SUSTAINING SOTL WORK IN THE FUTURE: THE ROLE OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Dr. Hena Ahmad
Associate Professor of English
Truman State University, Kirksville, Missouri

THE THEORY OF ENCOURAGEMENT

- “ Adlerians describe the process of transforming frogs into princes as encouragement.
- Although not Polya-like or subscribing to the pursuit of perfection, the encouraged person is usually willing to rely on self to meet the tasks of life and is willing to rely on self in assuming risk if one either does not know the consequences or faces potentially negative consequences.
- Mosak and Maniaci note that, “there is reason to believe that the more we encourage others, the more we encourage ourselves. By helping others’ transformation into princes and princesses we become princes and princesses ourselves. The implications for parents, educators, and therapists are transparent. Encouragement makes the process of psychotherapy rewarding for both the patient and the therapist (Mosak, 1950).” (“Encouraging Growth,” A Primer of Adlerian Psychology: The Analytic-Behavioral-Cognitive Psychology of Alfred Adler, Harold H. Mosak and Michael P. Maniaci, Philadelphia, PA: Brunner/Mazel, 1999, 148-9).
- I extrapolate that teachers in their roles as mentors, in their act of encouraging students encourage themselves. And, I propose, that therein, in essence, is one major way how SOTL will be sustained in the future.

WHAT I STUDIED

- Analyzing my mentoring practice;
- Mentored 100+ students over 9 years;
- Mentored 200+ projects/presentations/publications;
- Sources:
  o Survey questionnaire
  o Personal communication (emails):

WHAT I FOUND OUT

Confidence boosting:

- The impact of mentoring as a confidence booster …
- The majority of the students are more in agreement that the exercise is confidence building.

To learn to trust myself in a professional academic setting:

1. Without Dr. Ahmad’s guidance I would not have presented research at all. I was very inexperienced academically and I had no idea how scholarly publications were written. Dr. Ahmad gave me examples of scholarly presentations so that I could understand how they were put together, then encouraged me throughout the process. I would have given up if she had not been so encouraging!
2. Probably not. I wouldn’t have even known about NCUR if Dr. Ahmad hadn’t told me and encouraged me to do it. Also, my paper became significantly stronger with the help of Dr. Ahmad.
3. I probably could have, but it would have been a much more difficult process. The mentoring I received helped me to develop my research, perfect my writing, and understand the appropriate outlet for presenting the research. Without the encouragement of faculty, I probably would have considered presenting my research, but probably would not have followed through.
4. Positive encouragement along the way.
5. That Dr. Ahmad encouraged me to participate in the first place was helpful.

WHAT I STUDIED IS THE MOST IMPORTANT VARIABLE IN STUDENT SUCCESS WITH UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

- Course redesign
- Renewed vigor teaching the course
- Reinvigoration & Restoration of my faith in my ability as a teacher

MY STUDENTS ENCOURAGE ME

- Told me to see myself participating in an academic setting
- Helped me to see myself in an academic setting

MY STUDENTS ENCOURAGE ME

- I felt honored to have presented. I am grateful to Dr. Ahmad for making this process possible for me.
- This experience was inspiring and helped prepare me for future endeavors.
- This experience gives me confidence to continue writing for publication.

THIS ENCOURAGEMENT HAS RESULTED IN:

- Undergraduate research connects students firmly to the college experience.
- The most important thing in successful mentoring is the face-to-face interaction.
- Missed appointments are not allowed.
- From these assumptions I have created a handout: Guide to Mentoring Undergraduate Research.

REFERENCES


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