



MENTORING
INSTITUTE



MENTORING & COACHING MONTHLY

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September 2018

IN THIS ISSUE

Hello, and thank you for tuning into our September issue of Mentoring & Coaching Monthly! With the 2018 fall semester in full swing, the UNM community is excited for classes and the fast-paced atmosphere that comes with back to school.

This month we spoke with Kathleen M. Cowin, a Clinical Associate Professor of Educational leadership at Washington State University, Tri-Cities, and she told us about her career path, and how it informs the work in leadership that she is doing today.

This issue also features mentoring tips focused on corporate mentoring, as many students will eventually find themselves in a corporate setting after they graduate.

Also, check out some great articles about mentoring in the news for the month of September.

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Editor's Note

Welcome back to *Mentoring & Coaching Monthly*! As mentioned in the previous issue, my name is Yvonne Gandert and I will be taking over as the managing editor for the UNM Mentoring Institute. I have previously worked here, and am excited to be back.

The month of September denotes two important dates to bring to your attention. Firstly, September 3rd is to many students a much needed day off during the second month of school, but we must also remember that it is Labor Day, a federal holiday, first celebrated in 1882, to commend the contributions and achievements of American workers.

Secondly, September 11th marks the 17th anniversary of the tragic loss America experienced as a result of the World Trade Center attacks. We at the Mentoring Institute share a moment of silence to commemorate those lost, and the bravery of those who gave their lives to defend our country.

This month we spoke with Kathleen M. Cowin, a Clinical Associate Professor of Educational leadership at Washington State University, Tri-Cities, and she told us about her career path, and how it informs the work in leadership that she is doing today. Kathleen's story is unique in that she worked for many years as a teacher, as well as a principal, and this work propelled her into educational leadership. Strong leadership at all levels of education is a critical component to improving the education system in the United States. We appreciate Kathleen taking the time to answer some questions, and share her story with the UNM Mentoring Institute.

As mentors and coaches, it is important to recognize the need for mentors across all disciplines, and understand that each field has unique needs and requirements to consider when instituting mentoring services within their organization. This month, we provided an article that discusses tips for corporate mentoring, we encourage you to check it out, and see if they are applicable to your mentoring and coaching needs.

As always, we thank you for showing an interest in mentoring and coaching, and for your continued support of the UNM Mentoring Institute.



About Us:

THE MENTORING INSTITUTE DEVELOPS, COORDINATES AND INTEGRATES RESEARCH AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN MENTORING BEST PRACTICES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO (UNM). THROUGH THE APPLICATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN STANDARDS, THE INSTITUTE PROVIDES TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION SERVICES FOR A DIVERSE ARRAY OF STAFF, FACULTY AND STUDENTS, IN A CENTRALIZED EFFORT TO RECRUIT, TRAIN AND DEVELOP QUALIFIED MENTORS FOR THE UNIVERSITY, THE CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE AND THE GREATER NEW MEXICO COMMUNITY.

THE MENTORING INSTITUTE DOES NOT REPLACE OR DIRECT EXISTING MENTORING PROGRAMS. RATHER, IT PROVIDES A VARIETY OF SERVICES TO THESE PROGRAMS. THE MENTORING INSTITUTE AIMS TO BUILD UP CURRENT MENTORING PROGRAMS AND ENHANCE THE CULTURE OF MENTORING WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY, AND THE STATE IT SERVES.

THE MENTORING INSTITUTE ASSISTS IN STIMULATING AND PROMOTING A MENTORING CULTURE WITHIN THE COMMUNITY. BY ENCOURAGING THE MATRICULATION AND GRADUATION OF STUDENTS AS WELL AS THE RETENTION OF FACULTY AND STAFF AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO, THE INSTITUTE ALSO CONTRIBUTES TO THE DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH OF NEW MEXICO.

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INTERVIEW

A Conversation with Kathleen M. Cowin

CLINICAL ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP
WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY, TRI-CITIES

PLEASE INTRODUCE YOURSELF AND YOUR BACKGROUND IN LEADERSHIP/MENTORING.

Currently I serve as a clinical associate professor of educational leadership at Washington State University, Tri-Cities. I lead the principal certification program, teaching courses and serving as the university liaison for field work for our principal interns. Before working with principal candidates, I led a pre-service teacher certification program at another university. I began my educational career in the heart of the San Joaquin Valley in California as a bilingual kindergarten teacher (Spanish/English). I taught for 13 years and then served as an elementary and middle school principal for 16 years.

While working as a principal I became very interested in leadership and enrolled in a doctoral program in educational leadership and a superintendent certification program. I completed my doctorate and superintendent certification program with my dissertation focusing on mentorship practices veteran teachers use when mentoring novice teacher candidates (student teachers) or beginning career teachers.

My interest in mentoring began early in my educational career as I was asked to mentor both teachers new to our school and first year beginning teachers. As I moved into my administrative career, I continued to mentor teachers who were new to my school as well as first time teachers. I observed that the role the principal plays in discerning how the mentoring relationships are established and how school-wide resources for mentoring were allocated,

made a huge impact on the success of the mentoring process as evaluated by both the one being mentored and the mentor. I also serve as a mentor for our master's and principal/program administrator interns, as well as for many of my former students.

WHAT LED YOU TO BECOME INVOLVED IN THIS LEADERSHIP SEMINAR?

My work with pre-service teachers provided an entry point into my research into mentorship practices. Mentoring many of them as they moved from the student teacher role into their first full-time teaching position, and observing how often they were not given any other mentoring, was sadly eye-opening. During my work in the pre-service teacher certification program, I began to study mentorship practices and conduct my own action research based on what my former student teachers were reporting. My mentoring research focused on the mentoring practices of these novice teachers in their first year of teacher formation. I began to focus on the mentoring relationship we established and the ongoing formation of them as novice teachers and how the mentoring relationship enlivened my own teaching practice. All of these former student teachers reported that

as our relationships continued to develop and grow, our mentoring relationships provided the support that often kept them from considering giving up and quitting teaching. The despair some of these novice teachers revealed was heartbreaking and they often stated that they did not feel safe asking for help from those in their building and that there just was not time to build trusting relationships at school.

It was at about this same time that I attended my first Mentoring Institute conference at UNM. It was at the UNM Mentoring Institute Annual Conference where I found what I call "my people." I met researchers and practitioners who were focused on what I was passionate about – forming mentoring relationships that are reciprocal



*It was at the
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and invigorating in nature for all parties. The mentoring relationships I formed with my former student teachers led me to deeply reflect on my own teaching practices and drove me to learn more about my own mentoring practices and how to enhance those practices. I was introduced to a whole new (to me) mentoring scholarship, and talked with long-time mentors about their practices and outcomes. When I moved to my current position serving as a mentor to principal interns, a whole new realm of mentorship practices was opened to me for additional study.

What became a focal point was that often the mentors assigned to principal interns are their current principal who also acts as their direct evaluator and supervisor. Principal interns often told me they felt a sense of separation from their former teacher colleagues who saw them as stepping away from teaching and moving into administration, but at the same time their principal (who was also their principal intern mentor) did not see them as a full administrator. This sense of feeling different or separate often resulted in the principal intern feeling isolated within their own school. They were no longer a teacher, but they were also not a principal. Answering my principal interns' calls of concern about this isolation was the impetus for me to focus my research on how I could form a trusting relationship with my principal interns as well as how the interns might work together in a co-mentoring process to lessen their feelings of isolation.

PLEASE DESCRIBE YOUR GOALS WITH EACH SEMINAR.

My goals are to:

- 1) Get to know each other.
- 2) Establish a trusting mentoring relationship with each principal intern and among the principal interns in the group.
- 3) Provide a safe space for interns to discuss concerns and ask questions, embrace their own novicedom, escape for a time from feelings of isolation from former teacher colleagues, and model effective mentorship and leadership practices.
- 4) Have fun!

WHAT KINDS OF TOPICS ARE COVERED, AND WHAT PROBLEMS DO THESE TOPICS ADDRESS?

We begin by participating in active icebreaker activities to get to know each other's names and a little bit about each other. Then we discuss a framework for how we will work together and establish our group agreements based on the work of Jeanne Gibbs (2006) and Parker Palmer (2011). We spend time processing our group agreements until we can all agree to uphold them.

Next, we discuss confidentiality and trust building activities.

I give my "opening day talk" stating my own beliefs about leadership and mentorship as well as my core values that support my definitions of leadership and mentorship, and my philosophy of education. I give this talk as a way of modeling what I believe each future principal should be able to do when they meet their new school staff and community stakeholders.

We study and learn about the interconnectedness of trustworthiness and trust (Combs, Harris, & Edmonson, 2015; Tschannen-Moran, 2007, 2014) as well as models for thoughtful written reflective practice (Arrendondo-Rucinski, 2005), and communication skills (Alessandra & O'Connor, 2011), and models for communication (Zachary & Fischler, 2014).

Then after reflecting on our own communication skills, and agreeing to hold absolute confidentiality about what we discuss, we learn about the auto-ethnography process we will use called the self-portrait. I collect questions from the principal interns and we also discuss problems of practice that come from the interns' work. Some topics have included:

- 1) Celebrating student growth, development, and achievement
- 2) Curriculum concerns and selection processes
- 3) Clarifying communication among a group of teachers who may be working on a grade level or subject topic project in a Professional Learning Community (PLC)
- 4) Analyzing student achievement data and communicating that among PLCs
- 5) Student conduct issues and communicating with parents/guardians and teachers/administrative staff/para-professionals about these student conduct issues
- 6) Chronic tardiness/absences/truancy
- 7) School violence, bullying, and cyber bullying
- 8) Student mental health issues
- 9) Poverty and adverse childhood trauma
- 10) Para-professional and administrative team building
- 11) Communication with teachers about formal evaluation and the supervision process
- 12) Union grievances and strikes
- 13) Mandated budget cuts and reduction in force processes

WHAT WAS YOUR INSPIRATION TO USE SELF- PORTRAITS? PLEASE DESCRIBE WHAT THEY ARE.

My inspiration for creating the self-portrait process came from my long-standing interest in story and storytelling that intersected with my work as a participant in the Courage to Lead® workshops where I was exposed to writing an “I Am” poem and using auto-ethnography as a form of self-reflection. I combined these interests with the work of Sara Lawrence Lightfoot (2003), particularly her own school-based story recalled from her childhood, and the qualitative methodology of portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). After studying Lawrence-Lightfoot’s (2003) and other examples of self-portraits, I have students write their own self-portrait about why they want to lead as a K-12 principal or about an event where school, home, and community intersected.

Self-portraits are auto-ethnographic essays focusing on a particular incident in the principal intern’s own school-home-community experience that may have contributed to their desire to lead a K-12 school. The public sharing of one’s self-portrait with our intern group is by invitation and not a requirement of the seminar. The self-portrait sharing process comes after group agreements, trust, and confidentiality are firmly established among the principal interns in the seminar. While interns sometime express concern before they begin sharing their self-portraits, all have opted to do so in the past four years that the seminar has been held and they report how the sharing process deepens the trust among the group. A detailed overview of the process to establish the seminar can be found in (Cowin, 2018).

HOW DOES A HIGH LEVEL OF TRUST PLAY INTO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THIS SEMINAR?

Trust is essential to the process of sharing one’s self-portrait among the principal intern group. We read about trust (Combs, Harris, & Edmonson, 2015; Tschannen-Moran, 2007, 2014) and take several weeks to establish our group agreements (Gibbs, 2006, Palmer, 2011), and discuss confidentiality. Drawing on my work in The Courage to Lead® workshops, the discussions we have in our seminar are not about fulfilling our own individual sense of curiosity to know more about a story, concern, or problem a principal intern may share, but it is about holding a safe space where we practice attentive listening by allowing the person speaking to tell their story or voice their concern or question without

those listening making comments, giving advice, or explaining their solutions. Attentive listening is simply deeply listening without comment. When we as listeners are invited to comment it is with the intention to project a stance of inquiry that helps the speaker think more deeply about what he/she has said. This model of communication is what Zachary and Fischler (2014) call “collaborative engagement” (p. 168).

This is hard work for helping professionals (like teachers) who naturally seek to give advice and fix problems. I draw upon the idea of “double confidentiality” from the Courage to Lead® work which comes from the “Touchstones for Creating a Circle of Trust.” Double confidentiality means that only the speaker has the right to bring up the topic they have previously raised. So a principal intern would not approach another intern and ask further questions about a previous topic that was discussed at the seminar, as this would be breaking our sense of double confidentiality.

Within our seminar we also study the three tenets of relational mentoring explained by Fletcher and Ragins (2007). During the sharing of the self-portraits we especially focus on the third tenet, systemic power. As a group we want to be very aware that the speaker has the power to talk and even pause without talking when they have the floor without listeners ever repeating what is said or offering advice or comment unless specifically asked to do so.

All the efforts that go into establishing trust among the interns and with me contribute to being able to have a supportive group of colleagues who understand the positionality of being a novice school leader. The trust among the seminar participants provides a ready-made group of understanding colleagues who can provide support and feedback on the many questions and concerns that arise. We do not have to worry that one might be judged for not knowing the answer or how to do something as an intern.

Having others who you can call upon at a moment’s notice to ask a question or bounce an idea around with helps interns do thoughtful work during the seminar and in the day-to-day work each intern does. Interns routinely tell me that without the trusting colleagues from the seminar they would have no one to ask without fear or feeling they had no one to turn to for support. Many interns have expressed that the seminar is a very special setting with colleagues who they can continue to reach out to for support. A number of interns still meet together and with me after they complete the program.

"The seminar becomes a safe space to discuss concerns and questions that interns might feel worried about or embarrassed to ask their principal mentor because they don't want to disclose that they might not know what to do or how to handle a specific situation."

WHAT KINDS OF RESPONSES HAVE YOU RECEIVED FROM THOSE WHO HAVE PARTICIPATED IN YOUR SEMINAR? HOW HAS THIS SEMINAR HELPED STUDENTS BECOME BETTER FUTURE SCHOOL LEADERS?

Seminar participants have overwhelmingly expressed very positive feelings about the seminar. Participants often express that it is easier to discuss concerns and questions after completing their public sharing of the self-portrait process because they believe that other students understand them and the work they do as a principal intern. The seminar becomes a safe space to discuss concerns and questions that interns might feel worried about or embarrassed to ask their principal mentor because they don't want to disclose that they might not know what to do or how to handle a specific situation. The camaraderie they feel with the other interns makes it possible for each intern to have a set of confidential colleagues who, as one intern said, "get you and you can share other problems without worrying about what they might think of you" (Unnamed intern, personal communication, 2017).

Interns tell me that the seminar has helped them understand the importance of continuing to hone their communication skills, how to establish group agreements among groups of people, and the importance of establishing trusting relationships among all the stakeholders of the school: students, their families, faculty, staff, and the administrative team. Interns also tell me that they believe being able to reflect and having a ready-made group of confidential colleagues to be able to talk with so that he/she can explore concerns or questions will be vital to their sustaining an effective and long-lasting leadership career as a principal. Another area interns have told me they find helpful from the seminar is truly examining their self-portrait and recognizing the core values and beliefs it focuses on that may help them continue to set goals for growth and development as a leader.

WHAT ARE THE FIRST STEPS OTHERS SHOULD TAKE TO IMPLEMENT PROGRAMS SUCH AS THIS SEMINAR INTO THEIR OWN SCHOOLS?

I would suggest others spend time learning about how to establish group agreements from the work of Gibbs (2006) and Palmer (2011) and/or other scholars in the area of group norm setting and then spend the time to talk together about how the group will function. Critical to establishing how the participants will work together is to closely examine one's communication skills. Taking the time to study, self-assess, and ask for other's feedback on one's communication

skills is necessary so one can set goals of communicating in a manner that the conversations and discussions in the seminar can be self-revealing and not just at a surface level. Zachary and Fischler (2014) provide a model for communication that can assist in conducting a true mentoring conversation where participants can be vulnerable with each other (p. 168). Taking the time to assess the trust levels among the group, learning more about the components of trust, and establishing trusting and confidential relationships are a must (see the work of Fletcher and Ragins, 2007, and Tschannen-Moran, 2007, 2014). Teaching a methodology for an established practice of reflection (Arrendondo-Rucinski, 2005) and making time for reflection and feedback on the work conducted in the seminar has been a component that seminar participants have welcomed.

"Taking the time to assess the trust levels among the group, learning more about the components of trust, and establishing trusting and confidential relationships are a must."

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IN THE NEWS:

What's new in this month's selection of mentoring-related news



FORBES

[Where You Can Meet Your Next Mentor](#)

[By Shelcy V. Joseph](#)



DAILY CAMERA

[Women Scientist Speed Mentoring Event](#)

[By Amy Bounds](#)



LIVE MINT

[Two Women, Two Mentorship Models](#)

[By Sohini Sen](#)



THE CITY SENTINEL

[Over 800 Coaches Participate in 4th Annual Oklahoma Mentoring Challenge](#)

[By Darla Shelden](#)



FORBES

[Why You Need To Mentor Your Executive Leaders](#)

[By Jenn Lofgren](#)

MENTORING TIPS:

Corporate Mentoring Tips

Excerpted from "Corporate Mentoring Tips: 7 Habits of Highly Successful Mentors & Mentorees" by Management Mentors.

Many students leaving universities will head into the corporate workforce, therefore, we have provided 7 tips that are uniquely catered to the corporate world, and how to continue your mentoring journey after college.

ACTIVE LISTENERS

Active listening takes energy. People who listen actively don't simply sit back and allow words to hit their eardrums. They sit up straight. They take notes. They ask questions. They repeat or "mirror back" what they've heard to ensure they've understood it properly. Active listeners are the ones who provide non-verbal gestures (e.g. eye contact, nodding, etc.) that indicate they're following (or not following) what you're saying.

DEDICATED TO THEIR SUCCESS

I'm not suggesting that people should have a myopic view and are dedicated to only their own success. What I'm saying is that people who take pride in their work, who want to grow, and who truly care about their career trajectory are assets because of their high expectations.

DEDICATED TO OTHERS' SUCCESS

I put the "success" habits back to back so that it's clear they work in tandem. The most successful (and happiest) people in life are not in it just for themselves. They care about the organization and the people within that organization and have a genuine desire to see everyone and everything succeed: the company, the employees, and the mentoring program as a whole.

CURIOUS

People who are naturally curious tend to follow the "if there's a will, there's a way" philosophy. If they don't know the answer or if they need help with something, they won't sit back and wait; they'll go looking for the answers.

ENGAGED WITH THEIR SURROUNDINGS

These people view their work as more than just a job. They show interest in the industry, in the world around them, in the work that other departments are doing, and in the charitable events associated with their company.

WILLING TO STEP OUT OF THEIR COMFORT ZONES

These people are willing to try new things, consider new thoughts, and think outside of the proverbial box for the sake of personal and professional growth.

THE 3 R'S: RESPONSIBLE, RESPECTFUL, & READY

People who are responsible, respectful, and ready to get started with new projects help make the day-to-day work experience a better one not only for themselves, but also for everyone around them.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

2018 COACHING IN LEADERSHIP & HEALTHCARE CONFERENCE

 **September 28-29, 2018**

 **Boston, Massachusetts**

The purpose of these sessions is to have a stimulating exchange of information and discussions about coaching theory, research and its relevance to practice, as well as to expand the network of coaching researchers.

8TH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF COACHING PSYCHOLOGY CONFERENCE

 **October 11-12, 2018**

 **London, U.K.**

This Two-Day Conference offers Masterclasses, Keynote and Invited Speakers, Skills-based Sessions and Poster Presentations. The event will focus upon the practice and research of Positive and Coaching Psychology exploring themes such as: Acceptance and Commitment, Appreciative Coaching, Neurodiversity, Youth Coaching, Performance and Resilience, Psychophysiology, Ecopsychology, Family Life Coaching, Diversity and Ethics, and Research.

3RD INTERNATIONAL COLUMBIA COACHING CONFERENCE

 **October 17-21, 2018**

 **New York, New York**

The 3rd International Columbia Coaching Conference explores "Systemic Coaching: Whole Person/Whole Organization Engagement." Columbia's quest to continue to foster industry research, professionalism, and continuous learning is the inspiration for this two and half-day event on October 17-19, 2018, at Teachers College, Columbia University, New York City.

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SAVE THE DATE!

OUR 11TH ANNUAL MENTORING,
COACHING, AND LEADERSHIP
CONFERENCE WILL BE
HELD AT UNM FROM
OCTOBER 22-OCTOBER 26.

THE CONFERENCE THEME WILL BE
*MENTORING, COACHING, AND
LEADERSHIP FOR INNOVATION AND
ENTREPRENEURSHIP.*

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