



How CUE’s Mentors Support Teacher Candidates

A key feature of the UNC [Center for Urban Education](#) (CUE) Grow Your Own teacher preparation program is the mentorship that teacher candidates receive from highly experienced teachers, principals, and administrators. CUE mentors provide continuous mentorship to teacher candidates throughout their program. Mentors and mentees meet individually and in small groups on a regular basis.

Additionally, mentors visit teacher candidates in the schools where they work as paraprofessionals. These site visits are crucial, as they allow mentors to provide specific and actionable feedback and wraparound support to each teacher candidate. Mentors model how to build strong relationships, and mentees use that knowledge and experience to build strong relationships with the K–12 students in their classrooms.

Mentorship is a key aspect of success for many college students and is especially important for first-generation or BIPOC college students. Research demonstrates that teacher candidates who have mentor relationships throughout their program feel that they have increased confidence in their teaching skills and a larger professional network ([Smith et al., 2024](#)).

What Mentoring Relationships Look Like in Real Life

David Craven has been a CUE mentor since 2014. He said he's always loved being a mentor and working with CUE students. "They are so excited to be teachers and so willing to do whatever

Mentoring Best Practices

Here are the practices we've found to be the most effective and can recommend as a solid foundation on which to build a mentoring program:

1. Match the right mentor to the mentee. We consider a variety of factors: race, gender, culture, and areas of interest (e.g., expertise in special education).
 2. Take time to build trusting relationships with the mentees and get to know them on a personal and professional level.
 3. Stay in regular contact with mentees and give them the opportunity to communicate through multiple channels—Canvas, phone, email, and text.
 4. Visit teacher candidates to observe them working with students in the classroom and provide targeted, supportive instructional feedback. Use reflective questioning and ask students to examine their own instructional practices. Help them connect their reflections to what they are learning from their coursework.
 5. Support the “whole person” to decrease barriers that may impact the mentee’s role as student or their success working in an ECE–12 classroom.
 6. Provide opportunities and experiences to build mentees’ professional networks outside of the classroom.
 7. Discuss and model 21st-century instructional strategies and strong, positive relationships so that teacher candidates are prepared to connect with each of their students.
 8. Maintain knowledge about current resources at your university and other outside organization, including financial aid (e.g., scholarships, c im
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Miss Our Last Issue?

Visit the [newsletter archive](#)! In the [July issue](#), we recommended titles for your next three reads. In the [August issue](#), we featured two teacher candidates who were awarded scholarships by the Tamarac Optimist Club.

Looking for a Path to Becoming a Teacher?

We are enrolling new students for the spring 2025 semester. Call Dr. Rosanne Fulton, Director, UNC Center for Urban Education, at 303-637-4334 or email for more information. Watch our short video to learn more about the CUE teacher-preparation program.