## Mentors’ Roles

- establishing a mentor-student relationship, building rapport
- teaching (mnemonics, techniques, approaches, rhetorical concepts such as audience)—includes performing a particular kind of audience for students and self-consciously applying disciplinary thought
- analyzing a paper’s perceived weaknesses or students’ gaps in knowledge
- supplying information (on missed classes, on the English department, on the campus and services)
- building students’ confidence (by placing successive completed assignments side by side)
- allying themselves with students (to “get points” or raise a grade through revision; to request an extension)
- collaborating with students (identifying questions and developing them, not imposing their own ideas, helping students understand a fundamental principle about writing [not “getting the right answer], bouncing ideas, talking it through, prompting, encouraging, helping organize thoughts, enriching [the mentor’s] appreciation of course material
- tracking students’ developments & progress (to note improvement; to “build,” to prepare for the future)
- interpreting certain behavior as deleterious
- noting inadequate preparation for the conference (coming with no agenda or no writing)
- noting trends & patterns across the class (e.g., students still not understanding the nature of the conferences, students not quite understanding the assignment)
- wondering how to adapt/change sessions (by “getting feedback,” by determining what a student needs; to overcome recalcitrance, to boost level of student reasoning, to meet students’ expectations, to help students whose writing/reasoning is already strong)

### Table 1. Roles Played by Mentors in Conferences, Based on Mentors’ Logs