



# Reflections on Mentoring

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# **Focus: 3 critical mentoring tasks**

- **Choosing a dissertation topic**
- **Guiding the thesis: creativity and craftsmanship**
- **Post-graduate mentoring**



# The Dissertation Topic Choice

- Disciplinary differences
- The importance of the choice
- Structural/programmatic approaches
- The importance of mentoring

# Mentoring: the thesis choice

- Devoting the time
- Knowing your students
  - Personal backgrounds, skills, experience, interests
  - Strengths and weaknesses
  - personalities and aspirations
- The matching process; actualizing students' interests---imagination and psychology and empowerment
- Understanding the process of research



# The Thesis Research Process

- The topic may change; this is normal and OK
- The process is not linear (as we teach it)
- The journey is more important than the destination; enjoy the ride
- You don't need to have the last word on your topic
- Have realistic aims--good journal article(s) in top journal



# Mentoring Thesis Research: Creativity and Craftsmanship

- Think small
- Start simple, generalize in stages
- Fit the tools to the problem
- Wear your sophistication lightly
- Give your subconscious rein
- Beware of fragile results
- Stick to science; leave value judgments out
- Don't tackle problems for which you already know the answer
- Choose systems with enough complexity to surprise you



# Coming to Closure

- Clear and concise communication
- Knowing when to stop
- Looking at the whole
- Planning future extensions
- Revisiting the aim of a thesis---good journal article or two



# Post-graduate mentoring

- The job hunt; placement and matching
- Navigating the pre-tenure period
- Being generous with ideas
- Navigating the tenure process
- Imparting wisdom as well as advice
- Sensitivity to personal issues
- Tailoring to personalities





**THANKS!!**