charms. My work is cutting edge. You may have read my monograph, "Teleconferenced Penal Servitude Via the 24-hour Asynchronous Faculty Meeting?" No? Then you can't imagine the impact I could have on your work culture.

Robinson: I don't know. ..your career seems so. .. different. I'm not sure you would feel all that comfortable here. I'm afraid we're rather traditional, in an experimental sort of way.

LeMonstre: On the contrary. I assure you, professor, my life has been one long search to, as it were, reassemble my various parts. And it seems to me, that this is exactly what your situation requires. You have some rather paltry fields in Riverhead, a dubious claim on part of an ancestral Westbury estate, formerly owned by an eminent squadristi named Clark, and an unsteady and contestable title to shabby quarters in Hauppauge. Even the trees here along your entrance have begun to tumble down! Who better to restore your former grandeur than one nurtured in the traditions of Habsburg diplomacy and yet created by modern technology? I am, if you will, the administrator par excellence -part Charles V, part Golem.

Ms. Shelley: (Cracking her gum.) Could we get this over with? I want to get to the Walt Whitman mall. Is that in Melville?

LeMonstre: Of course, ma fleur. We have kept this gentleman too long. By the way, professor, may I ask whether that somewhat musky odor is your cologne? It's really too exquisite... such dankness.

Robinson: That's probably the refrigerator.

LeMonstre: My boat, as you Anglo-Saxons like to express yourselves, may indeed have arrived. (Whistles softly to the mastiff, which springs instantly to its huge feet.) Well, monsieur, I must lumber off. I trust we shall have the pleasure of meeting again soon. I like your manner. You would make an excellent footman, properly dressed. My dear?

Interviews Scheduled For Next Week:
Scheherazade
Don King
The Vicar of Bray
The Chimera
Lord Cardigan

While not written about education, Paul Berman's recent comments on life 10 years after the collapse of the Soviet Bloc seem pertinent nonetheless:

We should ask ourselves, How have we changed? What do we actually support today that would have provoked our indignation yesterday? Which of our assumptions were flat out wrong? We should put our entire emphasis on one point only: on what is new and fresh in our thinking.

Dissent (fall, 1999)

A Teacher for Littleton: Vivian Gussin Paley
Mayra Bloom, New City Unit

Ordinarily, the only people who pay attention to preschool teachers are preschoolers. But perhaps now, in the wake of Littleton, adults will consider early childhood as a developmental stage with life-and-death importance.

One teacher who understands this is Vivian Gussin Paley, the recipient of a MacArthur "Genius" Grant and the author of a nutshell library of books (*White Teacher, The Boy Who Would Be A Helicopter, You Can't Say You Can't Play; The Girl with the Brown Crayon,* and many more). In a world of schoolyard shootings, the title of her newest book, *The Kindness of Children,* sounds absurd. But even a brief review of Paley's work suggests that if boys like Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold had received a different kind of preschool education, their lives might have followed different paths.

Vivian Gussin Paley proved herself a master teacher in her early books, *Molly is Three* and *Wally's Stories,* which contained meticulous transcriptions of children's voices and stories about classroom life. In 1989, she documented her ongoing confrontation with internal and institutional racism in *White Teacher*- in effect, making a public commitment to peace education and anti-bias work. *White Teacher* also set the stage for Paley's extended study of exclusion, an experience central to the lives of Klebold, Harris, and other teen-age murderers.

In 1990, Harvard University Press published *The Boy Who Would Be* A *Helicopter,* the story of four-year old Jason, who focuses on his toy helicopter to the exclusion of everything -and everyone -in his nursery school classroom. Paley documents the pains- taking process through which Jason begins to separate from his beloved plaything and join classroom society. Readers alarmed by Jason's symptoms may wonder whether he is emotionally handicapped, oppositional, ADD, obsessive-compulsive or depressed. To Paley, however, Jason is not a diagnosis; he is a particular child negotiating a crucial passage toward what Murray Bowen and David Schnarch call "differentiation." Jason must learn that he can hold on to his own identity -his boundaries -and, at the same time, enter the school community. To complicate matters, he must also tolerate a new level of separation from his family and home. Given the difficulty and complexity of these developmental changes, it is not surprising that the lifework of differentiation can be thwarted at any age. Fortunately, Paley's classroom offers Jason a kind of asylum -a community which helps him transform his destructive and isolationist impulses into creative energy. Boys like Jason, Eric and Dylan must be skillfully, patiently and respectfully drawn into what Robert Kegan calls the school's "culture of embeddedness." Otherwise, their inability to connect with other children will harden into permanence and rage, as it clearly did in Littleton. It does not take a great deal of imagination to picture Eric or Dylan in preschool -they were not children who entered easily into classroom life or were ever accepted by their peers. Nor unfortunately, were they drawn in by teachers able to see that battles for children's very lives were taking place in the dress-up corner and on the monkey bars.

Exclusion -isolation -can be compounded in the early years by sustained exposure to what Honey Dickson calls the world of "screens." Television, radio, video, action movies, music, comic books, newscasts, computers and video games all contribute to a constant stream of images which reflect and magnify our most nihilistic, terrifying dreams. By the time these boys are adolescents, they have expert access to the Internet, which provides the practical tools and the political rationale for transforming these nightmares into reality.

Kindergarten teaching is not for the faint of heart, and Vivian Paley has never been a stranger to the cruelty and consequent suffering of children. Rather than accept these as necessities, isolation -and video games -all contribute however, she identifies them as the inevitable consequence of the exclusion that occurs when children are permitted to say to one another, "You can't play." Facing this issue directly, she declares that, in her classroom at least, *You Can't Say You Can't Play*, the title of another recent Paley book. (And lest one thinks the new rule has only small-fry application, just think of what might happen if college admissions offices or high school football teams couldn't say, "You can't play!")

Before imposing the new rule, however, Paley needed to find out what children thought of her idea. Tellingly, the older kids agreed that it might be okay for the little kids, but it would never work for us, suggesting that fourth and fifth graders know that a loss of innocence has already taken place. One kindergarten child, however, saw Paley's rule as the loss of privilege it was. "What's the use of playing," she wailed, "if you can't keep someone out?"

Paley, however, stood her ground. After a short period of adjustment, the preschoolers accepted the fact that you can't say you can't play, but they didn't stop there. They decided, for example, that it was no longer fair, when acting out their plays, to pick specific friend for particular roles. From now on, parts would be distributed on a rotating basis. The astonishing result was that quiet children started getting major parts; boys willingly played babies; and girls got to be monsters as well as mommies. Race, gender, popularity and precocity became irrelevant categories as the class enacted their personal and community dramas. It is hard not to wonder whether the tragedy at Columbine High School could have happened if the children had grown up with Paley's rule.

After many years of studying the relationship between stories and the creation of community, Paley published *The Kindness of Children.* Here she tells the Teddy Story, about the commonplace -extraordinary hospitality with which a group of English children greet a disabled child. Any who has observed young children for even a short time has had the opportunity to see evidence of caring, generosity, empathy. But what the screens have done to us, perhaps cruelest of all, is convince us that such kindness is an aberration, and that the essence of childhood is violence and hate. The penetration of this evil but mesmerizing idea into the American consciousness has led the way to Littleton, and the question, "How can we prevent such disasters?" is met with increasingly cynical, cruel and simplistic answers. But before we travel any farther down these unproductive roads, perhaps we could take off the headphones; turn off the phones; shut off the screens; sit down on one of the little wooden chairs... and listen to the preschool teacher.

ALL ABOUT
MENTORING
A Publication of Empire State College

Making Study Groups Relevant for Mentors and Students
David Quay; Long Island Center

For the past three years, I have taught study groups in the general area of criminology. Most of the students in these groups have been police officers in either New York City or Nassau County. With this in mind, I had a number of objectives while I did the teaching preparation. First of all, I wanted to encourage the group to do an original research project. Secondly, I wanted to make the research interesting and relevant to their work situations. And thirdly, I hoped to use some of the findings of this group work to further my own research on trends in crime in NYC. To accomplish these objectives, I designed a research paper project that would use existing data as a starting point, and could then build upon this data with student research.

The starting point for the research was a study done in 1973 by *The New York Times.* This initial project divided NYC into 70 police precincts and provided crime statistics and demographic information for each precinct. I went over this study with students, explaining the use of such terms as "index crimes, "crime rate" and "demographic variables." The early study group meetings were intended to introduce students to these basic terms and concepts used in criminology, and to outline the requirements for the research project. Using the *Times* study as a "baseline" measurement, I asked the students to select a precinct in which they either worked or with which they were familiar, and then to show how the precinct has changed in terms of crime and demographics. Current crime data was easily available from the precincts. To get the demographic information, the students had to go to the local community boards and request this data. Once the information was obtained, the students' main task was to compare the two time periods and show the reasons for the changes in crime over a 20-year period.

Our subsequent group meetings revolved around discussions of specific crimes (homicide, rape, drug offenses) and their causes. In addition, the trends in crime, the relationship between the victims and the offenders, recent legislation and possible deterrents to crime were also covered. Throughout our discussions, the goal was to relate these discussion topics to the research project. The objective of the group discussions was to show the correlation between crime and the demographic variables of race, income, age and gender. We wanted to see if the correlation between crime and certain demographics applied to the individual precinct under study.

The overall trend in crime in the U.S. over the last 20 years has been downward. Violent crime has had some mild fluctuations, while property crime has been steadily declining. The 1970s represented a peak period for most crime, and it was for this reason that I chose the 1973 study to serve as a baseline for comparison purposes. That is, if NYC followed the national trend, crime in the precincts studied should have been lower in the 1990's than in the 1970's. Over the three-year period during which I conducted the study groups, I was able to get data on 20 different police precincts. For example, I found that, for the crimes of homicide and burglary, the situation in NYC followed the same pattern as the nation. Burglary and homicide rates were lower in the 1990's than in the 1970's. For the crimes of robbery, however, more precincts showed an increase in their rates than showed a decrease. The finding was a surprise to both mentor and students. A number of possible explanations for this higher robbery rate were offered, with the insights of the students proving to be quite valid.

Study groups are one teaching modality at ESC in which students can exchange ideas with each other in a face-to-face situation. The ability to discuss common problems and the knowledge that a fellow student often has the same difficulties as oneself are important parts of the overall educational experience at any institution. At schools, like ours, where much of the learning takes place in a one-to-one situation, this is even more essential. In addition, the group ideas can often add to the knowledge of the mentor. These groups in criminology allowed both students and mentor to further our knowledge of certain trends within the field of study.

Interestingly, while I was leading these groups, I also did independent work on the same topic with individual students. In some cases, I gave those students who were police officers the same material assigned to the group. I asked them to replicate the group research project, only working on their own. From my perspective, the student who worked independently did as comprehensive a job as his or her counterpart in the study group. From the student's perspective, however, the group would have been preferred over the independent study modality. Students working on the project independently frequently said that they would have liked to have the opportunity to compare their findings with other students in a face-to-face environment. Learning can take place in many ways. Distance learning and independent study are both formats that certainly have a place in the modern college or university. Group learning, however, also has a place. One method should not be forgotten or abandoned for the other.

Toward the Long View: Philosophy Motion #294
Forest K. Davis, Mentor Emeritus

Last spring, Forest Davis offered these reflections on the work of mentor Peter Gilbert. He was kind enough to let us reproduce them here (with minor changes).

Peter Gilbert 1932-1999

In 1971, when the State University of New York was setting out on its course of founding a new and different institution of higher education it may be fair to say that no one knew how to do it. The context was unfamiliar. Progressive colleges were commonly small, private institutions open to educational experimentation, the trial-and-error method in education, and implementation of radical educational ideas. SUNY was a 72-campus public university marked by traditional styles and structures. Chancellor Ernest Boyer had been through the mill of the small private college, had had experience in consortial learning situations, and had worked closely with several figures in the liberal educational contexts of the 1960s. Empire State College was clearly going to be something new and different in the large public university setting. Different in what ways remained to be seen. Probably Empire State gathered to itself original figures from many sources of cultural and educational innovation, persons with creative impulses who yet and still represented many different educational viewpoints.

Peter Gilbert was one of the staffers who came over to ESC with Dean William R. Dodge from SUNY Central in Albany, in mid-1971. His colleagues remember that he turned up on short-term missions to several regions of the College where units or centers were due to open in the near future, to hew out the ground with and for the first students to appear in those places. Dodge's forte was being able to put together effective teams of mentors and administrators from diverse sources and to keep them all usefully hard at work, whatever their viewpoints, to help get the new institution up and running. It was a gift greatly needed, such was the diversity of opinion and commitment among the new college faculty and staff. A theory worth reflection may be that a single common characteristic abstracted from diversely experienced and committed personnel arriving at the College in its early period was original intellectual energy. (Richard Bonnabeau has described with remarkable accuracy the diversity and potential for conflict obtaining in early times in his 25th anniversary volume, *The Promise Continues: Empire State College, The First 25 Years.*)

Peter Gilbert was immersed in this complex development from an early stage, in a way of his own. Of the several groups of originally minded faculty who had arrived at Empire State from a wide diversity of sources, he probably belonged, temperamentally, among individualists who had worked out original paths by which to assist students in defining what they wanted to study and, therefore, to become. Faculty in this group fairly well knew how to work by drawing on past experiences of advisers and students alike to emerge with syntheses which enabled students to move forward with studies feeling that they had helped to define in significant ways their own educational plans and futures.

Peter was among the first to do this at Empire State in the early months of its first full year. Those of us who landed where he had been initially, even for brief assignments, heard about him and his first steps in those places. By then he would have reappeared in his central appointment at Statewide Programs, probably not saying much about his time in this region

or that. His colleagues thought of him as profoundly cultured, able to deal with many fields in the humanities which were his strongest suits, and particularly, with students in those fields.

It was curious how diverse the early faculty and staff were. It was as if people did not know what sources of educational thought and practice would give rise to Empire State College. Many diverse efforts were put in place and tried out all at the same time, with experience and time and a mix of those elements with College policies being relied upon to develop a complex institutional presence and mode of operation. Curricular study modules, several hundred of them, were developed over a considerable period, by a separate faculty and staff group, experts in their fields, often very well known, working as a unit in Saratoga under a grant substantial for that time. These publications, in handsome pamphlet form, poured into files of units and centers across the College literally ready for use, wanting only student interest and commitment. Probably a number of these modules received some attention and were useful. A good many rested in the files, disappearing variously over time, the faculty and staff group drifting off as institutional support for the program declined. Other innovative programs were similarly tried. Some were more lasting than others. Empire State College seemed to be the place to tryout many things, where the best and brightest of faculty and staff, regardless of highly diverse educational positions and representations, were brought to do their several things in the best ways possible, more or less all at once.

In the end, gradually emerging from the welter of support and lack of support, it was more nearly the educational approach represented in Peter Gilbert's mode which won the day. Applied in fields outside as well as within the humanities, this understanding of mentoring comprised as its central abstraction the idea of student-centeredness. It stood distinct from a range of other possible approaches to teaching at ESC that centered on topics, fields and methods, all ably represented within the College, but not ultimately gathering student or faculty support. Battles royal on the staff level, little known at the time, in some part also assisted in the winnowing.

Peter was a quiet man, taking no part in battles, doing his job as he saw it, in the best ways he could. He was an enormous wit, able to keep people in stitches by his sparkling sallies. He endured with the best, until the ravages of Parkinson's eventually forced his retirement. In his later years, confined as he was, one felt he never lost his good spirits and his *joie de vivre*. He could wake from a sound sleep, feeling the presence of a visitor, and reach instantly for a name. His themes were always on his walls and shelves even when his speech was gone. Learned as most would like to be, with that classic and historic, literary and religious wealth so much apart of his tradition, he went among us with a selfless freedom of movement and participation. How he may have been pursued, down what nights and days, he never said. Nor would he: to bear his burdens and do his part was no more for him than fair self-discipline. Colleagues, friends and students surely feel the great fortune of acquaintance with him.

An emphasis on learning theory and human development responds to the imperative need to start where the student is, to respect individual differences in background and temperament. An emphasis on the modes of thought, or on the operations of the mind, in this scheme, responds to the ever more rapid obsolescence of information, of subject matter. It anticipates that the how of learning will need to become more important in relation to the what then it is now.

Charles Muscatine
"Toward a New Curriculum"

Meeting Learner Goals and Expectations: Mentoring Relationships and Student Stories
Ellen G. Hawkes and Ken Cohen, Genesee Valley Center

Ellen Hawkes and Ken Cohen made a presentation at the 1998 *ALLIANCE/ACE Conference in San Diego. What follows is an excerpt from their paper.*

At times, when expectations and goals are not optimally advanced, motivational concepts and issues provide a useful perspective on what is happening and where to go [in the mentoring relationship]. When thinking of motivation, initial models that come to mind involve sports coaches who exhort their players through charged and/or harsh rhetoric or to the animal trainer who rewards the subjects when they display the appropriate behavior, i.e., motivation coming from the outside that one skillful, manipulative or charismatic person does to another. The works of Edward L. Deci (1995) whose theories and research lead him to conclude that it is self motivation rather than external motivation that is at the heart of creativity, responsibility, healthy behavior and lasting change, provides firm support for the mentoring approach to motivational issues in adult learning. Mentors need to ask how they can create the conditions in which people will motivate themselves.

When working with the adult student, one can easily develop a mind set that what motivates our students to get a degree is that it will increase their employment opportunities. Although there is nothing wrong with this perception of a relationship between behavior and consequences, this instrumental approach appears to be part of the motivation but certainly not all of it. Often what appears to be a major part of the reward of a college education and a degree is the satisfaction in the accomplishment. The student says, simply, "I did it" or in a little fancier language, they have gained a sense of mastery, competence and self-determination. Deci stated (1995), "The real job involves facilitating their doing the activities of their own volition, at their own initiative, so they will go on doing the activities freely in the future when we are no longer there to prompt them (p. 92)."

The key mentoring issues become understanding where the student wants to go, recognizing that when we are the least controlling and evaluative and the most autonomy supportive, the better our results will be. Several ways of being are at the forefront of this approach. Again, first, seeing it from the student's perspective, that is, empathy or taking the internal frame of reference, primarily involving careful listening. After listening, we respond, using the language of encouragement ("I suggest," "I recommend," "I invite you to try") rather than the language of coercion ("You should," "You must," "You can't"). Next, giving choices is a central feature in promoting initiative, ownership and empowerment. The more we can ask, "What would you like to do? ," the greater our success will be.

Finally, we should try to build a partnership (called *participative management* in the corporate world). Here, when we encourage the student to be active in managing their learning, to ask questions, to participate in problem solving, to try to make joint decisions, the student will be more motivated to carry through. All the while, we can engage in modeling or creating opportunities to show the student our own excitement about learning. Motivational, the greater our success will be.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

[In this basic sense], mentoring is what happens between a mentor and a student. Because this relationship is the key element of the ESG educational program, mentors learn how to design studies that start with students' interests, skills and current level of knowledge, giving them room to grow, giving a sense of direction. Learner goals and expectations, however, are not always clearly defined; on occasion they appear not to exist. However, by asking questions, the mentor allows the student's voice to emerge. With encouragement, the student talks and begins to tell his story.

Robert Coles (1989) noted that students "come to us with preconceived notions of what matters, what doesn't matter, what should be stressed, what should be overlooked, just as we come with our own lines of inquiry" (pp.13-14). Listening to student stories, a mentor begins to understand the student's aspirations, interests and capabilities. In one of the following examples, a mentoring relationship, strengthened by a student's story, culminates in a plan of instruction; in another a student reads a story, pulls together various incidents in her life, then voices her expectations. "By listening to student stories," Coles advised, "we can try a different approach instead of shaping what we've heard into our own version of what should be done academically" (p. 14).

Tom, a business student, decided to study Introductory Psychology to fulfill a liberal arts requirement. Although progress was slow, mentor patience brought results. During one session with the mentor, Tom said he was, "beginning to understand psychology better, because of what was happening during shift work at the factory:'"

"Tell me about it," the mentor replied. "Well, there's this man on the night shift," said Tom, "who's going through a divorce. He must have been really stressed out because he'd get very irritated and there'd be hassles with the other workers. "That's just like an example in the text in that chapter on personality:'

One story after another began to emerge. "I'll write my paper about stress," he decided, and we began to talk about a thesis statement, then started on an outline. More progress was made when we began to discuss the chapter on personality.

"You know what? ," Tom asked. "Before I write that paper on stress, I'm going to write about those emotions we felt when Dad was dying. I knew we all felt awful, but now that I've read this chapter, I realize we all had different emotions because of what was going on."

Titled, "Dad," Tom's story was simple and poignant. He wrote about his father's love for his family, his vital interest in life and community, "a man 77 years old still going to the mall, traveling and umpiring. It's very hard because of the way Dad passed away. Here's a man who was seldom sick and then was stricken with cancer. And in about a year and a half he's gone. I'll always remember how Dad lived his life, a person who had a lot of energy with a great zest for life."

"Looking at the way novelists and poets write about certain social and political issues," Coles observed, enhanced his students' ability to engage in moral and social inquiry (p. xvi). By probing his own teaching world, by listening to his students' responses to a particular story, he extended his teaching even further, using novels and stories with students in numerous disciplines. "... one keeps learning by teaching fiction or poetry because every reader's response to a writer's call can have its own startling, suggestive power" (p.xix).

Such was the case when Vicki read selections from Janet Zandy's (1993) *Calling Home,* an anthology of working-class women's stories.

"First jobs," she said excitedly, "I want to find out what happened in women's first jobs."

"Fine," I said, pleased with her enthusiasm. Her interest had not been sparked to such an extent previously. "Where will you begin?"

"I'm going to interview women of different ages and find out," she replied, words tumbling forth as she de- scribed her plan. "I'm going to ask these women to tell me stories about what happened in their first jobs, and their stories are going to give me a history of Rochester's working women.

In her paper she wrote: "From the oldest woman, born in 1915, to the youngest woman born in 1973, working for wages changed their perspectives forever. As I interviewed each woman, t heard about her intent to earn her way as a productive

member of society. Each wanted to do her best. Each of these women has encountered gender discrimination since the first day of her first job. Each has her own unique story and together they weave the fabric of our history."

Stories are strengthening; stories bring learning and insight. Convinced as a young woman that she became a victim because she had been taught to "obey and behave," Vicki was motivated to change when she came to college. And some of that motivation occurred from the stories she heard and read during her interviews and from reading assignments.

Robert Coles observed that "we all have stories within us which are a compelling part of our psychological and ideological makeup;' and then asked what the presence of these stories imply (p. 24). In retrospect, Tom and Vicki found new meaning to their college studies from stories. Tom's struggles with Introductory Psychology were lessened as he realized a shift worker's stress reflected concepts from his text. By writing a story about his father's death, he was able to better understand concepts about emotions. Vicki gained new confidence in her own academic ability when she interviewed women workers and listened to their stories. As active listeners, faculty mentors have learned to give shape to what they hear. They can, as Coles stated, "become more interested in the concrete details of a student's narrative in aggressively formulating a plan of study (p.14)."

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Community, Participation and Restoration: A Conversation with Robert Seidel, Genesee Valley Center
Alan Mandell, Metropolitan Center

Bob Seidel, faculty member in historical studies (history and politics) at the Genesee Valley Center, has been an ESC mentor since 1974. In 1998-1999, he was on leave as recipient of the Imperatore Scholar Award (his second). During this time he created the community project: "Restoring Keystones to Rochester's Community: A Progressive Photodocumentary Exhibit." In October, 1999, Bob retired.

AM: How has your work on the Imperatore project been going? I know the exhibit opens this week.

RS: Well, I was out day and night -early mornings, evening meetings -taking lots and lots of pictures. I got to the point where people, even the mayor of Rochester said, "Bob, I see you're here again!" What is exciting is that we have made an exhibit that will go to neighborhoods and is connected to real things people are doing in those neighborhoods. That's why there are six sites and we're planning more. The exhibit consists of 27 full color panels, and we have about 850 photographs digitized on a computer. We'll show them, with captions, like a silent slide show.

We have put together materials connected to Rochester and its neighborhoods we can be proud of. In addition, the College is publishing a 28-page exhibit brochure. When I retire I want to shepherd this program around. I have constructed a partnership with two city middle schools, the Memorial Art Gallery and the George Eastman House. We'll use the Restoring Keystones material and methods as ways to enhance civics and community studies education. Teachers are already very excited about it.

AM: Why did you choose to use photographs as the basis of the exhibit?

RS: I don't want people to say, all of a sudden, that Bob Seidel, who never took a good picture in his life is showing some photographs! This is not about pictures. It's about themes and ideas I have been working on for many years. It's also a form of public scholarship, something I take very seriously. I wanted to communicate with many people, not just a few supercritical colleagues.

AM: Yes, I remember our discussions about your manuscript, "Neighborly Affection."

RS: I worked on that book for many years. It was not published. I also was involved in another Imperatore project about ten years ago that focused on voluntarism.

Speaking of motive, I'm angry at the disdain people show toward their urban neighbors. And I'm pleased by the heroics and generosity of people like Adelaine Canty. She lives on a drug-riddled street where she's practically the only owner-resident. She says: "I'm not leaving; I'm building a deck this spring. This is my home:' And Mrs. Canty is a member of a vibrant block club that's fighting back. These are the people who deserve our consideration.

I've learned enough about American culture to understand that it is a culture that honors individual rights and not necessarily community. It continues to look up toward, to venerate, fame, wealth, ego- enhancement and individualism, but not equally toward responsibility toward others. And so we value sophisticated designs that sell cars with 43 square feet of leather and a super CD player, but that don't tell you whether the engine works or how much gas it guzzles. In effect, I wanted to see if graphic design, combined with the pictures we took, could help us see something different about our city and also stimulate further discussion. It's a visualization of community revitalization and community participation.

AM: So as you have gone around Rochester taking pictures of the neighborhoods, have people in those neighborhoods been interested in what you have been doing?

RS: Yes, absolutely. More than that. It's also that the city government knows it needs to work with citizens. It's sad that it comes to a necessity rather than a primary responsibility, but the city has begun to respond, for example through a citizen participation and planning program called Neighbors Building Neighborhoods. The city has also erected a unit of the city government called Neighborhood Empowerment Teams. In these and other ways, the city of Rochester has realized it has serious institutional problems and has built a variety of organizations to try to respond to them.

AM: Your real love of this city seems to be an important motivation to this work.

RS: I don't love Rochester more than I might love Milwaukee. But I want to say that I don't love wealth and power when we ignore our neighbors. In Rochester, we have one of the worst income distributions in a metropolitan center in the whole country. This pains me wherever it is.

AM: And you are hoping that the photographs help people see what they can't see or perhaps refuse to see.

RS: This quote from Alan Trachtenberg's *Reading America's Photographs* serves as the exhibit's epigraph: "Representing the past, photographs serve the present's need to understand itself and measure its future. Their history is ...in the political visions they help us realize:' And people understand this when they see the photographs.

AM: We're back to your on-going interest in the nature of that "vision" and something that might be called citizen education.

RS: The exhibit is really about the paradox of "love your neighbor as yourself." It's about the paradox that we do have individuality and personality, and it's hard to get out of ourselves. And yet, we simultaneously have obligations to many people, whether two blocks away from us or in Turkey or in East Timor. This paradox faces us every day.

AM: Do you think you have been able to communicate this "paradox" and your sense of the responsibilities we have to one another through your years of mentoring at ESC?

RS: I would say I have been much less successful in communicating to peers. The things that I have written have yielded very little response. This has been a grave disappointment. As far as students are concerned, I had a good rapport with students of all kinds regardless of their own social and political views. We have learned from each other. I'm proud of that. I'm also proud that some of my former students are now leaders in this urban renewal movement.

AM: Mentoring is about the intellectual intimacies of one on one. And yet your interests are about community and collectivity. Is there a tension between mentoring as a teaching form and the ideas/under- standings you have hoped to convey?

RS: Mentoring has probably been the best match for me and my personality. I came to mentoring when I was nearly 40. While I was scared out of my pants just thinking about how to do it, I became rather comfortable with it, and fairly successful. Yet I do think there is another paradox here. When we communicate, we tend to communicate to individuals. And I think that too much teaching has been lecturing. It's very difficult to organize groups so that they can be wholly participatory. If I would have been teaching in a traditional lecturing mode, it probably would have been lecturing a great deal. It wouldn't have been a community experience at all.

AM: So you would argue that the mentoring context offers opportunities for the building of community?

RS: In mentoring conversations, people have felt free to say many things. For example, why was it impossible for one student to tell her husband why she was afraid of his gun, or for another student, suffering from distress because of job loss, to talk about it? I don't think these conversations would have occurred in a larger group. Community is, in a sense, the depository of the remains of what people hide -the stresses and the pains they feel. We have to find ways to share this. As I have gone around the city with this project, what has really pleased me has been seeing generous people willing to talk with each other -in effect, to share. People were treating each other with respect. It was more than *pro forma;* more than just words. This is also what I want the photographs to convey.

AM: And what you also want your mentoring to provide?

RS: Yes. Mentoring is all of these things in small settings. I decided early on, after two or three tries, that I wouldn't do group studies. The lives of our students made group studies too chaotic for me. It was difficult for students; it was difficult for me. It never formed a community. So in the last ten years, I've done nothing but individual studies or CDL.

AM: And have you found that work satisfying?

RS: Let me answer in a slightly different way. I think the College has been quite successful for certain kinds of people with certain kinds of personalities to move into administration. But it's never been an opportunity for mentors to better their position. Mentors, from the time they begin, have a heavy workload and the distraction of many kinds of responsibilities. And it never changes. In fact, the better you are at it, the more work you have to do! So you never have time to concentrate as a scholar. The contradiction is that you can't be a scholar-teacher. And I think many of us have become broken in our own minds about this. I have become more whole again in this last year because, within weeks, I found that I could talk with dozens of people who understood what I was trying to do, and who responded with seriousness and interest. I could see that the project could make some difference. It was also much more fun than the transient satisfactions of trying to write an evaluation three months after the end-date when a paper comes in.

AM: Hasn't ESC promised that part of its distinctive mission was that it would become an integral part of the community, that it wouldn't hide behind the ivy or the ivory towers; that, in effect, it would encourage exactly the kind of community-oriented scholarship in which you have been involved?

RS: I actually think that what you are talking about *has* been realized at ESC more than almost anything else. I don't want to idealize the life of the conventional academic. It can be quite isolating. It can be awful. I think in our actual practice as ESC mentors, we have more relations with colleagues, with the community, and with people in general than most college teachers. This is exactly because our students work, because they come in with their day-to-day problems, because they demonstrate a strong motivation to learn various things, and because we engage with them and are always learning ourselves in the process. I don't think this is typical of the traditional higher education academy, where the only major change over the last few years has seemed to have been that most institutions now treat students like customers.

AM: And, from your view, have we as an institution had any impact?

RS: For me, this has been a major disappointment of the College. We have a reputation, but I don't think we have had much of an impact on higher education. It's been something like the impact of a drop of saline solution in the ocean. So this adds to the sense of our isolation as individual mentors and as an institution.

AM: You have been looking at the community of Rochester and the patterns or lack of "affection" in the city. How about the community of Empire State College? What if you tried to apply your analysis of community and participation to the College?

RS: It is true that we use the word "community" in this society probably more ambiguously than anywhere else in the world. In America, when we get together, there are often expressions of camaradarie and good feeling, but then we tend to go about our individual lives. So we live several kinds of lives, often very isolated from each other. And I think the very

same thing is true of the College. There are people who are struggling to establish neighborhoods worth living in the suburbs too. These are places where people have to drive every place and they are sick and tired of it. They want to have the same things that urban dwellers want. People understand that their living circumstances are not just about the houses they buy, or where they send their children to school, or how many cars they are going to have to buy to manage the locations they have chosen. It's about their neighbors and whether they can walk down the block or to a movie theatre or to a restaurant. It's about whether they can call someone if their chimney is on fire and whether they can stroll down to the soccer game or softball field.

In the College, what we have is an artificial community because basically people came for a job, an income. Most are also deeply sincere about their work. They take it seriously. They are professional, and there is a compassion about this work that fuses what we do with humanity. But I don't really think we see each other enough, and it may be impossible to have more of this. This is another source of the isolation, fragmentation and lack of community we feel. In this way, at ESC, we echo the fears, rumors and superstitions that any community has. We are no different than other human beings in this regard. Then, of course, there is the constant preoccupation in the College with revenues and enrollment, often, it seems, to the exclusion of other priorities.

AM: Do you retire with sadness?

RS: I feel I have made something of myself partly because the College has made that possible. Yet I will be active over the next few years as a volunteer in this community and with extensions of the Restoring Keystones project. I also think these years will be important because I will be able to make more of a difference with more people in our neighborhoods than I might have been able to do with students. That's my judgment now. I didn't know it a year ago, didn't even have a glimmer.

My hope is now that our photodocumentary exhibits will make a difference in the city of Rochester, that they will show our appreciation and respect for those who are working at rebuilding neighborhoods, that they will give others the courage to continue their significant and necessary work. Those people need to feel less alone. Above all, I hope these efforts will ameliorate the antagonism, the dead feeling, many people have toward the city and people who make their homes here. There are actually people here, and there are many conversations that speak of the city as if this is not the case.

AM: So you think of yourself as beginning a new career?

RS: I've been a farmer. Then Betty and I returned to school as undergraduates with three children, so our next career was education; and I went beyond the Ph.D. with post-doctoral studies in international development, U.S. foreign relations, and Latin American studies. Then, 25 years ago, I came to Empire State College. I'm not naive about the world. I understand conflict as inherent in the quest for community, and I've had my arguments with various people. But I also am a citizen of my place. So I'm going to continue to live my life, enjoy my family and neighbors, and feel less bound by the demands of the everyday mentoring existence. At this point, at least, this is a liberating thought.

Sabbatical Leave: One Mentor's Experience
Michael Andolina, Northeast Center

For the past several years, I have been complaining about the lack of a good textbook in critical thinking for adult students. There's a plethora (and even a whole bunch) of critical thinking texts on the market, some very good, but all focus on examples and exercises related to concerns of 18 and 19 year old, campus-based students. The exercises describe activities such as going to the movies, getting good grades, dating, classroom situations and dormitory life, to name a few. None talks about balancing work, family and college studies. Nor do they talk about adult issues such as work relationships, management dilemmas, single parenting, job stress and concerns of adult citizenship like serving on school boards and service organizations -the kinds of things most of our students deal with in their everyday lives. Moreover, attention to the differences in adult learning styles is ignored and, even more frustrating, none allows students to integrate the wealth of knowledge and experience our students bring to the subject of critical thinking.

So, at the suggestion of my colleagues, I decided to write a textbook. (They were tired of hearing me moan and groan.) A six-month sabbatical was an ideal opportunity to devote all my energy and time to the project. However, to my dismay, the sabbatical leave allowed just enough time to get immersed in the project but not enough time to complete it. Yet, without it, I wouldn't have been able to get started or achieve what I have so far.

After reading several self-help books on how to get published, my first task was to convince a publisher that the idea was worthwhile, or, in publishing jargon, "commercially viable." The guide books, especially *Writer's Market,* were helpful in providing a realistic look at the publishing world. They tell you what type of manuscript each publisher is looking for (the publishing world, they said, and my experience confirmed, has become highly specialized), which ones will accept only "agented" manuscripts, which ones will not accept unsolicited manuscripts, and which ones want only uncompleted manuscripts so they can direct your work toward market demands. They also tell you that the publishing world is extremely competitive and, like most businesses, looks to economize through mergers and takeovers of other publishers. The publishers then downsize some areas and re-divide into specialty presses under old names, with each division part of one huge conglomerate.

Here's a personal example. I sent the proposal to Jossey-Bass, a specialist in higher education texts. They were excited about the idea and asked for more material such as a sample chapter, table of contents and intended market summary. After sending them the material, they sent it to independent readers who reported to the main editor. They liked what they saw. However, as I continued to work with them, they were bought by Simon and Shuster, who was not as thrilled about the idea due to its limited market share. The last letter I received was from Viacom, who bought Simon and Shuster. Viacom owns television networks, cable networks and many of the communications networks in the U.S., with a corporate structure the size of some small countries. Needless to say, Viacom did *not* see the commercial viability of the text, even though they thought is was a worthwhile project for some small company.

The consistent message was: "This is a really good idea for someone else to publish." Every publisher had concerns about market share, marketing strategies and financial investments with limited returns. As one editor put it, "In publishing today, marketing is everything." And another echoed this sentiment with "There are three rules in publishing today,

marketing, marketing and marketing." Even some of the academic presses are under this kind of economic pressure. They, too, respond by specializing.

My task, then, was to find an appropriate publisher, something the guide books had said all along; I found out the hard way. Finally, one of the major textbook publishers, Wadsworth, now part of the huge publishing conglomerate International Thompson Company, put me in touch with another Thompson subsidiary specializing in adult education texts. They not only liked the proposal, they offered me a contract.

Now only one minor detail remains after spending over six months selling the idea to publishers, tailoring the proposals to publisher's specialties, and tailoring sample chapters: I have to finish writing the book!

I think I need a sabbatical.

Deconstructing Higher Education
John Nirenberg, University of Phoenix

John Nirenberg Ph.D., is dean of doctoral studies at the University of Phoenix. His essay was originally published by the Phoenix Institute in Accountability and Assessment Forum (*formerly* Adult Assessment Forum), *Winter;* 1997. *(Subscription information is available at* http://www.InterEd.com.*) We thank the Phoenix Institute for permission to reproduce this piece.*

The implications of living in the knowledge era haven't yet been fully realized but the outline of massive changes in education is now on the horizon.

The advent of the Internet and the supporting telecommunications technologies has Peter Drucker, among others, convinced that the university as we know it will become extinct within 30 years. The popularity of distance education, in all its forms, and the demand for practical (professional?) education has many people predicting the proliferation of private for-profit education providers and the collapse of the institutions we now know.

Distance education may be the first and most obvious step to this end. Distance education already relies on independent contractors from outside the conventional university setting to assemble packages of knowledge, assign credits, deliver the packages to a spot that is convenient to the student -either to a computer terminal or to a convenient corporate setting and to evaluate their students. After a specified time and the accumulation of a specified number of credits, a degree is received.

The step after that is much more exciting, potentially more lucrative and definitely more egalitarian: brokering, assessing and accrediting individually developed packets of knowledge that can be delivered where and when needed, independent of an old-paradigm institutional provider. These "knowledge modules" would be assembled by the user in quantities that could lead to several different indicators of achievement including a degree.

Corporate universities and the broader marketplace have recognized that their need for skills and knowledge has far outpaced local educational institution's ability to meet the compelling workplace requirements. And as appropriate corporate training became more dynamic and more education-like and the technology of learning became more learner-centered via personal desktop, even laptop delivery modes, the attractiveness of the local university classroom lost not only its appeal but its monopoly power as the provider of education.

Following the lead of corporate universities, large corporate consulting firms quickly filled the void left by the failure of the educational establishment and in addition to their already frequent presence as advisors they became their clients' new teachers.

So far, so good. But the second step -the step after next -when corporate universities and consulting firms become accredited is the establishment of an agency to function as a clearinghouse for individuals with the expertise who actually do the development of credit worthy modules, who would then be able to sell directly to consuming individuals or

organizations. This second step will, ultimately, fully democratize the knowledge economy.

At this point, individuals, like craftspeople at the dawn of the industrial revolution, will ply their knowledge modules independent of the universities, colleges and consultancies; either in person, under license, through the Internet or in hard copy for consumption by independent learners. The only barrier to this right now is the limitation imposed by accrediting bodies which currently will not provide individual legitimacy to saleable packages of knowledge (modules).

Yet, the underlying technology of the knowledge era is so demanding that that is precisely what is happening even though there is still no "accrediting" body to legitimize this new development. Individuals who have mastered new computer programs and systems for example, design and market their products and services. Speakers and authors sell their ideas based on their books or technical expertise or speaking appeal which is utilized at endless conferences, seminars and meetings held to share knowledge as well as to entertain professionals through an educational event. Legitimating individuals as knowledge givers (outside the institutional setting) is also happening in what the post-modernists call the deconstruction of education. Individuals are increasingly teaching one another as the need or interest demands. The new environment of the knowledge era also encourages self-learning through a variety of easily accessible media from print to audio to video to CD-ROMs to the Internet.

The only missing link for combining these learning opportunities into recognizable units outside of institutional education is a validating authority willing to approve such modules on an individual rather than a programmatic basis and validate the accumulation of these modules from a variety of sources into a recognizable unit of accomplishment such as a degree.

When universities finally lose their monopoly on the degree-granting privilege and when it is no longer required that the vast majority of one's credits of knowledge be earned at a single university, the doors will open for the individual to utilize his or her expertise in the free market, unencumbered by the lack of an institutional sponsor. In addition, the consumers of knowledge and aspirants for a degree will no longer be chained to a single provider or even a certain kind of provider so long as a basic module of knowledge is widely understood to mean the same thing more or less like the current practice of assessing credits among the universities.

It is not far-fetched to assume the day will soon arrive where all knowledge and one's proficiency at demonstrating competence or having learned that knowledge will be commonplace; experience which demonstrates mastery, competence in utilizing knowledge will be measurable and compared with current credit standards. This too, could accumulate in a variety of ways to be applied to either skill-based pay systems; personal signs of achievement, such as acquiring certificates; or to earning a degree.

Each provider of a module could even design it for various delivery modalities and also for various levels of achievement for the individual consumer. Thus, a consumer who merely wants to increase his or her under- standing of a concept or to be gently exposed to an area of knowledge may simply receive a micro-credit signifying literacy in, by not mastery of the course. Perhaps the next higher level of achievement would be fluency, signified by earning CEUs. Full credit (indicating mastery) might be earned only after passing an evaluation by the instructor or the accrediting body through an Internet-based testing process or an on-site exam at the conclusion of the learning experience.

Thus, a module is never an all or nothing experience as is a course today. There is ongoing positive recognition of achievement, at varying levels, for everyone. A serendipitous benefit of such an arrangement will be to eliminate the current grading structure which neither indicates level of real achievement or signifies a level of literacy, competence, fluency or mastery which would be accomplished with the new standards surrounding the democratized learning experience. Such issues as grade inflation and lack of grade variance would disappear. Of course worrying about earning the credit would still be a part of the experience for those competing for credit since they would still need to be evaluated. But letter grades would be irrelevant. No failing and no transcripting of failing grades would occur. The record would only show whether the individual earned a micro-credit (certification of attendance?), a CEU (certificate of achievement) or full credit, applicable toward a degree.

The next step toward the future is certainly an exciting one as the field of education is both democratized and becomes clearly student-centered.

ALL ABOUT
MENTORING
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Circle News: Learning in Community at the Central NY Center Faculty Retreat
Frances Mercer, Central New York Center

At a Circle meeting held at the 1999 *All College Conference, Frances Mercer eagerly told us about a book she had read that captured the learning process as many of us see it. She immediately agreed to find a way to write about Palmer's book and her efforts to use it.* We *thank her.*

When I returned from my sabbatical and was asked what I had learned, I spoke enthusiastically about the most recent book I had read -*The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life* by Parker Palmer. I was tempted to claim that I had chosen to systematically explore Palmer's writings during my sabbatical. However, the truth was much more mundane. I had encountered the book and learned of Parker Palmer for the first time during one of my weekly trips to the local public library, where I always scanned the new books shelf on each visit. The title, *The Courage to Teach,* caught my eye, perhaps because I was feeling less than courageous at the time, as I contemplated the end of my sabbatical and return to full-time mentoring. Thus, by chance, I learned of Parker Palmer and left with his book in my hand. I read the book and shortly thereafter returned to work and to attending center meetings. Apparently my comments at the center meeting were sufficiently animated that I was asked whether I would share in more depth at the faculty retreat. "Sure," I said, thinking that we could somehow use a blend of the more familiar critical incidents technique as discussed in Stephen Brookfield's *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher* and the critical moments approach as discussed in Palmer's book.

Some years earlier I had read Brookfield's book as the result of participating in the Circle group and attending a conference in Syracuse at which he was the major speaker. When I returned to his book to refresh my understanding of the critical incident technique, I found that he had cited Palmer in the very chapter in which he discussed this technique. In fact, I was struck by the strikingly similar perspectives advanced by Brookfield (1995) and Palmer (1998), as evident even in the titles of their separate chapters: "Holding Critical Conversations About Teaching" and "Learning in Community -The Conversation of Colleagues:' Both clearly believe and advocate that we (teachers/mentors) learn much from reflecting on, examining and discussing our experiences: we can learn from each other, and indeed, must learn from each other. They also believe that academic environments create significant barriers to truly honest and instructive peer conversations. They maintain that casual peer talk is not sufficient, and can even be damaging, so critical conversations must take place intentionally and with agreed upon conversational ground rules. Each offers specific principles and techniques for creating and sustaining constructive group conversations. Each also offers a different but similar process (Brookfield calls it "the three- role structure" while Palmer's is "the clearness committee") for facilitating an individual faculty member's exploration of a teaching/mentoring "problem." A final similarity is that both believe that faculty must take primary responsibility for creating and sustaining their own learning community, but should be supported by leaders who "expect it and invite it into being" (Palmer, p. 156).

In the end, for the Central New York faculty retreat, we used Palmer's critical moments approach alone. As preparation for the retreat exercise, we read two chapters from Palmer's book: "Teaching in Community: A Subject- Centered Education" and "Learning in Community: The Conversation of Colleagues." What follows is a description of what happened during our "conversation of colleagues" as guided by the critical moments approach.

We had scheduled two hours for this particular conversation of colleagues. We opened with the following reading from Palmer. Then together we created space for our conversation -our learning community.

Good talk about good teaching can take many forms and involve many conversation partners -and it can transform teaching and learning. But it will happen only if leaders expect it, invite it, and provide hospitable space for the conversation to occur. Leaders who work this way understand that good leadership sometimes takes the form of teaching. They lead from the same model we have been exploring for teaching itself, creating a space centered on the great thing called teaching and learning around which a community of truth can gather.

Becoming a leader of that sort -one who opens, rather than occupies, space -requires the same inner journey we have been exploring for teachers. It is a journey beyond fear and into authentic selfhood, a journey toward respecting otherness and understanding how connected and resourceful we all are. As those inner qualities deepen, the leader becomes better able to open spaces in which people feel invited to create communities of mutual support.

Such community is not easily achieved in academic life, given all that divides us. It is most likely to happen when leaders call us back to the heart of teaching and learning, to work we share and to the shared passion behind that work. If we can create such communities of collegial discourse, they could offer more than support in the development of work related skills -they could offer healing for the pain of disconnection from which many faculty suffer these days.

In the quotation at the head of this chapter, from *The Once and Future King,* Merlyn speaks in his role as mentor to Arthur, a leader in the making, and offers him a cure for his sadness and pain. It is worth reading again, for the pathologies it names are so familiar to anyone who knows faculty life, and the cure it prescribes is no more or less than the mission of education:

> "The best thing for being sad," replied Merlyn..." is to learn something. That is the only thing that never fails. You may grow old and trembling in your anatomies, you may lie awake at night listening to the disorder of your veins,... you may see the world around you devastated by evil lunatics, or know your honor trampled in the sewers of baser minds. There is only one thing for it then -to learn. Learn why the world wags and what wags it. That is the only thing which the mind can never exhaust, never alienate, never be tortured by, never fear or distrust, and never dream of regretting. Learning is the thing for you."

If we who lead and we who teach would take that counsel to heart, everyone in education, administrators and teachers and students alike, would have a chance at healing and new life. Learning -learning together -is the thing for all of us. (Palmer, 1998, pp. 160-161).

As we started our critical moments exercise, we once again consulted Parker Palmer's book and his explanation of the approach:

"Critical moments" is a simple approach I use in faculty workshops to invite people to share their practice in an open and honest way. I begin by drawing a horizontal arrow on a chalkboard, representing the movement of a course from beginning to end. Then I ask people to name the critical moments they experience along that time line as a course proceeds. By critical moment, I mean one in which a learning opportunity for students will open up, or shut down - depending, in part, on how the teacher handles it. "In part" is an important qualification, for one of the challenges of teaching is the fact that not all critical moments are under the teacher's control. (Palmer, 1998, p. 145)

We were seated around an enormous round table (with much the same effect as when Arthur's knights sat at a round table -it encouraged equality of participation). There was also a full wall of chalk boards -five or six abutting each other. So I drew a horizontal arrow/line of great length. After a brief discussion, we decided that since we were not course-based teachers, our line would represent the "course" of our relationship with a student from first contact to last contact during his/her association with ESC.

Initially, we tended to identify tasks or events (information session, orientation, enrollment, first learning contract, etc.)

and to see the line as a chronological line. But soon we got the hang of it and began to identify "critical moments" -first contact with the student, first negative feedback, etc. Then we realized that critical moments weren't necessarily chronological or associated with the same tasks or events with each student and that they could reoccur in a variety of contexts. It became clearer that being aware and expectant of critical moments might be a state of mind, a state of readiness that we could cultivate and benefit from. Another realization soon articulated was that critical moments were infinite and could be the focus of almost infinite activities - critical moments in educational planning, critical moments in the study group, critical moments in the mentor-guided individual tutorial, critical moments in the first face to face meeting between student and mentor, etc. In less than an hour, we identified and crowded more than 44 critical moments on the several-chalkboards-long line in a conversation that was gentle, thoughtful and spirited. Our list of critical moments included:

- incident that first motivated student to seek out ESC
- first phone call to unit or drop in
- information session
- application
- orientation
- enrollment
- first question
- first face-to-face meeting of student and mentor
- student reveals self
- student tells life story
- first "connection"
- first critical feedback/evaluation
- first learning contract/what to do
- student's first CDL course after individual tutorial study
- first barrier/obstacle/problem
- first assignment
- mentor delivers positive feedback
- student starts to think about prior learning
- student defines goals -"taking charge in early stage"
- first time student looks for resources -where are they?
- student falls behind
- student says "I'm going to make it."
- point at which personal story and academics intersect
- new horizons
- student realizes educational planning is hard
- stopping out prematurely -tired out
- first CBE essay submission -"good to go"
- student and mentor on same track
- student realizes mentor's limits
- first CBE report with credit award
- shared experiences -connection between student and mentor
- connection with others (peers)
- failure to connect
- first substantial conflict
- student declares independence -"takes charge"
- student expresses shift of perspective in educational planning
- student discovers joy of learning
- student expresses distrust
- introduction/connection between tutor and student
- when mentor realizes a student is not going to make it
- student recognizes stereotypes
- overwhelmed student
- crying at graduation

- becoming an alumnus

For our second hour, we selected one critical moment (that moment when you are approached by an overwhelmed student) to explore in more depth. We proceeded around the table. Each person was invited to tell about a specific situation in which that critical moment had happened for him or her -not to speculate on hypothetical situations but to describe as accurately as possible what *really* happened. Everyone was encouraged to share but everyone had the option to "pass." Our "conversation" was patient, intense and moving -we were learning from each other; we were sharing from the depth of our experiential learning. All 18 mentors chose to contribute. All had something unique to share. All contributed to the learning community.

I will not attempt to capture the wonderful detail, full texture and vivid reality of the situations described by the mentors, nor can I really duplicate the flow of the discourse. However, drawing upon notes taken during the discourse, a summary follows of the ways in which mentors attempted to open up the learning opportunities and options for students during "overwhelmed student" critical moments. (As defined by Palmer, a critical moment is "one in which a learning opportunity for students will open up, or shut down -depending, in part, on how the teacher handles it.")

First and foremost, mentors felt they listened, and tried not to make presumptions about the situation. They acted as a sounding board for the student: allowed the student to talk through his/her difficulties and feelings. They were careful to affirm the student's ability to make decisions about her/his life. Even in a situation, where the student seemed not to have much insight into being overwhelmed and the mentor felt constrained in offering guidance, the mentor was able to provide support through learning contract components that matched the student with empathetic tutors and learning opportunities relevant to the stress areas. One mentor observed that even when a student's life is filled with stress, sometimes the involvement in and challenge of learning is an oasis and stabilizing factor in the student's life. Therefore, we should resist jumping to the conclusion that what the "overwhelmed" student always needs is *less* academic work. However, mentors indicated that often what was effective was helping the student understand his/her options and the extreme degree of flexibility at ESC. They tried to find meaningful and successful experiences to keep the students moving forward, to discuss alternatives and modifications in learning contracts and learning activities, and to assist the student in realistically assessing his/her situation. Sometimes it helped to link the student with a peer support system and other times it helped to create an alliance (with the student's knowledge) with people in other aspects of the student's life, such as, a supervisor or minister or counselor. In other situations, mentors used a "triage" or "cut your losses" approach, assisting the student to prioritize and think through what they could salvage and what they needed to let go of. Mentors also emphasized that it is difficult to know ahead of time whether a specific student will become "overwhelmed." It is not always clear whether new students can handle a 16-credit load or should be encouraged to limit their first full time enrollment to 12 credits, or how even the seemingly sophisticated student who comes to ESC from a professional background will handle the shifts in thinking required of a liberal education. One "overwhelmed" student was reassured by the mentor's acknowledgement of the student's state of transition and flood of emotions about the changes in thinking required by school. The student had experienced much career success through efficient, concrete, and structured thinking and now was confronted with learning activities requiring abstract, ambiguous, even paradoxical, thinking. Mentors stressed that frequently students could be inspired, supported and encouraged by helping them to rearticulate their core motivations for learning and for returning to college. When the student's decision was to stop out or even leave ESC, mentors not only supported the student's decision, but also "left the door open" -assured the student of a welcoming opportunity to return, if and when that should become appropriate or feasible.

While I feel somewhat apologetic for listing these mentoring responses out of their rich contexts, I believe that these responses represent a valuable sharing of practice and honest dialogue. Palmer argues: "The growth of any craft depends on shared practice and honest dialogue among the people who do it The resources we need in order to grow as teachers are abundant within the community of colleagues. How can we emerge from our privatization and create a continuing conversation about pedagogy that will allow us to tap that abundance? Good talk about good teaching is what we need -to enhance both our professional practice and the selfhood from which it comes. (Palmer, 1998, p. 144):' At the end of this two-hour critical moments exercise, we realized that we had indeed engaged in good talk about our practice of mentoring, and demonstrated that honest dialogue could enhance our professional mentoring practice and the selfhood from which it comes. This experience of having created space for our own learning community also whetted our desires for continuing this type of "conversation of colleagues" as part of each of our monthly center meetings. We felt we should exercise the

type of leadership that Palmer called for: "creating a space centered on the great thing called teaching and learning around which a community of truth can gather."

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