

# Contextual Issues and Lessons Learned in Teaching Advising and Mentoring: A Long-Term Perspective

Advising and mentoring have long been integral components of higher education, providing students with guidance and support as they navigate their academic and personal journeys. However, the changing landscape of higher education, coupled with the advent of new technologies, has necessitated a re-examination of the traditional roles and practices of advising and mentoring.



## Honors Communication: Contextual Issues and Lessons Learned in Teaching, Advising, and Mentoring the Undergraduate Honors Student in Communication

by Jennifer A. H. Becker

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This article draws upon lessons learned over a long-term period of teaching advising and mentoring in higher education. It explores the contextual

issues that have shaped these practices, identifies effective strategies for advising and mentoring, and discusses the impact of technology on these practices.

## **Contextual Issues**

A number of contextual issues have influenced the evolution of advising and mentoring in higher education, including:

1. **Increased student diversity:** Higher education institutions are now more diverse than ever before, with students coming from a variety of backgrounds and with a wide range of needs. This diversity poses new challenges for advisors and mentors, who must be able to adapt their practices to meet the needs of all students.
2. **Changing student expectations:** Students today have higher expectations for advising and mentoring than ever before. They expect their advisors and mentors to be accessible, responsive, and knowledgeable. This has led to a shift towards more personalized and proactive advising and mentoring practices.
3. **Greater accountability:** Institutions are now more accountable for the success of their students. This has led to increased pressure on advisors and mentors to provide effective support that prepares students for academic, professional, and personal success.

## **Effective Strategies for Advising and Mentoring**

In light of the changing contextual issues, advisors and mentors need to adopt effective strategies that meet the needs of today's students. Some of the most effective strategies include:

1. **Building relationships:** The most important aspect of advising and mentoring is building strong relationships with students. Advisors and mentors should take the time to get to know their students, understand their needs, and develop a rapport with them.
2. **Personalizing advice:** Each student is unique, and advisors and mentors need to tailor their advice to the individual needs of each student. This means taking into account the student's background, goals, and learning style.
3. **Providing proactive support:** Advisors and mentors should not wait for students to come to them with problems. They should proactively reach out to students to offer support and guidance.
4. **Using technology:** Technology can be a powerful tool for advising and mentoring. Advisors and mentors can use technology to stay connected with students, share resources, and provide personalized feedback.

## **Impact of Technology**

Technology has had a significant impact on advising and mentoring in higher education. On the one hand, technology has made it easier for advisors and mentors to stay connected with students and provide timely support. On the other hand, technology has also created new challenges, such as the need for advisors and mentors to be proficient in using technology and the potential for technology to distract students from their studies.

Overall, technology has the potential to be a powerful tool for advising and mentoring, but it is important for advisors and mentors to use technology in

a way that supports student learning and success.

Advising and mentoring are essential components of higher education, and they can have a significant impact on student success. However, the changing landscape of higher education has necessitated a re-examination of the traditional roles and practices of advising and mentoring.

By understanding the contextual issues that have shaped advising and mentoring, adopting effective strategies, and harnessing the potential of technology, advisors and mentors can continue to provide the support and guidance that students need to succeed in college and beyond.

## References

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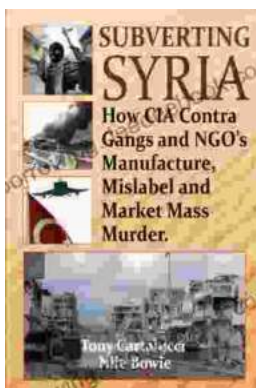
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