



# Representing Teaching

## THREE PERSPECTIVES FOR REPRESENTING TEACHING

When you represent your teaching for any kind of review, include these three perspectives:

1. Peer voices
2. Student voices
3. Your own reflections

In some ways, representing teaching is like creating a sculpture: both have many dimensions and take form over time. Your representation will be both a product and a process, so it's important to document how your teaching evolves over time, including how students' learning has improved.

Many times faculty members are caught up in the wide range of activities in our work, and we think about representing teaching only periodically. If you gradually build a record of your teaching as you go along, the teaching portion of your documentation can be the easiest part of representing your professional life. The natural rhythm and occasions of each semester require you to create teaching materials, give and read assignments, and provide evaluation to students. If you spend only a few hours each semester capturing a small portion of that work as an archive, you'll have this representation mostly complete.

This portion of the guide lays out a simple plan that will allow you to create your teaching record in a straightforward way, while also getting useful feedback that will help you accomplish with your teaching what you care about. You can both enjoy your teaching more by taking these small steps, and you can also create the materials you'll need to bring forward when your colleagues ask about your teaching. You're already doing 95% of what's needed just in the act of delivering your courses; the marginal effort to learn from your teaching and share it with others is very small in comparison.

## THREE PERSPECTIVES

At a very basic level the components of quality teaching include:

Identifying appropriate content and goals for a course

Designing good opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning

Creating and carrying out an instructional plan of teaching and learning activities

Creating a social environment in which students are able and willing to engage those activities to good effect.

A previous portion of this guide has addressed those components so you can think about how to achieve your own goals as a teacher. When representing teaching, you'll want to make those components visible to the people who would care about them,

receiving from those audiences the feedback you need to develop your teaching. Your faculty colleagues are the appropriate audience for your construction of the goals and content of your courses; they have knowledge and experience in the field and can offer useful observations about your decisions in developing a course. Students are the appropriate audience for some portions of course delivery; they engage in the listening, writing, reading and thinking that you arrange, and they can give you feedback on how well they think those activities are delivered. Finally, your perspective is also essential to the representation.

Readers of your work will want to see how your teaching is evolving, both in terms of your practices and your students' achievements. When you reflect on how well students' learning is matching your goals, you give an important view into your professional work as a teacher. No one starts out an expert at teaching or research; we get better at both as we learn by looking at products of our work and listening to feedback.

## PREPARING TO REPRESENT YOUR TEACHING

### AVOID "PEDAGOGIC AMNESIA"

Keeping a record of what you have done, along with notes about why you did what you did, is the best way to avoid what Lee Shulman has described as "pedagogic amnesia." It's easy to forget which assignments clearly showed whether or not students understood a key concept. Did grading essay exams take that much time? At the end of a semester, what gaps were evident in students' learning, calling for restructuring part of a course?

To keep a record of a course, you may wish to compile the items listed in the box at right. If you gather these kinds of materials for each course you teach, you'll have a complete record of your teaching. From it, you'll be able to illustrate the trajectory of your teaching accomplishments for your reviews.

### MAKE LEARNING VISIBLE TO YOUR TEACHING COMMUNITY

After a course, a successful teacher takes evidence of learning found in student work and reflects upon what it says about the course. It's challenging to identify weaknesses in an instructional design and plan changes that might benefit future students. In many cases, this involves making the results of our teaching public and seeking comment from others, much as we do in other parts of our creative lives. Peer review of teaching provides an occasion for examining the intellectual work of teaching, including constructive feedback on that work from professional peers.

In the process of offering a typical course you'll likely spend about 50 hours in contact with students (in class, labs, studios, or con-

### COURSE RECORDS

Items you can compile for a course record include:

1. Syllabus
2. List of course goals (may be included in the syllabus)
3. Brief description of how assignments relate to course goals (may be included in the syllabus)
4. Samples of student work at various levels (high, mid, low)
5. Notes on student performance:

Were the course goals appropriate?

How many students/what percentage achieved course goals?

What gaps in student learning are evident?

What material needs more time or a new approach?

## SAMPLE PROMPTS FOR COURSE NOTES

At the end of a course, record your reactions to these questions (see Appendix C):

Of all the material you taught, what were the three or four most important goals you had for student understanding and performance?

Where in students' work did they have the best opportunity to show you their understanding and their skills? Be sure to retain copies of a small representative sample of that work (two As, two Bs, two Cs of each).

What class activities, lectures, assignments or materials worked extremely well this semester? Can you replicate them, continue them or expand them? Do you have an idea about why they worked well or how you made them successful?

What class activities, lectures, assignments or materials did not go well this semester? How might you replace or modify them to achieve your goals better? Are there new ways you could achieve the same goals?

What ideas have you had for something new you want to add to this course the next time you teach it? Will the topics or goals evolve in some way? Are there ways to measure learning you want to add or ways to engage students you want to try?

What have you learned about teaching from this course? Are there lessons you would carry forward to teaching any class at this level and size? What ideas, reactions or feelings do you have about teaching right now, about this course or in general?

sultations), and probably the same amount of time outside class in preparation, reading student work, and general course management. Rather than discard the products of that substantial amount of time, it's very useful to set aside half a day to write down your impressions of a course. You could comment on which topics or issues you would emphasize more or de-emphasize in your next offering. You could discuss how well you felt the assignments, projects, and exams represented the skills and knowledge you hoped to see in your students. Making notes about such changes is best accomplished right after the course is over, while the ideas and experiences are still fresh in your mind. Another option is to keep a running journal, jotting down notes during the semester.

You also can save a random but representative sample of student work as an archive of what you and they accomplished together (see Student Consent Form in Appendix B). It's disheartening to a teacher to think that after years of teaching there has been no progress in advancing students' understanding of our field. If you have a small but accessible record of some key performances from several offerings of a course, you can review them for any trends. Maybe you see some consistent problems that you can address with more time, different materials, or additional practice. Maybe you see some improvement over time that was not apparent to you in the midst of delivering courses. Ultimately this is why we teach, to help students appreciate and understand our fields as we do, and having a small archive allows you to see how you are doing in a longer perspective.

Whatever your field of research or creative activity, you keep archives of your work. You have tapes of performances, examples of studio work, lab data, notes from library visits or interviews; in many ways you capture the important products of your inquiry into your field. Given the amount of time you likely spend each semester on teaching (probably more than 200 hours total for two courses), it would be a shame to lose all the benefits of that work by not developing some record of what was accomplished. The syllabi, assignments, and student work are done anyway, so you should not simply throw them away. Adding a half-day of reflection and writing, to capture your insights at the moment of greatest understanding, is a wise investment. It will help you grow as a teacher and achieve your goals, and ultimately those reflections can document your intellectual work as a teacher.

In Appendix C, we include a document titled "Course Notes," which is a page of prompts you could use to guide that consolidation of your teaching experience at the end of a course. You likely would not do this for every course, every semester, but picking a single course you teach frequently would give you an opportunity to learn from your teaching and to show your colleagues the intellectual skill you bring to your teaching.

## TEACHING REVIEWS

### PREPARING FOR REVIEWS

#### Self-reflection

The guidelines for evaluation of teaching at KU include prompts for reflecting on your teaching. For both the Progress Toward Tenure Review and the Review for Promotion and Tenure, you will be asked to describe your philosophy of Classroom Teaching by addressing “the primary subjects you teach and, using one or two courses as examples, discuss how you organize material and activities to help students achieve course goals, how you assess their achievement of those goals, and how your teaching experiences (including feedback from student evaluations) have shaped your ongoing goals and practices as a teacher.” Your answers to these questions will form the basis of the self-reflection portion of your teaching representation.

You can see that these questions mirror the kind of consideration of your teaching that’s been highlighted in this book. If you’ve been taking time each semester to think back on a course, you’ll have this already done. It’s most important to show the growth of a course, rather than document every aspect of every course. By capturing the essence of how a course has changed over multiple offerings, you provide your colleagues with a good representation of your thinking, planning, and growing as a teacher.

#### Course narratives

Many faculty members find it useful to write course narratives as part of their preparation for reviews. The goal of a course narrative is to describe student learning-driven practice within one course (or multiple offerings of a course). Consider these prompts when constructing your narrative:

1. Course goals: What are your intellectual goals for the course?
2. Implementation: How do your assignments and course activities connect to these goals?
3. Student performance: How do you know when your students have met the goals?
4. Reflections: What did you (or will you) do in future offerings if students do meet the intellectual goals? If they do not?

What sorts of evidence could you use to address question #3?

#### PORTFOLIO CHECKLIST

Your teaching portfolio should include these items:

1. Annotated syllabus describing course content
2. Short description of reasons for decisions about content and goals
3. Elaboration of instructional design
4. Examples of assignments and of student work on those assignments
5. Reflection on students’ achievements and plans for future course offerings

Essential items are the syllabus, examples of assignments and student work on those assignments, and your reflections on students’ learning and plans for future course offerings.

## QUESTIONS FOR PEER REVIEWS OF PORTFOLIOS

Is the material in this course appropriate for the topic, for the curriculum, and for the institution?

Are the intellectual goals for students well articulated and congruent with course content and mission?

Are there opportunities (in or out of class) for students to practice the skills embedded in the course goals?

Do students receive useful and relevant feedback on their performance in the course?

Does performance requested of students include challenging levels of conceptual understanding and critical evaluation of material appropriate to the level of the course and of the students?

Are the forms of evaluation and assessment appropriate to the stated goals of the course?

Has this faculty member made a sincere effort to ensure that students achieve the goals for the course?

Is there evidence the faculty member has tried to improve teaching practices based on consideration of students' performance?

For a complete list of questions for peer review, see "KU Guidelines for Peer Review" in Appendix C.

Evidence of student learning—tracking/analyzing performance on particular types of assignments or on individual dimensions of assignments (rubrics are particularly useful for this purpose) often lead to greater insights than grades.

Student feedback—mid-semester evaluations; observations of student engagement, participation, attendance; end-of-semester evaluations.

See Appendix C for a sample course narrative.

## Peer review of teaching

When most people hear the term "peer review of teaching," they often think of someone visiting a class and writing a report on whether the lecture was clear and whether students were paying attention (or asleep). Our view at KU is that there's much more to teaching than holding people's attention while talking non-stop. As this workbook has suggested, there's much to designing class time, assignments, feedback, and practice that can make a course successful. In many cases, there will be time spent with students in which the teacher appears to be doing nothing but listening and occasionally commenting. There is a story about a department chair making the obligatory classroom visit to a young faculty member, and he was surprised to see students working together, sometimes sharing with other groups or with the whole class, and interacting individually with the professor. After 20 minutes he said to the professor, "It's OK, I'll come back sometime when you're teaching." Peer review of teaching should include a detailed analysis of the professor's plan for learning, including material selection, targeted goals for students, methods of measuring learning, indicators of success in learning, and use of time with students during scheduled classes, studios, and labs.

Guidelines for evaluation of teaching at KU include a section for peer review that's drawn from reading and discussing a portfolio of course materials. See the box on page 67 for items to include. Peer reviewers focus on four areas: quality of intellectual content, nature of teaching practices, quality of student understanding, and evidence of how your teaching is changing over time. See the box at left for questions a colleague could ask when looking through your portfolio and talking with you.

It's very important that you make these materials available to colleagues early in your time at KU, so you can get constructive feedback as your courses evolve. Obviously, this helps you become more skilled as a teacher, but it also helps you learn how to represent your teaching. It would be foolish to wait until just before a professional review to send out a research manuscript for review, hoping it will win audience approval. We all know that we learn

a lot about the quality of our work and about how we write about it by sharing manuscripts with critical audiences early and often. So it is with teaching. Share your semester-by-semester reflections on teaching with colleagues, getting their reactions to what you do and how you learn from it. If you've done this once a year, you'll find preparation of your teaching materials for review to be easy.

Additional material for peer reviews can be found in Appendix C ("Four Facets of Teaching for Peer Reviewers" and "Guidelines for Peer Review of Teaching: FAQs and Answers").

### Student voice

Student evaluations of teaching are an important part of the feedback that faculty members receive. The Kansas Board of Regents requires that student evaluations include questions about students' perception of delivery of instruction, assessment of learning, availability of faculty members to students, and whether course goals and objectives were met. At KU, departments use various forms to obtain this feedback. Check with your unit chair for a copy of the form used in your department.

It's crucial that we learn to read student feedback. KU has moved away from asking students to give an overall rating of a teacher, instead asking students to answer questions about specific features of a teacher's performance. Whether or not they're learning will be examined by looking at their work, not their impressions. Students are a good audience to tell us if we're clear, accessible, respectful, or timely. They may also be able to tell us if the activities we give them are well aligned with the ways we evaluate their learning. These and similar questions can help us see ourselves through the eyes of others, and these are important others. We're asking them to do a lot of work, and it's useful to have a cooperative relationship with our students.

A copy of the current student survey of teaching form, along with a corresponding report form, is provided in Appendix C, as well as information about open-ended student comments to guide improvement of teaching.

## UNIVERSITY REVIEWS

### Annual review

KU requires that each faculty member be evaluated annually using criteria and methods appropriate to his or her unit for teaching, scholarship, and service. Specific criteria and procedures are identified in each department's faculty evaluation plan. (See Section B in the *Handbook for Faculty and Other Unclassified Staff*.)

It's best to consult with senior colleagues and your department

### THREE TYPES OF REVIEWS

KU faculty members complete three types of reviews:

1. Annual reviews
2. A progress toward tenure review
3. Promotion and tenure reviews

## RESOURCES FOR REVIEWS

These documents and URLs will be helpful resources for you as you prepare for reviews:

Annual reviews: *Handbook for Faculty and Other Unclassified Staff*: [policy.ku.edu/provost/faculty-and-unclassified-staff-handbook](http://policy.ku.edu/provost/faculty-and-unclassified-staff-handbook)

Tenure reviews: Article 6 in *Faculty Senate Rules and Regulations*: [policy.ku.edu/governance/FSRR](http://policy.ku.edu/governance/FSRR)

Guidelines and instructions for reviews are available on the Provost's Office Web site at: [facultydevelopment.ku.edu/evaluation](http://facultydevelopment.ku.edu/evaluation)

chair to know what's expected within the unit's review. At the same time, it's in your best interests to develop early the kind of materials that will be called for in the campus-wide professional review, so you should also plan to submit early versions of that work for your colleagues' consideration. Getting their feedback as part of annual review could be very helpful later, especially if it makes it easier for you to present an account of your teaching and easier for them to know deeply how you work as a teacher.

In 2006-07, the Faculty Senate Task Force on the Assessment of Teaching and Learning considered how faculty and other teaching personnel at the University are evaluated for their teaching and for their related scholarship. In April 2007, the task force submitted its final report, which was endorsed by the Faculty Senate. The central principle underlying the task force recommendations is that evaluation should be focused on the development of teaching over time and that assessment of that development should be based on multiple forms of evidence, including class materials, student evaluations focusing on the characteristics of teaching that students are best able to judge, a reflective statement from the teacher, and peer observation and evaluation. Two products of the task force are available in Appendix D: "Activities That May Be Considered in the Evaluation of Teaching at KU," and "Guidelines for Department Implementation." For additional information, see [governance.ku.edu/promotion-and-tenure](http://governance.ku.edu/promotion-and-tenure).

### Progress toward tenure review

The progress toward tenure review is a formal review conducted approximately midway through the probationary period for tenure-track faculty. The purpose of the review is to give faculty members a meaningful appraisal of their progress to date toward earning tenure and to orient tenure-track faculty members to elements of the formal tenure review process. For review guidelines, see [facultydevelopment.ku.edu/evaluation](http://facultydevelopment.ku.edu/evaluation).

This stage of review is very useful to faculty members, and it's a perfect opportunity to present a teaching portfolio, along with a substantive review of your intellectual work by colleagues. If you've kept end-of-semester reflections on one or two courses, you can combine them into a coherent narrative that indicates how you've shaped and developed that course over time. If you include examples of assignments and student work, you can make the case for the success of your teaching in terms that peers will appreciate and recognize. Since the final review for tenure will focus on such an in-depth peer review, it's very efficient to have done a thorough version of it in the run-up to the tenure period.

There will be consideration of student ratings at this point, but their impact should not be greater than that of the peer perspec-

tive on your work. If you've been developing and writing about your courses and students' accomplishments, your peers can offer a powerful perspective on your work. Most importantly, your writing about your course (the half-day reflection we recommend) should include your reactions to student comments. Faculty colleagues are more interested in how you learn from what your students say than they are in what the students said in the first place. Again, it's the trajectory of your teaching that matters, and learning from student comments can be a useful part of that trajectory.

### Tenure and promotion review

If you've followed these guidelines during the years before a review for tenure or promotion, there should be little left to be done at the final stage. The three perspectives are all in place for you to represent for review. You've been slowly evolving the substance and process of your teaching by regular reflection. You've looked at student learning to see if your own goals for teaching are being met, and you've adjusted your methods accordingly. You've also listened to the reactions of your colleagues as you've shared with them each stage of your development as a teacher. This is not a huge burden, but represents the products of the small marginal time spent summarizing all that you learned from the hundreds of hours spent teaching in a semester. Finally, you've listened to and responded to the perceptions of your students, not by having them define the quality of your teaching, but by having them give you feedback on key features of teaching that we as a community agree are helpful in promoting learning.

Ultimately your responsiveness to your audiences will be the most important evidence of quality teaching, as shown in student achievement and in your narrative of growth in teaching. By following the guidelines we recommend and doing the reflection and documentation in small but frequent steps, representing your teaching will be natural and productive rather than onerous.

*Faculty Senate Rules and Regulations (FSRR)* outlines all rules that govern tenure processes. Guidelines for promotion and/or tenure are found in department faculty evaluation plans and on the University governance website ([governance.ku.edu](http://governance.ku.edu)). The most up to date version of the FSRR is kept in the KU Policy Library. See [policy.ku.edu/governance/FSRR](http://policy.ku.edu/governance/FSRR).

Because granting tenure is such a critical decision for both the faculty and the University, this review tends to be anxiety provoking. However, any faculty member coming up for tenure should be assured that the same good teaching practices and efforts made to represent teaching, which are expected and appropriate for yearly evaluations, are also the kind of evidence that should be brought to bear when preparing for promotion to associate professor. As stated in the *FSRR* (section 6.2.2), "The evaluation of teaching

### EVALUATION OF TEACHING

When considering activities for teaching evaluation, reviewers may focus on some of the following factors.

How does this teacher conduct courses?

- Clarity of course goals

- Relevance and appropriateness of course content

- Effectiveness of instruction

- Measures of student learning

How does this teacher prepare for courses?

- Appropriate preparation of new courses

- Continuing efforts to improve teaching

What teaching work has the faculty member done in addition to teaching courses?

- Coordinating courses within a program or developing a new course

- Mentoring and supervising GTAs/GRAs

- Mentoring and supervising students in clinical settings or internships

- Mentoring new faculty members in their role as teachers

- Mentoring students or directing research projects

Has this faculty member made contributions related to scholarship of teaching?

- Teaching related presentations at KU or elsewhere

- Serving as a guest teacher at other institutions or in the community

- Publishing articles related to teaching

## COURSE PORTFOLIOS ON CTE'S WEBSITE

Over 100 course portfolios are posted on the CTE website ([cte.ku.edu/portfolio](http://cte.ku.edu/portfolio)). In the portfolios, you'll find ideas about encouraging participation and engagement during and outside of class, evaluating learning, helping students develop expertise and professional competencies, incorporating community-engaged learning, and evaluating learning at the program level.

You can view the portfolios by discipline, by author, or by keyword.

Check this site to see highlights of some of the best teaching work being done at KU.

includes consideration of syllabi, course materials, and other information related to a faculty member's courses; peer and student evaluations; a candidate's own statement of teaching philosophy and goals; and other accepted methods of evaluation." This list of the evidence and expectations Promotion and Tenure (P&T) committees will have when examining a tenure application should look very familiar to any faculty member. It was the express intention of both the governance committees who wrote the P&T and the administration that the materials necessary for promotion to associate professor be the same kind of materials that any active and thoughtful faculty member should already be preparing in the course of his or her normal teaching duties. So the best way to prepare for the P&T process is to follow all the advice provided above regarding making your teaching activities visible to your University colleagues.

## COURSE PORTFOLIOS

A course portfolio represents a teacher's most effective practices. When teaching is approached as an act of data-driven practice, the course portfolio can allow you to explore how effectively the goals of student learning are being achieved, from your point of view and from the perspective of student work. In this way, student and teacher practices inform and serve each other; this bi-directional relationship is captured in the course portfolio.

The structure of a course portfolio explains course goals, how goals were implemented, how student performance was achieved, and the teacher's reflection on what was achieved and what can be bettered in future offerings. A richer portfolio tracks a course's evolution, showing what was learned and improved over time. In contrast to other reviews, students' voice and performance is evident through student work, not through student ratings. Also, instead of a generalized teaching statement, the reflections of the teacher are encompassed in an in-depth analysis of his or her teaching and future teaching goals (Bernstein 2006).

As members of an intellectual community, we're happy when we can share our research. It's valuable for colleagues to learn from our work and build on it, and we're also proud to know we've accomplished something others find worthwhile. There may be a time when you feel that way about your teaching, as well, and KU has a way for you to share your accomplishments. CTE provides a number of faculty groups that share the products and insights of their teaching, and we work with faculty members to represent those in an electronic gallery. If you wish to share your work, we'll help you create a course portfolio for our website.

## FACULTY MENTORING

### For mentees

According to Robert Boice, author of *Advice for New Faculty Members: Nihil Nimus*, faculty members from highly rated pairings of mentees and mentors evidenced greater long-term benefits than did poorly mentored or nonmentored new faculty. These are representative specifics for new faculty with effective mentoring:

Always came close to departmental expectations for scholarly productivity.

Always exceeded departmental expectations for adequate teaching by year 2 on campus.

Always were rated, beforehand, by reappointment committees as adequately collegial and cooperative.

Boice also found that new faculty who did not have effective mentors were, to put it mildly, somewhat less successful. Perhaps, then, it would make sense to at least consider a senior faculty member as a mentor for you at the beginning of your career.

Unless your department has a formal program established to pair you with someone, it will likely be your responsibility to choose a mentor, and this is a process you should not take lightly. Boice found that mentor/mentee relationships that developed spontaneously, rather than through a careful selection process, tended to “die an early, natural death” with “no clear sense of which actions and interactions would be most helpful.”

So how do you choose your mentor? Boice offers several suggestions, and you can find a more complete list in the sidebar at right:

Be patient and meet with several potential mentors.

Pick a primary AND a secondary mentor. Use both.

Meet briefly and regularly with your primary mentor.

Be involved in scheduling meetings with your mentors, and note that all meetings don't have to take place in an office.

Remember that you may need to put more time into the mentor/mentee relationship than your mentor. Boice found that while mentors who spent an hour per week on their mentee were generally very effective, “For mentees of exemplary mentors, time reported spent on meetings and exercises averaged 2.5 hours per week.”

### OPTIMAL WAYS OF ARRANGING MENTORING

Know how useful, essential, and fun mentoring can be.

Be proactive in finding a qualified mentor; you may even have to cultivate your mentor as much as he or she educates you.

Most campuses set expectations higher than can be attained without mentoring.

Understand that exemplary mentors may not be the most obvious faculty members on campus.

Be patient and mindful in selecting/accepting a mentor; wait while you sample the advice and modeling styles of prospects before establishing a formal relationship.

Try to arrange one mentor from a department other than your own, to ensure that some of your foibles are observed by a colleague not on your own P&T committee.

Remind yourself of the actions of excellent mentors (willingness to mentor in active ways, including coteaching) and of exemplary mentees (ready trust, openness, and involvement, once confidentiality is assured).

Let go of perfectionism. Accept two or three mentors, each with different kinds of expertise.

Enquire about outstanding mentors of new faculty. Put your department chairperson in another category, as someone you should regularly ask for advice but who shouldn't know all your shortcomings.

Expect that mentoring experiences, if done well, will persist at least three years.

## MENTORING GUIDELINES

Robert Boice suggests mentors follow these four recommendations when designing mentor/mentee activities:

Select activities that are of mutual interest, fit both schedules, and generate discussion. Engage in a variety of activities:

Discuss teaching projects

Visit each other's classes

Attend teaching seminars and workshops

Share course assignments

Review examples of students' work on assignments

Talk about classroom issues over coffee, lunch, etc.

Meet regularly. Without set meeting times, pairs tend to decrease contact when other demands begin to impinge on their schedules.

Keep a log or journal that can serve as a reference when the mentee is summarizing activities for reviews.

Be flexible, and allow for creative mentoring.

## For mentors

Most good mentor/mentee relationships do not happen spontaneously. If a junior faculty member approaches you and asks you to serve as a mentor, it is likely the result of a significant amount of informal research and a careful vetting process. You have been asked to play a crucial role in the future of this person's career.

What does it take to be an effective mentor for a junior faculty member? According to Robert Boice, "effective mentoring is neither too difficult nor too time consuming to effect in useful fashion." Unless your department has a program already set up that pairs new faculty members with senior faculty mentors, it is usually up to the new faculty member to pick a mentor. Once this happens, Boice explains, "effective mentoring [takes] no more than one hour per week, on average, for mentors (including time spent in meetings, in preparing for meetings, and in related contacts with faculty/administrators who could help their mentees.)"

If mentoring is taking more time than you planned, it is okay to look for ways to decrease your commitment to your mentee. The most common way is to encourage your mentee to find a secondary mentor. As an added bonus, Boice found that a secondary mentor not only decreased the primary mentor's workload, but also increased the likelihood of long-term success for the mentee.

Given that long-term success of your mentee is the goal, be prepared to meet regularly for at least the first few years of his/her career. Initial meetings may involve mostly small-talk, but in time these discussions should evolve to include, according to Boice, "direct coaching, even collaboration, in domains of writing, teaching, and socialization." Remember, too, that meetings do not always need to occur in your office, and do not always need to be scheduled by you. A walk around campus or a quick meeting over coffee can provide a nice change of pace.