

Mentor Experiences with Mentoring Programs from WPA-GO: Michael Day



Dr. Michael Day, Director of FYC and Professor of Rhetoric, Technical Writing, and Composition Pedagogy at Northern Illinois University, mentored at both M@Cs and Breakfast Buddies events

What did you like best about participating in this year's Breakfast Buddies (BBs) event?

I really enjoy meeting new people and finding out what they are working on and what they are interested in. The events are usually low-key, very friendly, and everyone seems collegial and ready to collaborate.

How was working with a mentor at BBs from another institution different than professional development opportunities on your campus?

I carry the same spirit of "conspiracy to collaborate" that I use on my home campus with me to conferences, but, since I need to get to know new people quickly, I need to immerse myself in listening, affirming, and getting to know new colleagues.

What value do you see in mentoring?
Why is it important for experienced individuals to make time to mentor at these conferences?

I believe in the importance of co-mentoring to enrich our professional and personal lives. By mentoring, I don't mean the top down hierarchical relationship you



Mentors, Judith Walker, Judith Szerdahelyi, and Michael Day



Mentors, Michael Day and Janice Walker

might be thinking of, but something more like professional friendship, or mutual aid, where both people have equal standing and equal say. Co-mentors are dedicated to sharing strategies, and most important, mutual advising and support. My enthusiasm for co-mentoring stems from the assumption that I have a lot to learn from everyone I work with, at conferences and online, regardless of how long each of us has been working in our field, which happens to be teaching writing. For more details, see <http://www.mday.org/philosophy/>

What would you say to someone who is on the fence about participating in Breakfast Buddies?

Back in the “olden daze” when I was a graduate student, a group of three of us co-mentors had a slogan: “Schmooze it or lose it!” If you’re going to take the trouble to go to a conference, do more than just attend panels. Get out there and network! It’s both personally and professionally fulfilling.



Michael Day with his mentees, Al Harahap and Casie Fedukovich