

SITE Fireside Chat #2: Issues and Strategies for Mentoring Doctoral Students in Instructional Technology

Abstract: This panel continues a conversation started at SITE 2006, in which doctoral students and professors discussed the challenges of preparing for and beginning a career in instructional technology. This year's panel will describe the activities of SITEmentor, a collaborative mentoring effort across four universities, and solicit feedback and discussion from the audience. Doctoral students and those who mentor doctoral students are especially encouraged to attend.

In the past several years, leaders in the field of instructional technology have called for targeted efforts in research (Roblyer 2005; Roblyer & Knezek 2003; Schrum et al. 2005) and application (Koehler & Mishra 2005; Mishra & Koehler 2006; Thompson 2005). One component of this effort to improve the field is the development of intentional strategies of mentorship of rising doctoral students in instructional technology (Bull et al. 2006; Dawson & Ferdig 2006).

Over the past year, doctoral students and professors at four universities—George Mason University, Iowa State University, the University of Florida, and the University of Virginia—have participated in a collaborative mentorship effort called *SITEmentor*. As Debra Sprague noted (2004), discussion about education and technology can devolve into a set of isolated conversations, in which technologists and teacher educators do not communicate across disciplinary boundaries. *SITEmentor* facilitates cross-university conversations to prevent doctoral students (and professors) from falling into the habit of only “talking to ourselves.” The students and professors at the participating universities interact through synchronous (e.g., video conferences) and asynchronous (e.g., blogging) channels to explore the field, identify research interests, and pursue collaborative presentation and publication opportunities.

One particularly valuable activity to broaden doctoral students' horizons has been conversations with journal editors. From their position, editors know the field, know the research in the field, and can guide doctoral students as they develop their own research agendas. *SITEmentor* has hosted several such conversations with journal editors, and the SITE 2006 conference featured a Fireside Chat with Lynne Schrum, editor of the *Journal of Research on Technology in Education* (www.iste.org/jrte).

This year's Fireside Chat will continue that conversation and use the activities of the *SITEmentor* network as a starting point for discussion.

References

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