

My advising and mentoring philosophy

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Rather than sharing “talk,” perhaps referring to how my students described their perceptions of my “walk” with them is a more accurate reflection of my style of supporting our future teachers...

Last December all of my student teachers and I met for pizza at Grotto’s. The teacher candidates had bound their unsolicited, heartfelt letters into a handcrafted scrapbook; I must admit that I have never received a gift from a group of student teachers that touched me as deeply.

Consistently, these future teachers shared that despite their initial fears about student teaching, at the conclusion of the experience, they felt confident about beginning a career as an educator, and that was the goal I had hoped each of them would accomplish. One teacher candidate expressed her growth succinctly, “I feel capable now and ready for a classroom of my own.” The group of pre-service teachers stated that they felt I was patient during times of uncertainty, available to listen, supportive and encouraging, ensuring them that successful instructional practices were “within their reach.”

One of my most important goals as a field instructor included providing feedback to each teacher candidate about what he/she was “doing right.” One student stated, “You allowed me to reflect on my strengths and weaknesses.” Another shared, “You opened my eyes to new ways to teach.” They stated that they viewed me as a knowledgeable, passionate, positive, optimistic and experienced mentor, and stated that they appreciated that I “guided, motivated, and pushed” them to do more. They apparently even noticed my modeling of time-management skills, and gradually they grew to understand the ways in which all educators must take advantage of the opportunities to renew their personal and professional energy.

Periodically, we took the time to publically share and celebrate their growth and accomplishments. The quotations and words they chose to share humbled me: “Better than a thousand days of diligent study is one day with a great teacher (a Japanese proverb),” and “Few people have made as significant impact on my college learning experience as you have.”

I am indeed fortunate and blessed for the opportunity to softly guide our future educators.