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Learning as You Teach: Recognizing Mentor/Protégé Interdependence

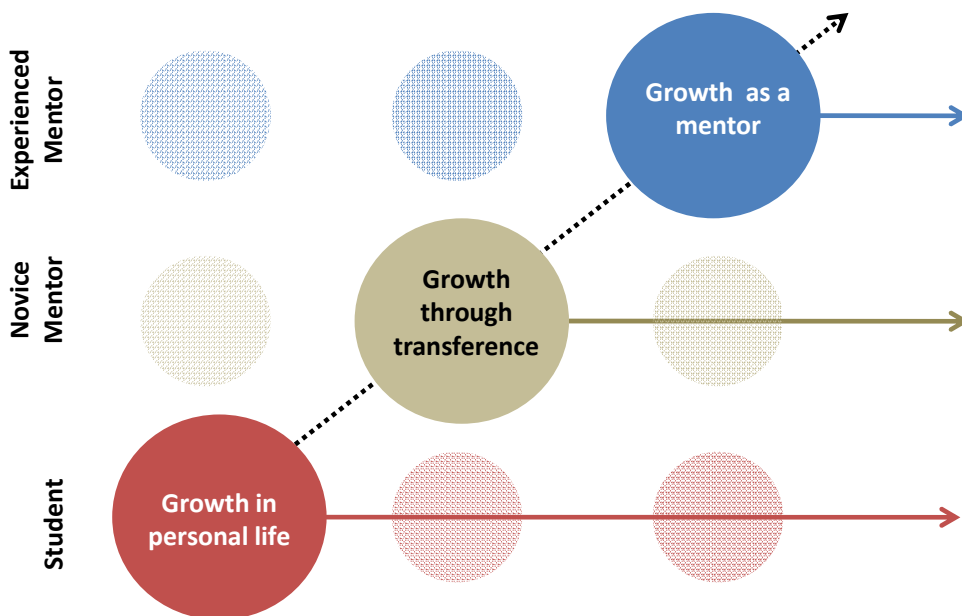
Personal narrative as a tool for learning and personal growth: As Jean Clandinin argues, we experience a curriculum of lives. Through “storying” and “restorying” our lives, we make sense of and learn from that curriculum. This study is based on a year and a half of work as a peer mentor, mentoring 126 new freshmen in five different learning communities. Reflecting on my experiences, eighty-four stories were identified that significantly impacted my growth and development as a peer mentor. This discussion is grounded in a qualitative analysis of those stories. (Clandinin, et.al, *Composing Diverse Identities: Narrative inquiries into the interwoven lives of children and teachers*. London: Routledge, 2006.)

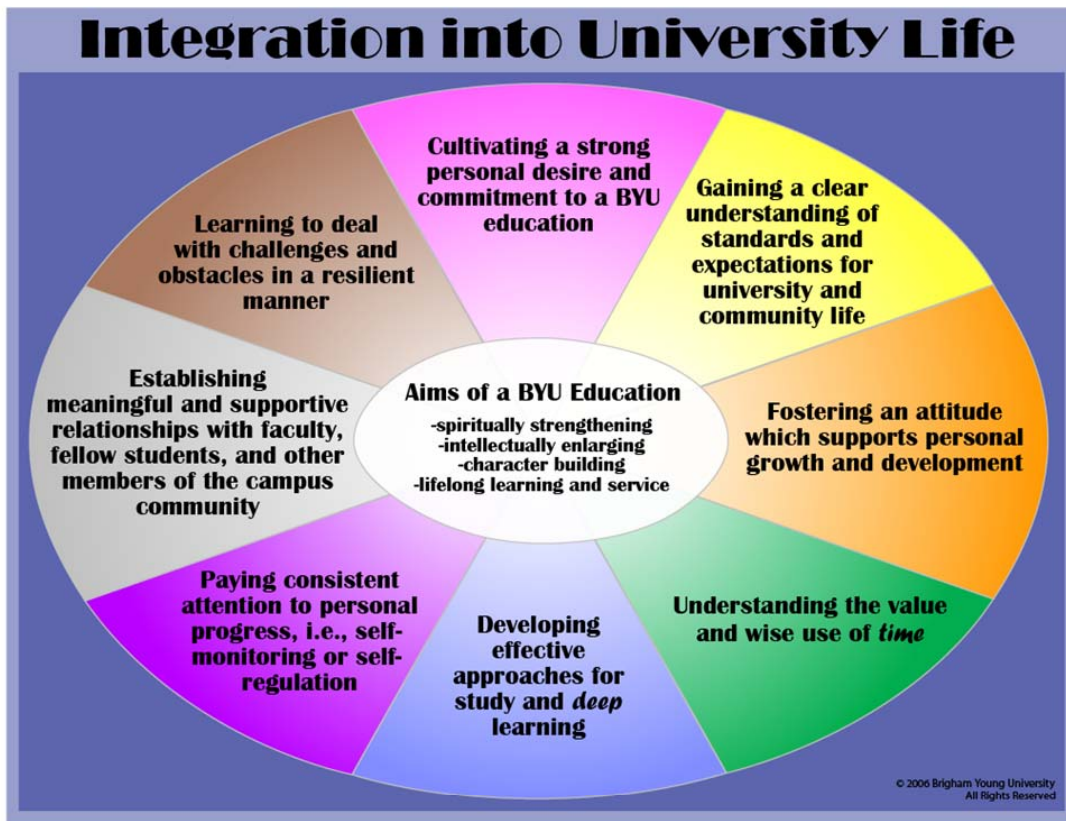
Rich learning experiences provide fertile ground for growth. One story often illuminated more than one growth trajectory: in 84 stories I coded for the three personal growth trajectories 133 times. In the same way, stories usually provide examples of more than one learning theme. In the 84 stories, I coded for examples of learning themes 185 times.

Narrative as a process for deep learning: reflection, connections and reconstruction

Concluding reflection: The learning and growth of a mentor in any mentor/protégé relationship will parallel that of the protégé, allowing both mentor and protégé to grow side by side.

Personal Growth Trajectories





Narrative stories with underlying learning themes

Learning themes	Story 1: Growth in personal life	Story 2: Transference of knowledge	Story 3: Mentor skills and abilities
Cultivating purpose and commitment		Secondary	Primary
Gaining clear understanding of expectations and goals	Primary		Secondary
Fostering an attitude of personal growth	Primary		
Understanding and wise use of time	Primary		
Developing as a deep learner	Narrative as a process for deep learning		
Monitoring personal progress		Secondary	Primary
Establishing meaningful relationships		Primary	Secondary
Overcoming obstacles--resilience		Primary	