

My name is Lynn Tatlock, and I've had many roles in this department, including chairing it for eight years. I teach graduate courses in 19th-century literature and culture. I also am heavily involved in mentoring both PhD students and other students at various points along the way.

Working with graduate students has been a wonderful experience here because they're with us for longer stretches of time. One has a chance to get to know them and to work closely with them and assist them through all sorts of twists and turns. My generation didn't get much mentoring, but, honestly, we didn't ask for it either. It was a different moment. It was like, you know, "Get away from me. Don't bother me." [laughter] And I think that students are different now, and they also ask for it. In a tight job market, the better prepared you are, the more you know about what the profession is going to expect of you, the better it is. And, again, these aren't things that are learned in a formal classroom situation, typically, but they're learned outside of class in sort of one-on-one encounters.

We have long cultivated a teaching culture in this department, and one outgrowth of that has been our pedagogy initiative, which has been in place for about five years now. Everybody in the department participates in this enterprise so they are learning from different faculty, different teaching styles, and have lots to take home. We aren't modeling a single style of teaching but trying to teach the students to find their own style and their own voice in the classroom. What might have been a typical setup, and I hope is becoming ever less so, is that the students had one pedagogy course, and it was foreign language teaching. We certainly offer that sort of course, but, in fact, we spread our pedagogy courses over five semesters. By the end of five semesters, they've really had a chance to reflect on it, to have lots of contact with faculty members, both in and outside the department, and additional conversations arise that then feed back into the student's own goals and hopes for their professional lives.