

Connecting Senior Faculty Conceptions of Mentoring and Teaching

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Overview

Tenured senior faculty members hold a position of critical influence at the university. Their voices may be insistent or subtle, far-reaching or ad-hoc, but their reputations, experience, and apparent knowledge can give their words and actions clout, particularly if they hold important leadership positions at the institution. Junior faculty often turn to their senior colleagues for advice, wisdom, information, comfort and feedback, as they strive to meet the demands of research, tenure, and service (Boice, 1992; Mullen & Forbes, 2000). Since senior faculty are often viewed and view themselves as role models, it is important to know what they actually think about teaching, student learning, and mentoring, in order to understand what conceptions they are conveying, or passing on, to their younger, receptive colleagues.

In this pilot study, we look at how senior faculty mentors in a formalized faculty development program at a research intensive university conceive of teaching undergraduates and we connect these findings to an earlier (Calkins & Light, 2007a) study of the same subjects that focused on their conceptions of mentoring junior faculty. We ask two key questions: (1) How do the senior faculty mentors in our program think about teaching? And (2) Do mentor conceptions of teaching undergraduates relate in any way to the ways in which mentors understand the mentoring of teaching undergraduates? Specifically, is there any connection between mentor conceptions of teaching and the distinct dimensions which describe conceptions of mentoring? For example, do more sophisticated conceptions of teaching tend to map onto more constructive and active dimensions of understanding mentoring? Conversely, do less sophisticated conceptions of teaching mentoring map onto more reproductive and passive dimensions of understanding mentoring? These are the questions that this study seeks to illuminate.

Theoretical Frameworks

This study draws on two theoretical frameworks: a framework for thinking about teaching, and a framework for thinking about mentoring, each described more fully below.

Conceptions of Teaching

Research has shown that there are two broad orientations towards teaching: teacher-focused and learner-focused (Kember, 1997; Prosser & Trigwell, 1999; Trigwell & Prosser, 2004). A student-focused or transitional category, lies between them (Light & Calkins, 2008; Calkins & Light, 2007b). (See Table I).

Table 1. Analytic Framework: Broad Conceptions of Teaching

Type	Key Descriptor
A. Teacher -Centered	Teaching as transmission of concepts
B. Student -Centered	Teaching as helping students acquire concepts
C. Learning -Centered	Teaching as helping students advance conceptually

Teacher-focused instructors generally experience teaching as transmitting content and knowledge (their own, and that of other experts) to passive students, with little consideration of the student’s prior knowledge or experience with a subject (A). Student-focused instructors understand teaching as facilitating student learning by providing necessary tools and knowledge to help students acquire the concepts and skills that the instructor already possesses (B). Learner-focused instructors, on the other hand, experience teaching as facilitating their students’ personal construction of knowledge, seeking to promote conceptual change in their student (C) (Prosser & Trigwell, 1999; Light & Calkins, 2008). We should note too, that these categories are hierarchical: a teacher holding a learning-focused conception, for example, understands the (and subsumes) the difference between being learner-focused and student-focused, but the opposite is not the case.

Conceptions of mentoring

In a previous study (Calkins & Light, 2007), we created a preliminary framework for understanding how senior faculty members conceive of mentoring as it relates to teaching, particularly in regards to junior faculty (see Table 1). These faculty tended to identify the same characteristics and behaviors of a “good” mentor that have been well-documented in the literature. Such attributes included approachability, accessibility, being knowledgeable, and caring (Clark, Harden, & Johnson, 2000), as well as offering advice, being encouraging, and building self-confidence (Anderson & Shannon, 1988; Kram, 1995; Cronan-Hillix, *et. al*).

But in our previous study, we identified four general types of conceptual understandings of mentoring (see Table 2). These conceptions were defined first by how the mentor viewed or understood the relationship between mentor and mentee, which we found fell into two broad orientations: mentor-focused and mentee-focused. Two other descriptive features, which focused on the nature and quality of the mentoring process, further refined the conceptions. Those holding a mentor-focused conception essentially believe that the mentor is or should be the focus of the mentoring relationship. The mentor believes that it is his role and responsibility (albeit reluctantly accepted at times) to pass on the “right” academic knowledge and skills to his mentee, which he then

expects his mentee to reproduce. On the other hand, the mentee-focused mentor puts her mentee at the heart of the relationship. He expects his mentee to develop his own unique voice, and to construct his own path to success. More reflective of what it means to be a mentor, she understands that there are many paths to success, with many solutions. In short, mentor-focused mentors expect the mentoring process to be more reproductive in nature, while mentee-focused mentors expect it to be more constructive in nature.

Each orientation is further distinguished by the quality of the process, in terms of how active or passive a role the mentor expects to take. In both orientations, the mentor may offer insights or advice, but only when first approached by the mentee. The nature of the passivity is marked by the orientation; that is, a mentor-focused mentor might offer the “right” strategies or advice when asked, but otherwise she is not likely to intervene, or may let the mentee “fail,” if the mentee does not ask for or does not heed her advice. In comparison, a mentor-focused mentor may be very active in the mentoring process, meaning that she is monitoring her mentee’s progress, and imposing her own solutions on her mentee. The mentee-focused mentor may also be passive or active in the mentoring process. He may wait for the mentee to grapple with the problem, but the key difference from the passive mentor-focused mentor is that he may let his mentee “fail” in order to learn from the experience. This mentor is more likely to view such “failure” as a necessary opportunity for the mentee’s growth. An active mentee-focused mentor will strive to encourage her mentee to develop her own solutions, ideas and opportunities, and is likely to approach the mentee and seek to deal with problems together.

Table 2: Senior Faculty Conceptions of Mentoring in Teaching

Category Types	Mentor-Focused		Mentee-Focused	
	I	II	III	IV
<p>DEFINING FEATURE</p> <p>Conceptions</p> <p>1 Relationship Focus</p> <p><i>Mentor</i> Vs <i>Mentee</i></p> <p>Mentoring, mentee growth, mentor growth, place within academic community</p>	<p>Opportunity to serve as expert academic resource, with expertise that can be reproduced</p> <p>Assumes mentee will adopt the “right” voice (similar to mentor’s voice)</p> <p>Views mentoring as a means to enhance mentor’s reputation or to fulfill professional obligations</p> <p>Views mentoring as modeling “right” academic values of the community to interested junior colleagues (mentoring is peripheral to mentor’s work)</p>	<p>Opportunity to create mentee in mentor’s own academic image, and/or to continue mentor’s work</p> <p>Advises mentee to adopt “right” voice (similar to mentor’s voice)</p> <p>Embraces mentoring as a means to promote mentee’s strengths as extension of mentor’s self-image</p> <p>Embraces mentoring as providing “right” academic values of the community to junior colleagues (mentoring is part of mentor’s work)</p>	<p>Opportunity to serve as a guide as mentee grows and develops academic self</p> <p>Expects mentee to develop his or her own unique voice</p> <p>Sees mentoring as a opportunity for mentor to also grow and develop</p> <p>Sees mentoring as assisting junior colleagues find their own place in the academic community (mentoring is important part of mentor’s work)</p>	<p>Opportunity to encourage mentee to explore and develop mentee’s academic self</p> <p>Challenges mentee to develop his or her own unique voice</p> <p>Values mentoring as a opportunity to also explore and develop mentor’s own growth</p> <p>Values mentoring as challenging their junior colleagues to construct their own unique space in the academic community. (mentoring is crucial to mentor’s work)</p>
<p>DESCRIPTIVE FEATURES</p> <p>Approaches</p> <p>2 Process Nature Focus</p> <p><i>Reproductive</i> Vs <i>constructive</i></p>	<p>Views mentoring as a fixed process; mentor reproduces real or assumed experience being mentored</p> <p>Assumes mentee will approach problems as mentor does</p> <p>Recognizes what is “right” path or what will lead to success</p> <p><i>Reproductive</i></p>	<p>Uses mentoring as a process to steer the mentee, reproducing mentor’s real or idealized experience of mentoring</p> <p>Persuades mentee to approach problems as mentor does</p> <p>Directs mentee to follow mentor’s “right” path to success</p> <p><i>Reproductive</i></p>	<p>Approaches mentoring as a fluid process; open to ways of mentoring other than how mentor was mentored</p> <p>Hopes mentee will develop mentee’s own solutions with mentor’s guidance</p> <p>Understands many paths for mentee other than mentor’s own path</p> <p><i>Constructive</i></p>	<p>Actively constructs new ways to mentor other than how mentor was mentored</p> <p>Encourages mentee to construct new solutions with mentor’s guidance</p> <p>Challenges mentee to create mentee’s own path</p> <p><i>Constructive</i></p>

3 Process Quality Focus <i>Active</i> Vs <i>Passive</i>	May let mentee “fail” for not seeking or following mentor’s advice	Expects mentee to take mentor’s advice (the “right” way)	May let mentee “fail” in order to learn (opportunity for mentee’s growth)	Actively encourages mentee to find and develop mentee’s own solutions/ try out new ideas, opportunities
	May offer “right” tips and strategies, but only when asked	Monitors mentee’s progress, impressing his or her own solutions on mentee	May wait for mentee to approach after mentee grapples with problem first	Will approach mentee for progress; may seek to deal with problem together
	Non-reflective and/or less invested in mentoring process <i>Passive</i>	Partially reflective and highly invested in mentoring process <i>Active</i>	More reflective and somewhat invested in mentoring process <i>Passive</i>	Highly reflective of and highly invested in mentoring process <i>Active</i>

In this study of senior faculty conceptions of mentoring junior faculty, we categorized 9 mentors as *mentor*-focused (7 in category I; 2 in category II) and 12 mentors as *mentee*-focused (8 in category III; 4 in category IV) (Calkins & Light, 2007) (see Table 3). In the current study, we looked at the same mentors to identify their conceptions of teaching.

<i>Relationship Focus and Process</i>	Mentor-Focused Reproductive		Mentee-Focused Constructive	
	<i>Passive</i>	<i>Active</i>	<i>Passive</i>	<i>Active</i>
<i>Quality</i>				
<i>Category</i>	I	II	III	IV
<i>Mentors (n=21)</i>	7	2	8	4

Table 3: Faculty mentoring conceptions by Type (Calkins & Light, 2007)

Methods

Program Design

Participants in this study were senior faculty members involved in a year-long faculty development program designed to enhance the teaching of early career, tenure-track faculty. The early career faculty in the program had been invited to apply by the university Provost. The program required each of the junior faculty members to select a senior colleague in their department who would agree to serve as a mentor for the year. Mentors were encouraged, but not required, to attend all program events, which included a 2-day overnight retreat, a second one-day retreat, 4-5 dinner workshops, and three workshops focused on teaching and learning related issues. As part of the program, the

junior faculty also had to develop a substantial project that focused on an issue or problem related to their teaching. The project usually consisted of the creation of a new course or curriculum, the revision of an existing course or curriculum, or an innovation of one course element. Mentors were expected to offer constructive feedback about their mentee's teaching-related project and accompanying critical account and, more generally, to discuss teaching-related issues with their mentees. In some cases, the mentor had personal investment in the mentee's project, sometimes developing or team-teaching a course with his or her mentee. In other cases, the mentee had focused on a large-scale curriculum redesign or other pedagogical innovation that would have larger impact on their department. Finally, mentors were also encouraged to observe their mentee's courses, and to invite their mentees to observe their own classes in return.

Participants

Twenty-one tenured senior faculty members from a private research I university were interviewed about their involvement as mentors in the program. Two from the 2004-2005 cohort were interviewed to develop the instrument, 8 came from the 2005-2006 program, and 11 from the 2006-2007 program. Six came from medicine, 9 from science and engineering, 3 from humanities and social sciences, 2 from other professional schools, and 1 from music. Scheduling conflicts precluded the other 17 senior mentors involved in the program from completing the pre-program interview. Their teaching experience ranged from six to over twenty years.

Instruments

Two of us interviewed the mentors at the beginning of the academic year, before the first event of the program occurred. The interviews were semi-structured and lasted 30-50 minutes. To ensure that participants felt comfortable sharing their thoughts with us, we informed them that their responses would be kept confidential and that they could stop the interview at any point. We also assured them that we would assign them subject codes for our analysis and, if we used any of their comments in our research, we would conceal any identifying details, such as their educational backgrounds and areas of expertise. The interview protocol consisted of 12 items, which were designed to elicit the participant's understanding of mentoring, teaching, and learning. For this study, we asked them how they defined teaching, what they understood as the key components of teaching, and how they thought students learned in their classes. These questions included: "How long have you been teaching, either at this university or in other contexts?" "How would you define "teaching?" or "What does the word "teaching" mean to you?" "How would you define "learning?" or "How do you think your students learn?" We also asked them about their views about mentoring, such as: "What does it mean to be a mentor?" "What do you think are the qualities of a good or an effective mentor?" "Have you ever been a mentor in other contexts?" and "Do you expect to learn anything from being a mentor?" Sometimes we rephrased the questions slightly, or followed up their responses with prompts, such as "Could you give me an example?" or "Can you clarify what you meant by such and such a point?"

Analytic Procedure

The interviews were audio-taped, fully transcribed, and analyzed. We carried out our analysis in four phases. First, one of us read through the interview transcripts to select passages in which the participants' discussed their ideas and conceptions of teaching and learning. Second, we each separately analyzed the excerpted data to identify key variations in the participants' conceptions, and then, third, we compared our responses. Throughout the process, we reviewed the transcriptions in their entirety to keep the quotes in context. Lastly, we compared our analysis of our participants' conceptions of teaching and learning, to our prior analysis of their conceptions of mentoring. To some extent, our sample is limited because all had agreed, first, to be mentors in the program, and second, to be interviewed, implying at least a tacit interest in thinking about what it means to be a mentor and teacher.

Findings

Conceptions of Teaching Undergraduates

We found that most of our mentors hold reasonably developed conceptions of teaching, given that they are employed at a research-intensive university where teaching is not always explicitly valued (see Table 4 below). Twenty of the 21 mentors held Type B or C conceptions. This relatively high proportion of developed conceptions may reflect these faculty's interest in teaching and mentoring, shown in their willingness to participate in the program, as well as the fact that they have been teaching for quite a while.

Several commented that they had changed their conceptions over time, moving from teacher-focused to student-focused conceptions. For example, an Engineering professor explains this evolution in his conceptions over time:

“I used to think of teaching as sort of the transfer of knowledge, maybe from the instructor to the students, but now I think of it more as the construction of knowledge by the student. I think of teaching at any level is to really add value to those students. And so I don't think just lecturing at them is the way to add value, because they can get a lot of different perspectives from a lot of different textbooks, and I think that what really adds value is if you can really see where they are pull out what their misconceptions are and figure out a way to address those and have it explained from a variety of different angles.”
[Engineering].

			Conceptions of Teaching			N	
			Teacher-Focused	Student-Focused	Learner-Focused		
			A	B	C		
Conceptions of Mentoring	Mentor-Focused	I	Passive Reproductive	1	4	2	7
		II	Active Reproductive	--	2	--	2
	Mentee-Focused	III	Passive Constructive	--	3	5	8
		IV	Active Constructive	--	3	1	4
			1	12	8	21	

Table 4: Comparison of Senior Faculty Conceptions of Teaching Undergraduates to Conceptions of Mentoring

In the case of the 1 out of 21 mentors who could be considered teacher-focused (A), the mentor, a professor of science, explains that teaching occurs when:

“I have communicated some information to somebody else that I believe that they hadn’t known” (Science).

This professor views teaching as a fairly straightforward transmission of information from teacher to student. There is no sense that he views the student as bringing any prior knowledge or experience to the transaction: the “somebody else” seems to be merely a passive recipient of his own expertise. Twelve out of 21 mentors (57%) fell into the student-focused category (B). As a professor of Communications explains:

“Teaching to me means to explain things to the students in a way that helps them understand it....taking various analogies and try to simplify things just to get them to the point where they understand it. After they understand it, I think they can go back and look at the textbooks and it will make more sense to them. But I am just trying to get them to the point where they can tackle those difficult materials.” (Communications)

This professor views teaching as helping students acquire the concepts and knowledge that he has already mastered. We categorized 3 student-focused mentors as “weak,” because the participants made marginal reference to facilitating student learning through the acquisition of skills and knowledge, which we believed moved them beyond the teacher-focused category.

More than a third of the total participants (8/21 or 38%) could be identified as having highly sophisticated, learner-focused (C) conceptions. For example, an Engineering professor holding a learner-focused conception explains:

“...[Teaching] is not me just sitting up there throwing information at them [students].... I am trying to...encourage them to formulate useful questions and to figure out how to approach them and how to answer them.” (Engineering)

His conception is learner-focused because he not only wants his students to acquire the tools of his discipline to answer a question, as a student-focused teacher would expect, but he also wants his students to be able to learn to ask their own questions. There is a suggestion here that he wants his students to develop their own conceptual understanding of the material.

Conceptions of mentoring and conceptions of teaching

When we compared our senior faculty mentors conceptions of teaching undergrads with their conceptions of mentoring junior colleagues in teaching undergraduates, we found that student-focused and learner-focused conceptions tended to be distributed among the mentoring conceptions. Learner-focused faculty tended to be more constructive in the mentoring process. Of the 8 learner-focused mentors, 6 out of 8 (75%) viewed mentoring as a constructive process. Asked to describe the characteristics of a ‘good’ mentor, a professor of science explains it is:

“[Taking] a personal interest in somebody’s professional development.... It speaks a lot. You don’t have to be their friend, but it’s more than an instructor, it is more than an advisor.. [A good mentor has] the ability for someone to try at something, cost free. [It may be] a completely wrong approach, but [a mentor will say] ‘Now read this,’ edging along, nurturing along, where your stock doesn’t go down in somebody else’s eyes or your grade doesn’t dip because of intimate failures. To be sure, you have to hold people to accomplishments and standards, etc etera, at the end, but I would like to see on the way, the ability to learn in real time, and somebody is watching you learn and helping you.”

On the other hand, seven out of nine (78%) mentors holding reproductive, mentor-focused conceptions also held the less developed student-focused and teacher-focused conceptions of teaching. For example, this Engineering professor describes a student-focused conception of teaching:

“[Teaching is] a passage of knowledge, and also passage of insisting again on methods of how to get there. So it’s not only this passage of ‘I know all this, and I am going to reorganize it and then I am going to give it to you.’ But, it’s trying to entice people to tell them how they can be independent thinkers and put the pieces of the puzzle together...Looking at different types of methods by which you can get to a kind of a logical type of conclusion...” (Engineering)

While he does view teaching partially as a “passage of knowledge” and methods, which he as an expert has already mastered, he also expects students to be able to acquire and use those concepts and tools to “put the pieces of the puzzle together.” As a mentor for his junior colleagues, he holds a reproductive mentor-focused conception of mentoring:

“[Mentoring is] about giving advice and providing advice in terms of how to manage the time, how to structure and relate prior experience. ... I keep track of what’s going on, when I know something where they can get an advantage of going to whatever I just tried to tell them to make the bridge, make the connections and go there... or how to optimize their chances of getting a good position, funding or this type of things.” (Engineering)

He knows what his mentee needs to do and how “to optimize their chances” for success, because he has already made those links and connections that he thinks his mentee should reproduce.

If reproductive nature of conceptions of mentoring tended to map with less sophisticated conceptions of teaching, we found no strong evidence of similar distinctions with respect to the active/passive quality of the mentoring conception with respect to the 13 student- and teacher-focused faculty: 8 (62%) were more passive; and 5 (38%) were more active. On the other hand, learner-focused faculty appear to be more passive than active mentors: Seven out of eight (88%) learner-focused faculty held passive conceptions of mentoring and one (12%) held an active mentoring conception. In mentoring his junior colleagues, another Engineering professor who holds a learner-focused conception of teaching undergraduates, describes a more deliberate passive conception of mentoring:

“...Mentoring seems to be treading a line; on the one extreme, just answering questions, which is a very sort of disengaged sort of mentoring, and the other extreme, poking your head in the person’s class every day which is a very annoying sort of mentoring. So I guess what I try to do is always be available to answer their questions, even when they might not realize that they have asked one, they have just sort of implied one, somehow, and to poke my nose in at times when I feel like they would be comfortable....” (Engineering)

He is clearly mentee-focused mentor, wanting to facilitate his mentee’s development and allow the mentee to construct his own path to success, but at the same time is fairly passive in his attitudes towards mentoring his junior colleague about teaching.

Only one of six active mentors was learner-focused. For this one professor, teaching is letting students “into the learning process,” even to the point where he sits down (metaphorically or literally) and lets the students take over their own learning:

“Teaching is all about providing a set of structural experiences in a point of time that opens imaginative thought to the students. ... [T]eaching is letting go. ... There is an opportunity that you have to welcome the students in as part of the learning experience. What is very important for teachers, I think, is the ability to say, ‘OK, I will step aside here and try to get other people to take part in the learning process.’ ... I think a good part of teaching is just sitting down.” [Music].

In terms of how he mentors his junior colleagues, he views mentoring as existing at two different levels, one more ad-hoc, and one more sustained:

“[On] a day to day basis, mentoring is quick advice on things which are fairly trivial but important at the moment. So if a person has a concern about an individual teaching problem with a student or something, I think a mentor can be helpful. ... The other kind of mentoring, which I think is probably more meaningful in terms of a career, is the kind that happens when a person comes in and says, ‘OK, I’m approaching my third year review. What kinds of things do you think I should be doing differently in my work?’ So that kind of mentoring is on a longer term, and that goes on too, when after one has tenure and you are working with a colleague who is thinking of perhaps moving to full professor, or something like that. I think there’s a role to be played there for more senior people to say, ‘Well, the bar is high for a promotion to full professor; You need to be thinking about this.’ So there [are] different levels of mentorship, [a] kind of a lower level day to day, and then there is this kind of longer-term thing that I think that you need to do that is important.

As a mentor, this professor is also mentee focused. He is active, thinking about his junior colleagues’ career beyond ad hoc teaching help; he expects to be an active part of his mentee’s professional growth for a very long time, and thinks ahead to professional milestones. He does not simply provide his mentee with his own roadmap to success, he expects and challenges his mentee to work these problems in a way that works for him, providing guidance and insights at critical junctures.

It should be remembered that the findings reported above are not intended to suggest that these numbers reflect larger patterns in academia; but rather they are intended to begin to map out interesting patterns and questions in the teaching, learning and mentoring terrain as described in the sample.

Discussion

Our preliminary findings suggest an apparent dilemma: although nearly all of our senior mentors hold student-focused or learner-focused conceptions of teaching undergraduates, they are also mostly passive in their interaction with their junior colleagues. This suggests that even though senior faculty may hold more sophisticated

conceptions of teaching, they may not be sharing these conceptions when mentoring their junior colleagues about undergraduate teaching. There may be several explanations for this seeming discrepancy.

First, senior faculty might consider the nature of their relationship with their junior colleagues to be substantively different from the relationship they have with their undergraduate students. They might believe that they should not actively intervene, and assume that the junior faculty should be more proactive. As such, the mentor will let them puzzle out a solution, possibly as he or she would do. Indeed, this study may suggest a further interesting idea: that a key difference between learner and teacher-centered faculty lies in the way in which they think of or understand student learning development. Teacher-centered (and student-centered faculty) think of undergraduate learning development as located in the student (first they receive facts, then they think about the facts later, either as a senior undergraduate or a graduate student). Learner-centered faculty may think about learning development as located in the student's relationship with the learning environment (the teacher). Initially, the teacher actively helps the student develop his or her own conceptions, but later becomes less proactive, encouraging them to become more self-directed and independent, particularly with graduate students and possibly even more so with junior colleagues. We know from a previous study (Light & Calkins, 2006) of the junior faculty enrolled in this program that faculty do make a distinction between undergraduate learning and graduate student learning which is more akin to their own.

Moreover, the mentors may feel constrained simply by the nature of the relationship in an academic culture in which teaching is still regarded as a private practice between the faculty member and his or her students. Lastly, they may feel they should be more passive in their interactions with their junior colleagues, simply because they do not want to lead their junior colleague astray, and privilege teaching over research—an act that could hurt their colleague's chance at tenure in a research-intensive university. They may suppose that more active academic mentoring of junior peers should focus on the latter's research plans and less on teaching – indeed, active mentoring on teaching might be counter-productive to helping the mentee achieve tenure.

Whether the apparent passivity of the mentors is a problem is less clear. We found in earlier studies of the teaching conceptions held by our mentees (2005, 2007), that many of the junior faculty at least begin our program with category A conceptions, although most end with B or C conceptions. Moreover, about a third of the mentors in the current study indicated that they had only recently adopted what we considered B or C conceptions in the last few years, which suggests that without some sort of systematic reflection (e.g. formal faculty development innovation), that it may be commonplace for many years to pass before senior faculty become learner-focused teachers. It might be that the more sophisticated faculty mentors who feel they are encouraging their mentees to become more self-directed have assumed they hold more sophisticated conceptions than the mentees actually do.

The finding that most of the mentors (20 of 21) have developed conceptions of teaching and learning may also suggest that the act of mentoring itself is a faculty development exercise (at least in terms of change in conceptions). Indeed, perhaps this critical reflection on the mentoring process could be incorporated for other faculty in faculty development programs.

Conclusions

This study raised a host of questions and possible directions for thinking about learning and teaching, as well as mentoring, as well as possible means for drawing out some interesting parallels between the two practices. In our future research, we hope to draw out these implications more, suggesting how faculty development initiatives that systematically encourage reflection and critical inquiry into the mentoring process may help senior faculty develop more sophisticated ways to share their learner-centered teaching conceptions, as well as to suggest ways to move more faculty out of the teacher-focused and student-focused categories.

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