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October 2021 CTL Newsletter

CTL's Monthly Newsletter keeps you plugged into events and support available to everyone in the UMSL teaching community and research-informed practices for use in the classroom or online.

In This Issue

- **A Message from Assistant Director of Student Support Programs Jennafer Alexander:** Mentoring
- **Learn new teaching approaches:** Three Teaching Intentions: Mentoring Edition
- **Student Voice:** A message from Active Learning Assistant Emma Fore
- **ACUE Lunch and Learn Series:** Learn from and with ACUE credentialed faculty
- **Focus on Teaching and Technology (FTTC):** Wrap up and takeaways
- **Submit:** Propose a session for Missouri S&T's Innovation in Teaching

and Learning Conference
- **Course Evaluation:** Updates about the end of semester Course Evaluation System

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Mentoring in and Beyond the Classroom

A message from CTL Assistant Director for Student Support Programs Jennafer Alexander.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to rethink how we design our courses, build relationships with students, and engage with colleagues. As a result of these changes, I began to explore the role that mentoring has played in my life, both at UMSL and beyond. Mentoring has also become more meaningful for me as I have moved away from teaching on a regular basis and into the Center for Teaching and Learning where I coordinate the Supplemental Instruction (SI) and Active Learning Assistant (ALA) programs. Currently I supervise over 65 student employees who also serve as mentors for their peers. I began to ask myself what it means for me to be a mentor in this context. How does mentoring relate to, say, teaching? Or advising? What does (or can) mentoring look like in practice, especially during challenging times?

Mentoring is a broad term that encompasses many roles (supervisors, employees, educators, advisors, colleagues, peers, students, alumni, and more). Traditional conceptions of mentoring come from an apprenticeship model where the protégé relies on a single mentor for guidance and support. As I read more about this topic, however, I discovered alternative models for mentoring based on *reciprocity*. Pamela VanHaitsma and Steph Ceraso, for instance, underscore the value of “horizontal mentoring” that is “carried out within a horizontal rather than hierarchical relationship." Horizontal mentoring, like peer mentoring, offer alternatives to traditional models based on trust and a mutual exchange of knowledge. In other words, horizontal mentoring reminds us that *both* parties gain from the relationship.

Regardless of the model we use, mentors can have powerful and lasting

impacts on our lives. In a recent Gallup-Purdue study, researchers found that students who have mentors in college are 2.2 times more likely to be engaged in their work after college, and 1.7 times more likely to thrive later in life. Yet only 22% of those surveyed had mentors in college. It seems, then, that we have a responsibility to our students to learn more about effective mentoring.

Learn More: Pamela Van Haitsma and Steph Ceraso, "'Making It' in the Academy through Horizontal Mentoring" – rooted in feminist scholarship, this essay features seven specific practices for horizontal mentoring.

Please see the "Teaching Intentions" section to hear more from CTL Assistant Director of Student Support Programs Jennafer Alexander for specific resources about mentoring.

Three Teaching Intentions - Mentoring Edition written by CTL Assistant Director of Student Support Programs Jennafer Alexander

This section will highlight technology, activities, practices, or elements of course design for the online or on ground classroom to be implemented with intentionality. Every suggestion will not be appropriate for every context. Please see our contact information at the bottom of the newsletter to set up an individual consultation if interested in discussing these ideas in more detail.

Plan for the Unexpected

Although most of us can define mentoring on a superficial level, the term can be confusing. Some researchers conflate mentoring with teaching, overlooking the distinct aspects of mentoring that supplement the teaching experience. But mentoring is *not* the same as teaching, and many mentoring programs operate outside of academia (in neighborhoods, after-school programs, the workplace,

etc.). The two roles may overlap, but mentoring extends beyond the boundaries of the course as mentors help students achieve their personal and professional goals (which may or may not align with the specific course goals). Thus, mentoring often grows out of teaching when students and teachers develop relationships outside of the classroom. In doing so, mentoring also blurs the boundary between the personal and the professional.

Mentoring frequently happens outside the confines of the classroom (or the Zoom meeting): in office hours, department meetings, coffee shops, libraries, and labs. But while some liken mentoring to an intellectual friendship, I agree with Elizabeth McKinsey's assertion that "mentoring is not the same as friendship." In most cases, people become friends without having any specific goals in mind, whereas mentors work with the mentees to identify and achieve their professional goals. Still, McKinsey explains how mentoring can lead to friendship (and vice versa). She points to "the holistic nature of a true mentoring relationship. Both student and faculty member are engaged as whole people." In the classes I've taught, as well as in the SI and ALA meetings, I tap into that holistic approach by asking open-ended questions to students about their lives. I may ask for "news" or "updates." Or I may ask students about their weekend plans. I never know how the students will respond, so I must prepare for the unexpected. Their responses range from highly personal to highly academic. But by asking ambiguous questions at the beginning of the discussion, I show that I care about the students as whole people. I invite the students into a mentoring relationship.

Mentoring takes many forms, which adds to the confusion. On the one hand, mentoring happens through planned interactions, as in formal mentoring programs in which mentors are recruited, hired, and trained. On the other hand, mentoring happens in more natural or organic ways. Chance encounters or serendipitous moments can allow students to connect with potential mentors. McKinsey argues that this "natural" kind of mentoring is more effective than the planned, structured kind. For her, the mentoring experience is more meaningful when students can connect with mentors in a relaxed setting; genuine mentoring, from this perspective, cannot be mandated. In the pandemic, though, we have fewer opportunities for spontaneity, fewer unplanned conversations in the hallways. Even still, I have found that planning for organic interactions can be effective as well. At the end of each meeting, for instance, I offer to stay on Zoom for a few minutes, in case students want to

chat. Again, with this strategy, I purposefully straddle that line between "class time" and "after-class time," giving the students opportunities to connect with me in a less-structured way. I make myself accessible to students in a mentoring capacity.

Learn More: Elizabeth McKinsey, "Faculty Mentoring Undergraduates: The Nature, Development, and Benefits of Mentoring Relationships" – using testimony from students and faculty, this article shows that unplanned an "natural" mentoring can be crucial for student success. McKinsey also shares best practices, as well as the risks and benefits, of mentoring.

Learn More: Lynn Bloom, "Mentoring as Mosaic: Life as Guerilla Theater" – weaving personal narrative with research on mentoring with parenting advice, Bloom gives a glimpse into how mentoring has changed since more women have entered academia.

Learn More: Michelle F. Eble and Lynée Lewis Gaillet (editors), Stories of Mentoring: Theory and Praxis – a collection that brings together 78 contributors and offers an array of anecdotes, assignments, program descriptions, and paradigms for successful mentoring.

Connect Students With Multiple Mentors

Researchers use various metaphors to conceptualize mentoring, but nearly all involve multiple mentors. For instance, Rodrigo et al argue for a DYI (Do-It-Yourself) approach in which mentees develop "personalized learning networks" throughout their educational careers. Those networks include "textual mentors" like books, articles, memes, blogs, social media, as well as "any and all knowledge resources that help situate you in a community of practitioners so that students can build individualized networks for mentoring." This gives greater significance to the readings, images, videos, and other texts that we select for our courses. Thinking of the course materials as textual mentors invites us to be more intentional about how we select those materials. In other words, as we design our courses, we can build networks of support for the students through the texts we select – and those networks can be created in collaboration with students. In my work, I encourage students to share blogs, articles, videos, and other resources that pertain to the discussions. Then I

incorporate those materials into the course throughout the semester. In that way, the students use a DIY approach to mentoring based on their individual needs, goals, and interests.

In addition to providing textual mentors, we can connect students with other mentors at UMSL and beyond (SI Leaders, ALAs, tutors, advisors, peer mentors, alumni, professors, etc.). Students need mentors who can offer additional insights into their lives, especially when students come from cultures that differ from our own. In fact, Gail Okawa imagines mentoring as practice of "diving for pearls," and when the mentoring relationship involves people of who share similar cultures, then "you know how to…find the pearls, then you can get into a deeper level." From this perspective, mentoring is a cultural and activist practice, particularly for students and faculty of color.

Learn More: Rodrigo et al, "DIY Mentoring: Developing Personal Learning Networks" – this essay challenges traditional "replication" models of mentoring in students model themselves after a single mentor, offering a DIY model that of mentoring networks. In addition to examining the infrastructure of a mentorship, the authors offer six criteria for effective DIY mentoring.

Learn More: Gail Y. Okawa, "Diving for Pearls: Mentoring as Cultural and Activist Practice among Academics of Color" – a qualitative study on two scholars, Geneva Smitherman and Victor Villanueva Jr., and their protégés. The study examples mentoring as a cultural tradition and activist practice for scholars of color.

Learn More: Torie Weiston-Serdan, Critical Mentoring: A Practice Guide – a book about the theories and practices of critical mentoring. Focusing on young people, Weiston-Serdan uses critical race theory to dismantle deficit-based assumptions about learning. Each chapter includes a list of action items.

Remember that mentoring is hard. Be compassionate.

Mentoring can be complicated for everyone involved. Students may not know how to be mentored or how to ask for help. Students do not know how to establish relationships with potential mentors, especially since each mentor has

unique quirks, preferences, talents, interests, and idiosyncrasies. Students may receive conflicting advice from mentors, which makes it harder to adapt that advice to their lives. Mentors make mistakes too. Sometimes mentors give general advice that may or may not apply to specific contexts. Mentors also struggle with setting boundaries with students who demand too much time and energy.

Given these challenges, I encourage us all to be more transparent about our mentoring work. Start conversations with other mentors, reach out for help, and make mentoring more visible. And hopefully we can show compassion for ourselves and others along the way.

Student Voices - Written by Emma Fore

Every two months we will be incorporating student voices into the newsletter. The Center for Teaching and Learning greatly values student voices in all aspects of teaching from design to delivery. Students chosen are current Active Learning Assistants or Supplemental Instructors. Emma is a French major and Active Learning Assistant for Foreign Languages 2100: Languages and Worldviews with Assistant Teaching Professor Manon Allard-Kropp.

School, for most of my life, consisted of a never-ending game of deciding when it was the right or wrong time to speak. Unfortunately, as I would imagine kindergarten and high school teachers alike would agree, students are not always great at making this decision. We talk to our friends during silent reading time, and we don't talk when we have an answer but are worried about sounding stupid. I can still remember the tingles of terror in my hands after being brusquely reprimanded by my kindergarten teacher for asking the people at my table if they wanted to play a game while coloring. "No, Emma. It's quiet time." I had accidentally made the wrong decision.

Over the course of my education, I, the stereotypical anxious, people-pleasing, overly-concerned-with-grades student, developed what I considered to be an astute ability to discern when it was the correct moment to talk, and when to keep my mouth shut. I was always on the lookout for when the teacher's

expectant silence appeared to transform into annoyance, or, even worse, suspicion that I (because I couldn't help but assume that they were singling me out) had not done the assignment. That was my cue to say something, anything, even if I had nothing meaningful to say. What came out of my mouth was often something that I would have rather put back in, but at least I had filled the silence, because silence was bad…right?

Somewhere along the confusing, contradictory road of hearing "Children should be seen and not heard," and "No, Emma. It's quiet time," and later, "Everyone must share at least three times using direct citations from the text for full credit," I had unknowingly crafted the idea that silence was in opposition to speaking. Thus, imagine my surprise when I became an Active Learning Assistant and discovered resources about the value of silence. As we read and discussed these ideas, the evidence I had gathered from my schooling was put into question, and just hearing that silence could be useful, even purposeful, instead of scary was enough to change my perception of it.
Once this fear was lessened, my brain finally let its value shine through. I was able to observe the power of allowing twenty seconds of "wait time" after a question, rather than trying to fill the silence. I was able to enjoy the relaxed excitement of sitting in a Zoom meeting with a teacher who welcomes responses from multiple avenues (by turning on your microphone, 'raising' your hand, or typing in the chat) and is willing to remain in that moment until all students gain the confidence to participate. I was able to benefit from a minute of silence at the beginning and end of a class as I wrote "one-minute papers" to warm up my mind and then summarize what I learned. Most importantly, I was able to realize that purposeful, productive silence can be a tool that ultimately leads to speaking, listening, and learning more.

To Learn More about Silence in Teaching:

- The Sound of Silence: The Value of Quiet Contemplation in the Classroom
- One-Minute Paper: Assess through Student Expression
- Extending the Silence

ACUE Lunch and Learn Series: Open to All

Members of our Teaching Community

Faculty that participated in ACUE's "Effective Online Teaching Practices" will host monthly Lunch and Learn meetings in 2021-2022 to share what they found to be successful in their courses. These monthly meetings are open to all UMSL faculty, staff, and graduate students to learn more about the innovative work of our colleagues.

The Association of College and University Educators (ACUE) "Effective Online Teaching Practices" program provided faculty with an opportunity to learn evidenced-based teaching strategies, apply, and reflect on what they have learned. We have been featuring faculty from the program who employ practices from the program in our CTL newsletters over this past year. Please check out past issues to learn from the creativity of your colleagues.

You will have the opportunity to continue to learn from and with your colleagues through a virtual Lunch and Learn Series where ACUE credentialed faculty will share strategies that have been successful in their courses and then host discussions about how you can employ those strategies in your own context. All members of the UMSL community (faculty, staff, graduate students) are welcome to attend.

Last month we heard from Erin Whitteck (CTL and Chemistry/Biochemistry), Hiroko Yoshii (Department of Languages and Cultural Studies) and Maureen Quigley (Department of Art and Design) about different approaches to student and faculty accountability. You can find some artifacts shared by Erin and Hiroko here.

Event Details:

- **Date of the next Lunch and Learn:** October 15th, 12:00 - 12:50 PM
- **Presenters:** Keiko Ueda (Department of Languages and Cultural Studies) and Alicia Hutchings (College of Nursing)
- **Topics:** Effective Student Communication and Setting Expectations
- **Location:** Virtual (see Registration below)

If you have any questions please reach out to CTL Assistant Director Erin Whitteck (elwbcf@umsl.edu). If you have already registered for the event you do not need to register again. A Zoom link and Outlook invite will be sent through email.

Register here for the Fall ACUE Lunch and Learn Series

Innovation in Teaching and Learning Conference

March 17, 2022 at Missouri S & T

The ITLC - Innovation in Teaching and Learning Conference was formerly known as Missouri S&T's TLT - Teaching and Learning Technology Conference.

The focus of the conference is on any new ideas and pedagogy in teaching and learning. The past two years have really stimulated creative ways of reaching students and ensuring that they are learning, even if they had to attend classes remotely.

Missouri S&T's Innovation in Teaching and Learning Conference is an excellent forum in which to share your ideas on this broad and complex topic!

Conference Details:

- Submit proposals by October 29th here
- Visit the conference website

If you have any questions, please contact the Center for Advancing Faculty Excellence at cafe@mst.edu or 573-341-6713.

Focus on Teaching and Technology Conference Wrap Up and Takeaways

The Focus on Teaching and Technology Conference was held virtually from September 29th-October 1st and offered an ensemble of keynote addresses,

faculty innovations during concurrent sessions, technology workshops, and vendor exhibits.

This year, for our 20th anniversary, we were excited to welcome over 1900 registrants to our UMSL-hosted Focus on Teaching and Technology Conference. This was our second year running the conference virtually which allowed us many opportunities to engage with our colleagues around the region on several different platforms. Did you miss the conference? Check out these motivating anchor session recordings.

- **Wednesday Keynote:** *Help Students Assume Their Role in the Learning Process: Teach Them How to Learn* by Saundra McGuire, view video
- **Thursday Keynote:** *Igniting Our Collective Imagination* by Bonni Stachowiak, view video
- **Friday Anchor Session:** *Effective Teaching: Tips from Award Winning Teachers*, view video
- **Tech Treks:** 3-5 minute "lightening round" presentations about different teaching tools presented by faculty and instructional designers, view videos

UMSL colleagues were big contributors to the Conference!

A big shout out to our UMSL colleagues who shared their great work with participation from around the region and nation.

- *Science Labs Can Be Taught Remotely (and Inexpensively!)* presented by **Carl Bassi** (Optometry)
- *Fostering Inclusiveness in a Virtual Classroom* presented by **Qiang Dotzel** (Math & Statistics)
- Sparking Creativity in your Course presented by **Jill Alexander** (Communication & Media)
- *Anti-oppressive Pedagogies in the Online Learning Environment* presented by **Nicole Egelhofer-Wells** doctoral student (Education)
- *Connecting Engagement Through The Doer Effect,* **Jennifer Vines** (Nursing) and colleagues at Nearpod
- *Using Transparent Assignments to Advance Equitable Teaching and Increase Student Performance* presented by **Keeta Holmes** (CTL), **Shannon Ahrndt** (Communication & Media), **Sanjiv Bhatia** (Computer

Science), **Kamila White** (Psychological Sciences)

- *Trauma-Informed Teaching during Sensitive Times* presented by **Amanda Bequette** (Psychological Sciences), **Erin Whitteck** (CTL & Chemistry)
- *Social Annotation Across the Disciplines* presented by **Seemantini Pathak** (Global Leadership & Management), **Erin Whitteck** (CTL & Chemistry), **Bethany Zolman** (Biology), and colleagues at Washington University in St. Louis
- *Increasing Engagement By Using 15-Second Reflection Videos* presented by **Leighanne Heisel** (Communication & Media) and colleagues at Maryville.
- … And a special thanks to **Joseph Rottman** (Information Systems and Technology) for representing UMSL in our Anchor session *Effective Teaching: Tips from Award Winning Teachers*.

FTTC Award Nominees and Winners!

We are amazingly proud of our own Jenna Alexander who won the Institutional Designer Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity Award (I.D.E.A) for her work with the Supplemental Instruction and Active Learning Assistant programs. She was nominated by a record 8 different faculty who were so grateful for the amazing work she does. Thank you to everyone who recognized the power of this work and shared it by providing such eloquent nominations for her for this award!

Also a huge shout out to the UMSL College of Nursing LGBTQ+ **Nursing Education Team** and those at UMSL Pierre Laclede Honors: **Kimberly Baldus, Christoph Schiessl, Ann Torrusio**, and **Rob Wilson** both who received nominations for Instruction Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity. Thank you everyone for the amazing work you all do at UMSL to support our students!

Learn more about all these presentations and award nominations in our Conference eProgram (passphrase fttc2021).

Course Evaluation System

Course evaluations are now managed in the CTL. The Faculty Senate sets dates for opening and closing of course evaluation surveys, as well as when faculty can access their results.

The course evaluation schedule for the 2021-2022 academic year as decided by the Faculty Senate is now updated on the CoursEval Resources Guide webpage and the CoursEval for Students webpage. On these webpages, faculty and students can find information on when surveys will be open, report release dates, and information on the CoursEval system.

Last year, CoursEval and course evaluation services were added to the CTL portfolio of services. Starting in the Fall, course evaluation surveys are set up through the CTL in collaboration with department chairs and college deans. Faculty, business support personnel, college deans, and department chairs will be able to access reports through courseval.umsl.edu.

If you have any questions about course evaluations, please contact CTL's Learning Analytics Coordinator, Mary Painter at mapxvc@umsystem.edu.

About the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL)

The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), a division of the Office of Academic Affairs, supports the professional development of those who teach and learn at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. Our goals - to promote engagement in courses, on campus, and in the community - enhance the University as we align our activities, services, and consultations with the campus goals to promote excellence in teaching, research, and service.

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