Mentoring: Models of Success

Karl W. Reid, Ed.D.
Senior Vice President
Academic Programs and Strategic Initiatives

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Topics

• Why Mentoring Works
• A Mentoring Achievement Model
• Models of Success at MIT
Kolb’s Cycle of Learning

Concrete Experience
(Demonstration/Observation)

Active Experimentation
(Incorporating ideas into action; problem-solving)

Reflective Observation
(Contemplating the experience from various perspectives)

Abstract Conceptualization
(Idea formulation and integration; generalization & theory)
Kolb’s Cycle of Learning

Concrete Experience (Case Study)

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### Reflecting on Mentors: Sensemaking

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Kolb’s Cycle of Learning

Concrete Experience (Case Study)

Abstract Conceptualization (Idea formulation and integration; Generalization & theory)

Reflective Observation (Contemplating the experience from various perspectives)

Active Experimentation (Incorporating ideas into action; Problem-Solving)
Effects of Faculty Mentoring

• **Higher** academic goal definition
• **Higher** first semester GPA
• **Higher** first semester persistence
• **Greater** college *self-efficacy*

Perceived Self-Efficacy: “I Think I Can”

- Confidence in one’s capabilities to influence outcomes and behaviors
- “The Exercise of Control”
- Research: Certain students have lower expectations
  - “Defensive Pessimism” vs. “Strategic Optimism”
  - “We can’t, and I really can’t” vs. “I can and we can”
- Subsequent behaviors influence connections

Positive Effects of Self-Efficacy

- Interest in, positive attitudes towards subject matter
- Greater effort (concentration, rework)
  - Greater success in solving conceptual problems
  - More persistence in searching for solutions
  - Willingness to discard faulty approaches
- Manage work time better
- More resilient
- Lower stress and anxiety
- More challenging choices

*Perceived self-efficacy influences cognitive skill acquisition and performance outcomes*
How Self-Efficacy is Developed

Mastery Experiences
- Too challenging
- Too simple

Zone of Proximal Development

Vicarious Experiences
(Role Modeling)

Verbal Judgments
(Mentoring)

Physical and Emotional States
Hypothesized Achievement Model

Sources
(Bandura, 1997; Helms, 1990)
- Mastery experiences
- Vicarious experiences
- Social persuasion
- Physiological states
- Physical attributes
- Sociocultural influences (parents, families, peers, schools, media)
- Systemic forces (political, economic, racial discrimination)
- Lived experiences

Integration Moderators

Academic Self-efficacy

Racial Identity Attitudes

Institutional Integration
(Tinto, 1993)

Academic Integration

Social Integration

Achievement
(Cumulative GPA)
Why Mentoring Matters

**Sources**
(Bandura, 1997; Helms, 1990)

- Mastery experiences
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**Integration Moderators**

- Academic Self-efficacy
- Racial/Ethnic Identity Attitudes

**Institutional Integration**
(Tinto, 1993)

- Academic Integration
- Social Integration

**Achievement**
(Cumulative GPA)

- Academic Self-efficacy
Summary: What Matters for Students in College?

• Academic confidence
• Opportunities to engage encouraging faculty on a personal level
• Greater campus involvement
• Positive racial identification/ cultural fluency
• Attributions that empower performance-oriented behaviors
• Effective learning strategies
  – Groups, getting help, time mgmt, studying smarter
Other Mentoring Considerations

- Studies have shown
  - Students with same-ethnic mentors perceived them to be significantly more supportive in furthering their personal and career development and reported significantly greater program satisfaction than non-matched students;
  - Frequency of student-mentor contact is positively correlated with students' adjustment to college, perceived mentor supportiveness, and program satisfaction

- Example: University of Louisville FMP
  - Assigned a faculty mentor to all admitted African American students
  - Aimed to enhance persistence of African American students by having a faculty member foster a caring, nurturing environment to help students feel welcomed and connected with the university
  - Assignments made based on the intended major of the student
  - The mentors, who also serve as faculty advisors, proactively contact the student by telephone and email, and hold face-to-face meetings at least bimonthly
  - Result: Closed gap in first-year persistence

### Applying the Theory: Sensemaking

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Applying the Achievement Model

Concrete Experience
(Case Study)

Reflective Observation
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Active Experimentation
(Incorporating ideas into action; Problem-Solving)
MIT Mentor Advocate Partnership (MAP)

- **Historical Overview**
  - Established in 2007, the Mentor Advocate Partnership (MAP) is a volunteer mentoring program for first-year MIT students that seeks to foster holistic development along both academic and non-academic dimensions.

- **Mentors: Faculty, Staff, and Graduate Students**

- **Supplements freshmen and academic advising**

- **Relationship persists for two years with two-year renewal**

- **Students held accountable for**
  - Academic performance
    - Students check in at critical junctures during the semester
  - Career aspirations
    - Strong’s Interest Inventory
MAP Continued

• **MAP Protégé Class**
  - 54 New First-Year Protégés
  - 67 Second-Year Protégés
    - Partnerships continue through their 2nd year
  - 28 Mentors

• **Upcoming Events**
  - November 19 - MAP Kickoff Event/Match Party
MIT Laureates and Leaders

• Cohort of students interested in attending graduate school
• Selected as early as freshman year
• Facilitates academic connections with faculty and graduate students
• Follow strategic steps towards the graduate school application process
  – Undergraduate research
  – Faculty and graduate mentors
  – GRE
  – Application
  – Funding

• Facilitated by L&L Advisor and student mentor
Freshman Efficacy Seminar
(“Race, Identity and Achievement”)

• A residence-based freshman seminar
• Discussions and activities based on readings that critically identify factors that affect academic performance
• Facilitated by an academic advisor/mentor
• 9-10 students annually
• Met weekly in the fall, bi-weekly in spring
### Seminar Format

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| 40 minutes | • Review of each participant’s goals, academic assignments, commitments, and outcomes from the previous week  
             • Ensuing discussion centers on a participant’s challenges, concluding with a collaboratively generated solution |
| 60 minutes | • A discussion and activity based on the readings or other assignments |
| 15 minutes | • Participants discuss their commitments and goals for the following week |
Seminar Topics

Fall Topics
• The Achievement Contract
• Working Smarter (1-3)
• Learning Styles
• Racial Identity (2)
• Stereotype Threat
• Cultural Fluency
• Achievement Motivation
• Preparing for Finals
• Setting Goals

Spring Topics
• Review Goals/ Setting New Goals
• History of AA Action at MIT
• Assault on Affirmative Action
• Situational Leadership
• Integrity and Character
• Roundtable Discussions (guests)
• Service Project
Seminar Results

• Freshman GPA
  – No difference in GPAs over 4 years
  – Seniors significantly above Institute average

• Persistence
  – 15 percentage points higher than URM average
  – One forced to withdraw for academic reasons

• Campus/Regional Leadership
Mentoring Dimensions of Success

Integration Moderators

Academic Self-efficacy

Academic Integration

Institutional Integration (Tinto, 1993)

Achievement (Cumulative GPA)

Academic Self-efficacy

Mastery experiences
• Vicarious experiences
• Social persuasion
• Physiological states

Racial Identity Attitudes

Physical attributes
• Sociocultural influences (parents, families, peers, schools, media)
• Systemic forces (political, economic, racial discrimination)
• Lived experiences

The Identity Dimension

The Relational Dimension

The Motivational Dimension

The Learning Dimension
Fostering Meaningful Faculty-Student Interactions

• Undergraduate research
  – Associated with improved outcomes
  – Encourage students to keep looking
  – Supplemental funding may be available

• Invite yourself/ Accept invitation to dinner
  – “Signal” first class (depending on size)
  – “Finger foods” receptions
  – Residence halls/ ILGs

• Transparency where appropriate

• Encourage face-to-face communications
  – Words have significant weight

• Advise a student group/ office
“The way a student perceives and responds to events in the college setting will differentiate his or her college experience and shape his or her outcomes.” W. R. Allen
Thank You!

Karl W. Reid, Ed.D.

karl.reid@uncf.org
Academic Integration

- Knowing a professor or administrator personally
- Faculty expectations/encouragement

“[Black students] develop best in environments where they feel valued, protected, accepted, and socially connected.” - W. R. Allen
Social Integration

- Campus participation
- Leadership involvement
- Use of campus facilities
- Perception of peers (share same values)
- Extracurricular opportunities
- Residence halls
Self-Efficacy: Will I Be Successful?

- Confidence in one’s capabilities to influence behaviors and outcomes
- Research: Black students have lower expectations
  - “Defensive Pessimism” vs. “Strategic Optimism”
  - “We can’t, and I really can’t” vs. “I can and we can”
- Subsequent behaviors influence connections
How Self-Efficacy Affects Behaviors

• Choices
• Effort (concentration, rework, discard)
• Persistence
• Resiliency
• Emotional reactions (vulnerability to stress, anxiety, and depression)
• Confidence in one’s capabilities can influence behaviors and outcomes
• Research: Some groups have lower expectations
  – “Defensive Pessimism” vs. “Strategic Optimism”
  – “We can’t, and I really can’t” vs. “I can and we can”
Racial Identity: Who am I and Who are We?

- Implications for a person’s feelings, thoughts and behaviors
- Racial identity attitudes shape:
  - How we organize information about ourselves, others, and institutions
  - Our response to perceived racism
  - Our reference group orientation & attributions
  - Cross-race social interactions
# Racial Identity Stage Theory

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<th>Statements from RIAS-B</th>
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| Pre-Encounter           | “I believe white people look and express themselves better than Black people.”  
                          | “I believe to be Black is not necessarily good.”                                                                                                       |
| Encounter               | “I feel unable to involve myself in White experiences, and I am increasing my involvement in Black experiences.”                                     |
| Immersion/Emersion      | “I believe the world should be interpreted from a Black perspective.”  
                          | “I believe that everything Black is good, and consequently, I limit myself to Black activities.”                                                   |
| Internalization/Commitment | “I feel good about being Black, but do not limit myself to Black activities.”  
                          | “People, regardless of their race, have strengths and limitations.”                                                                                  |