

## WHOLE PERSON MENTORING FOR CAREER AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE (LIS) STUDENTS IN UNIVERSITY OF UYO, NIGERIA

**OBOT, Imaobong N., *PhD***  
University of Uyo Library,  
University of Uyo;

**OKORIE, Unwana U.**  
Akwa Ibom State College of Education,  
Akwa Ibom State;

**UDOFIA, Iwat E., *PhD***  
University of Uyo Library,  
University of Uyo

**AND**

**UZOEGBU, Fiat M.**  
Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education (AIFCE),  
Owerri

### ABSTRACT

*This paper examined whole person mentoring for career and professional development of library and information science students in the University of Uyo, Nigeria. Three objectives and three research questions were formulated and matched to guide the study. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. The area of study was the University of Uyo. The population of the study consisted of four hundred and fifty undergraduate students, forty-nine post-graduate students of library and information science as well as thirty professional librarians, totaling five hundred and twenty-nine. A sample fraction of forty-six percent was used to determine the sample size of undergraduate students. The fraction was used because the population was not large. Census sampling technique was used to include the entire population of forty-nine post graduate students and thirty librarians. Three experts validated the instrument which was found to be reliable with an overall average reliability co-efficient of 0.87. Data collection was done by means of a self-developed questionnaire. Descriptive statistics, i.e., percentage analyses and charts, were used to answer the research questions. Findings on the percentage analysis of the aspects of whole person mentoring and the extent to which each is utilized in the University of Uyo revealed that organizational/behavioral, relationship, value, and finance had responses of 145, 116, 89, and 87 respectively for high extent rate. On the other hand, the spiritual and parenting aspects had responses of 102 and 98, respectively, to affirmed the low extent of utilization of those aspects. Findings on the extent of utilization of whole person mentoring in the University of Uyo revealed that the highest percentage of the respondents, 211(84.4%) stated that it is very low. Second to the least, respondents on the subject matter affirmed no mentoring at all, 23(9.2), while the least number of respondents, 16(6.4%) said low extent. Other findings revealed that the challenges associated with whole person mentoring ranged from lack of sustainability 92(36.8%) to lack of showing personal interest in the mentees life 7(2.8%). Based on these findings, recommendations included that mentors should be formally trained by the university management as well as sustained for the whole person mentoring relation to achieve desired objectives.*

**KEYWORDS:** Whole Person Mentoring, Career Development, Professional Development, Library and Information Science and Nigeria.

## Introduction

The LIS curriculum places a premium on the Students' Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES), which advances a process whereby students embark on fieldwork and gain practical experience before earning a professional degree. This is, however, not the case with other professions like medicine, law, accounting, etc., where students are not required to undertake such field experience through internships before obtaining their degrees. It can be noted that even in the field, LIS students most often do not seem to have gained much experience from professional librarians but rather from the para-professionals whom they see often. Therefore, without guidance from professionals, their hopes are dashed as they know their career as well as professional development will be shattered. This also makes the students' sagacity and their choice of librarianship as a career oblique, thereby posing a certain degree of uncertainty about their expectations of the realities of the labour market into which they will graduate.

This paper therefore sought to fashion out ways in which a mentorship programme in the library school, in alliance with information professionals in the library, University of Uyo, can aid LIS students' career and professional development in order to make them competent participants in the workplace. Mentors are a crucial option for young adults who are overwhelmed by life choices, large classrooms, new living situations, and little stability (Cramer & Prentice-Dunn 2007). Observation has shown that most higher education students drop out of school for sheer lack of people to guide them through their career as well as academic goals. Mentorship can therefore bolster their professional development and give them a renewed sense of direction.

Mentoring can be done in a variety of ways, sometimes unconventionally and at other times in an organized and methodical manner. The role of the mentor will depend, to a large extent, on what both players (i.e., the mentor and mentee) uphold in the relationship based on their needs, conditions, and events that affect them at a particular time, place, and organizational milieu. Mentorship is a lasting management technique that involves a more accomplished and proficient adult teaching or advising a younger person by way of transmitting his ideas, skills, and knowledge in both formal and informal apprenticeship schemes. In any model chosen, a mentor was viewed as an individual who acted as a role model and supporter throughout the duration of the mentoring process (Ross, 2013).

Mentorship is widely valued within librarianship (Lacy & Copeland). Mentorship equips academic librarians with the much-needed capacity to serve as personal connections, informal resources, and professional role

models to LIS students. The thrust of this paper therefore aims at elucidating the extent to which a new mentorship model, which is known as whole-person mentoring, can be applied in bringing out the best in LIS students at the University of Uyo, vis-à-vis the earlier hurdles encountered by undergraduates in Nigerian universities, to wit, LIS students at the University of Uyo. "Whole" person mentoring, as the name implies, simply involves a process by which a mentoring programme protracts beyond career to include discussions about behaviour, values, parenting, finances, and even spiritual life (King, 2020). It can be employed in many different ways, either informally or in a structured, systematic way. From observation, most mentoring programmes fail to achieve the required goal because they only focus on career development and neglect other aspects that constitute components of a "whole" person, as listed in the author's definition above.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Nigerian undergraduates in Universities are usually assailed by diverse dilemmas ranging from psychological, academic, and, to a large extent, sociological. Albeit a large number of undergraduates go through the above hurdles successfully, a good number of them fall by the wayside owing to negative peer and parental pressures, depression, and, in some cases, substance abuse. From the above, it is correct to approbate the fact that mentorship can play a very vital role in connecting LIS students to the appropriate channels to take in order to achieve the set goals of their academic quest.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to determine the utilization of whole person mentoring for professional development of Library and Information Science (LIS) students in the University of Uyo, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. examine the types of whole person mentoring and the extent to which each type is utilized in the University of Uyo.
2. determine the extent of utilization of whole person mentoring in the University of Uyo.
3. ascertain the challenges associated with the utilization of whole person mentoring in the University of Uyo.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the types of whole person mentoring and the extent to which each type is utilized in the University of Uyo?

2. What is the extent of utilization of whole person mentoring in the University of Uyo?
3. What are the challenges associated with the utilization of whole person mentoring in the University of Uyo?

## Literature Review

The whole person concept, first introduced by a philosopher, Dr. Mortimer J. Adler, encourages individuals to strive for proper balance in all areas of their lives, such as spending meaningful time with family and friends, maintaining our health, enriching our lives, becoming all that we can be, giving back to our communities, learning to manage our financial affairs, and growing our spiritual lives (Cahill, 2014). People, of course, tend to be happier and more productive when all areas of their lives are balanced (Naidu, 2014). The author stated further that this means having a balanced, systematic programme for growth and progress in the four broad areas of our lives: physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual. Therefore, this concept, when introduced into organisations as a mentoring programme, enhances emotional control, intellectual vibrance, and spiritual upliftment.

With the recent demands of life and subsequent stress individuals are exposed to, it has become increasingly difficult to balance all aspects of life, like family, community service, health, and the spiritual. Being a whole person and living a balanced lifestyle through wholesome relationships and strong friendships in all aspects of life is therefore the basis for happiness, self-confidence, good health, peace of mind, heightened productivity in every undertaking, and a feeling of career progression, individualised as well as professional accomplishment.

Most empirical research on mentorship (Lacy & Copeland, 2013; Ross, 2013) has focused on the academic and professional development of individuals. However, there has been little research on a more recent form of mentorship (Cramer & Prentice-Dunn, 2007, Woolworth, 2019, Colosimo, Desmeules, and McKinnon, 2017), which extends beyond career, workplace, and organisational proration of programmes to include discussion about behaviour, values, relationships, parenting, finances, and even spiritual life (Woolworth, 2019). This is referred to as whole-person mentoring. The term, though new to the mentoring world within organizations, will add to both theory and practise because it is an integrative approach, rare in an organisational context in the sense that the focus is on the whole person, not just at work but also in life (Jones, 2015). "Whole" person mentoring simply involves the unlearning of knowledge and experience by the mentor on behalf of the mentee, either in an organisation or academic environment, thereby bringing desirable transformational changes. University instructors have a unique

opportunity to serve as personal connections, informational resources, and professional role models for young adults (Cramer and Prentice-Dunn, 2007). This is invariably to state that the role of a mentor is an inseparable part of school demand and should be upheld.

Without the guidance of a professional, the perceptions of students about librarianship and their expectations of the workplace can become skewed, leaving them unprepared for reality (Lacy and Copeland, 2013). Therefore, Cramer and Prentice-Dunn propose that mentoring of undergraduates involves more than a typical apprenticeship model in which a professor or researcher guides a student/trainee through academic materials or research design; rather, successful mentorship of young adults requires adoption of the notion of "curd perosnalis," or caring for the whole person. Some mentorship models, however, often pertain only to graduate students (Zvolensky, Herschell & McNeil, 2000). Whatever the type and level of students used, whole-person mentoring is an approach to effective mentorship based on caring and compassion for the personal aspects of young adult mentees (Cramer and Prentice-Dunn, 2007).

While students choose undergraduate and graduate LIS programmes for various reasons, many have mentors to help guide and nurture their dreams and bring them to reality. However, the whole-person mentoring program, which may be very suitable for LIS students, is not applied. The whole-person mentoring programme is particularly suitable for this category of students as it combines theoretical and practical elements needed to educate LIS students to further equip them to become competent participants in the work environment vis-à-vis a technological and knowledge-based society.

## **Methodology**

In carrying out the study, a descriptive survey design was adopted as the study was descriptive in nature. The targeted population was five hundred and twenty-nine (450 undergraduate students, 49 post graduate students, 30 professional librarians). A researcher developed instrument tagged "Whole Person Mentoring Questionnaire (WPMQ)" was used for the collection of data from LIS students in the University of Uyo. The reliability co-efficient was 0.87 derived from administration of the instrument to 30 respondents who did not form part of the main study. These instruments were then administered randomly two hundred and fifty respondents (171 undergraduate students, 49 post graduate students - Post Graduate Diploma - 17, MLS - 15 Ph. D - 17) and 30 librarians. A sample fraction of forty-six percent was used to determine the sample size of undergraduate students because the population was not large. 30 copies of the instrument were also administered to 30

professional librarians using the census sampling technique. This technique was adopted to include the entire population of librarians because the population was manageable and accessible. Two research assistants helped the researchers in issuing and retrieving the questionnaires from the respondents. Descriptive statistics (percentage analyses and charts) were used to answer the research questions.

## Results and Discussion

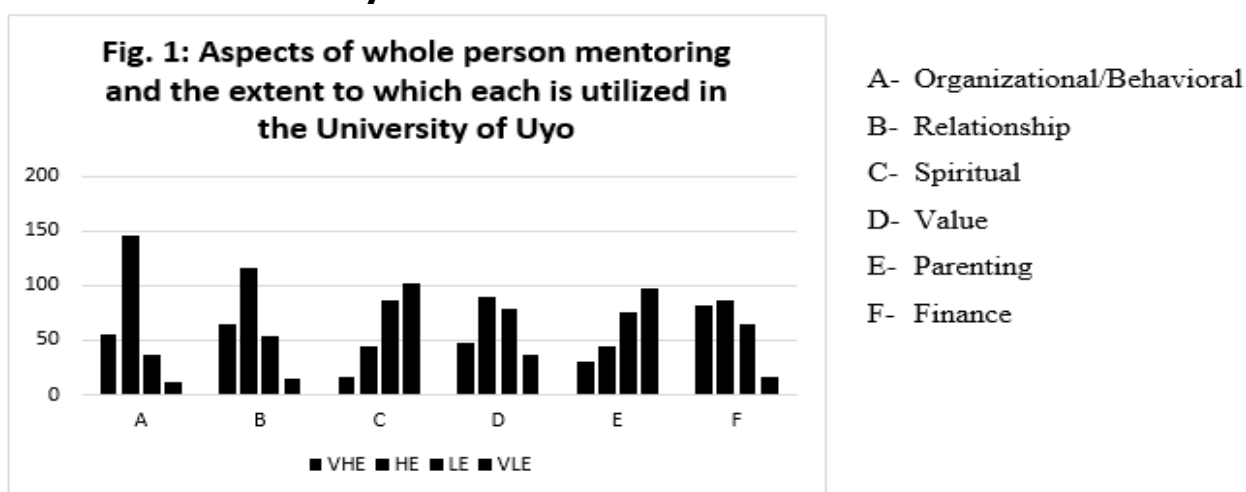
### Results

**Research Question One:** The research question sought to examine the types of mentoring and the extent to which each is utilized in University of Uyo. To answer the research question, percentage analysis was performed as can be seen in table 1 and figure 1.

**Table 1: Percentage analysis of the aspects of whole person mentoring and the extent to which each is utilized in University of Uyo.**

Types of mentoring	Extent of Utilization				Total
	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	
Organizational/Behavioral	56	145	37	12	250
Relationship	65	116	54	15	250
Spiritual	16	45	87	102	250
Value	47	89	78	36	250
Parenting	31	45	76	98	250
Finance	82	87	65	16	250

**SOURCE:** Field survey



**SOURCE:** Field survey

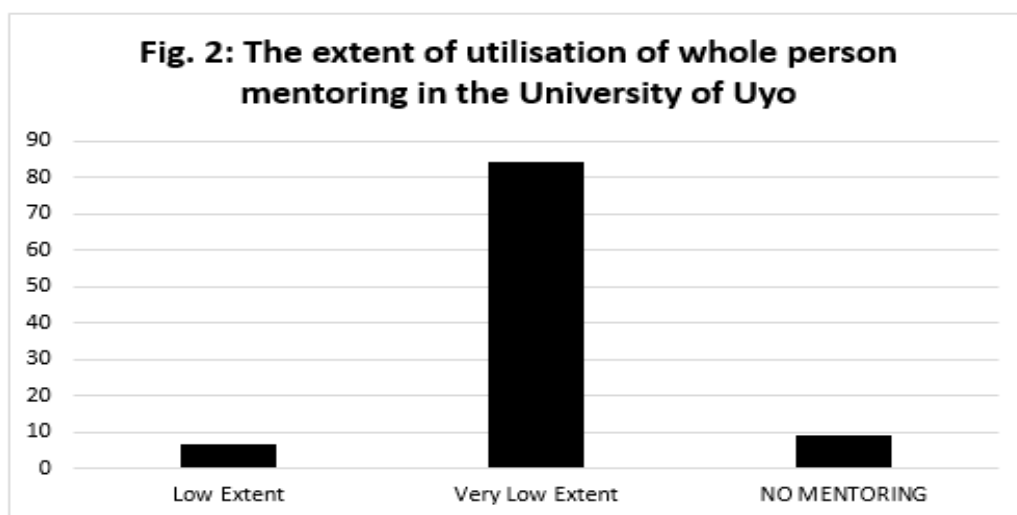
The above Table 1 and Figure 1 present the percentage analysis of the aspects of whole person mentoring and the extent to which each is utilized in the University of Uyo. From the result, it was observed that for organizational/behavioral mentoring the highest respondent 145 said high extent, while the least number of respondents (12) said very low extent. For relationship mentoring the highest respondent 116 said high extent, while the least number of respondents (15) said very low extent. For spiritual mentoring the highest respondent 102 said very low extent, while the least number of respondents (16) said very high extent. For value mentoring the highest respondent 89 said high extent, while the least number of respondents (36) said very low extent. For parenting mentoring the highest respondent 98 said very low extent, while the least number of respondents (31) said very high extent. For finance mentoring the highest respondent 87 said high extent, while the least number of respondents (16) said very low extent.

**Research Question Two:** The research question sought to determine the extent of utilization of whole person mentoring in the University of Uyo. To answer research question one, percentage analysis was carried out as seen in Table 2 and Figure 2.

**Table 2: Percentage analysis on the extent of utilisation of whole person mentoring in the University of Uyo.**

Extent of whole person mentoring	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low Extent	16	6.4
Very Low Extent	211	84.4
No Mentoring	23	9.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100</b>

**SOURCE:** Field survey



**SOURCE:** Field survey

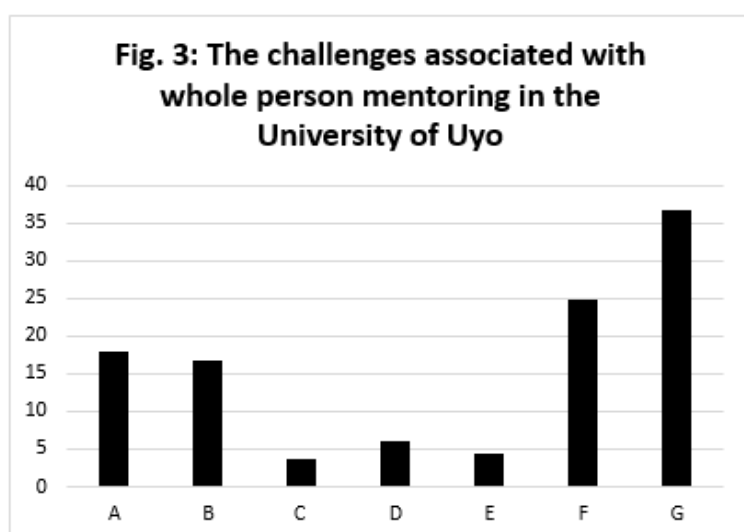
The above Table 2 and Figure 2 presents the percentage analysis on the extent of use of whole person mentoring in the University of Uyo. From the result, it was observed that the highest percentage of the respondents 211 (84.4%) said the extent of whole person mentoring in the University of Uyo is very low, second to the least respondents on the subject matter affirmed no mentoring at all 23 (9.2), while the least number of respondents 16 (6.4%) said low extent.

**Research Question Three:** The research question sought to ascertain the challenges associated with whole person mentoring in the University of Uyo. To answer the research question, percentage analysis was used as seen in Table 3 and Figure 3.

**Table 3: Percentage analysis on the challenges associated with whole person mentoring in the University of Uyo**

Challenges of whole person mentoring	Frequency	Percen.(%)
Non availability of the mentor	45	18
Lack of sincere desire to share knowledge by the mentor	42	16.8
Lack of empathy by the mentor	9	3.6
Differing ethnic/background	8	3.2
Lack of showing personal interest in the mentees life	7	2.8
Lack of encouragement	11	4.4
Lack of passion from both the mentor and the mentee	62	24.8
Lack of sustainability	92	36.8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>100</b>

**SOURCE: Field survey**



- A - Non availability of the mentor
- B - Lack of sincere desire to share knowledge by the mentor
- C - Lack of empathy by the mentor
- D - Differing ethnic/background
- E - Lack of showing personal interest in the mentees life
- F - Lack of encouragement
- G - Lack of passion from both the mentor and the mentee
- H - Lack of sustainability

**SOURCE: Field survey**



The above Table 3 and Figure 3 present the percentage analysis of the challenges in whole person mentoring in the University of Uyo. From the result, it was observed that the highest percentage of the respondent 92(36.8%) said the challenges in whole person mentoring in University of Uyo is lack of sustainability, seconded by respondents 62(24.8%) who said lack of passion from both the mentor and the mentee. This was followed by respondents who mentioned the non-availability of the mentor as one of the challenges 42(16.8%). The fourth on the list was 45(18%) of the respondent who said lack of sincere desire to share knowledge by the mentor, this was followed by 11(4.4%) who said Lack of encouragement. Followed by 9(3.6%) being the sixth on the list who said Lack of empathy by the mentor, second to the least respondents on the subject matter said Differing ethnic/background 8(3.2%), while the least number of respondents 7(2.8%) said Lack of showing personal interest in the mentees life.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The result of the percentage analysis in Table 1 and Figure 1 presents the percentage analysis of the types of mentoring and the extent to which each is utilized in the University of Uyo. From the result, it was observed that for organizational/behavioral mentoring, the highest respondent 145 said high extent, while the least number of respondents (12) said very low extent. For relationship mentoring the highest respondent 116 said high extent, while the least number of respondents (15) said very low extent. For spiritual mentoring the highest respondent 102 said very low extent, while the least number of respondents (16) said very high extent. For value mentoring the highest respondent 89 said high extent, while the least number of respondents (36) said very low extent. For parenting mentoring the highest respondent 98 said very low extent, while the least number of respondents (31) said very high extent. For finance mentoring the highest respondent 87 said high extent, while the least number of respondents (16) said very low extent. All these agree with the opinion of Cramer & Prentic-Dunn, 2007, Woolort, (2019), Colosimo, Desmeules and McKinnon, (2017) which stated that whole mentoring extends beyond career, workplace and organizational prorating of programmes to include discussion about behaviour, values, relationships, parenting, finances, and even spiritual life (Woolworth, 2019).

The result of the percentage analysis in Table 2 and Figure 2 presents the percentage analysis of the extent of whole person mentoring in the University of Uyo. From the result, it was observed that the highest percentage of the respondents 211(84.4%) stated that the extent of whole person mentoring in the University of Uyo is very low, second to the least respondents on the subject matter affirmed no mentoring at all 23(9.2), while the least number of respondents 16(6.4%) said low extent.

These results agree with the opinion of Cramer and Prentice-Dunn, (2007) the whole person mentoring programme which is found to be very suitable for LIS students is not applied.

The result of the percentage analysis in Table 3 and Figure 3 presents the percentage analysis of the challenges in whole person mentoring in the University of Uyo. From the result, it was observed that the highest percentage of the respondents 92(36.8%) said the challenges in whole person mentoring in the University of Uyo is lack of sustainability, seconded by respondents 62(24.8%) who said lack of passion from both the mentor and the mentee. This was followed by respondent who mentioned Non availability of the mentor as one of the challenges 42(16.8%). The fourth on the list was 45(18%) of the respondent who said lack of sincere desire to share knowledge by the mentor, this was followed by 11(4.4%) who said Lack of encouragement. Followed by 9(3.6%) being the sixth on the list who said Lack of empathy by the mentor, second to the least respondents on the subject matter said Differing ethnic/background 8(3.2%), while the least number of respondents 7(2.8%) said Lack of showing personal interest in the mentees life.

## Conclusion

Based on the findings of this research, it was concluded that the extent of utilization of whole person mentoring in the University of Uyo is very low. Organizational/behavioral mentoring is the most utilized aspect of mentoring in the University of Uyo while the spiritual aspect is the least utilized. Lack of sustainability is the most common challenge in whole person mentoring in the University of Uyo.

## Recommendations

1. Mentors should be ready and quick to give information, support, feedback, ideas and contacts to their mentees regarding other aspects of mentoring like relationship, values, parenting, finance etc., so as to make them better individuals in the field of work, family and the society at large. Mentees on the other hand, should bring to the fore, well-conceived and articulated topics bothering them for discussion in every meeting.
2. University library management should work together with Heads of Department of library schools towards ensuring that willing mentors are matched to suitable mentees. In a situation mentees complain about a particular mentor, there should be a change to a more appropriate match and ensure that the whole person mentoring, which accommodates both formal and informal approach, is fully utilized.

3. Mentors should be formally trained by the university management as well as sustained for the whole person mentoring relation to achieve desired objectives. Such training will help mentors have good knowledge of the plight of students and how to help them achieve useful information on how to help the overcome problems that will affect their career and professional development.

## REFERENCES

- Bozemand & Feeney (2007). Toward a useful theory of mentoring a conceptual analysis and critique. *Administration & Society*, 39(6), 731.
- Cahill, K. T. (2014). *Embracing the whole person concept*. Available at <https://inspiremetoday.com/blog/embracing-whole-person-concept/>
- Colosimo, A., Desmeules, R. E. & Mckinnon, D. (2017). Whole-person mentoring for every stage of careers in librarianship. *Library Leadership & Management*, 23(1), 261-268.
- Cramer, R. J. & Prentice-Dunn, S. (2007). Caring for the whole person: guidelines for advancing undergraduate mentorship. *College Student Journal*, 41(4), 771-778.
- Jones, C. (2015). A 'Whole Person Learning' approach to coaching and mentoring. Retrieved from: <https://www.oasishumanrelations.org.uk/resources/developing-practice/a-whole-person-learning-approach-to-coaching-andmentoring/>
- King, J. (2020). *Whole person concept mentoring*. Retrieved from: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/whole-person-concept-mentoring-jermaine-king-smsgt->
- Lacy, M. & Copeland, A. J. (2013). The role of mentorship programs in LIS education and in professional development. *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science*, 54 (2), 135-146.
- Naidu, L. (2014). *Balance in Life: The Whole Person Concept*. Available at <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/balance-life-whole-person-concept-logan-naidu-cfp-bcom-acii-aiisa->
- Ross, K. (2013). Purposeful mentoring in academic libraries. *Journal of Library Administration*, 53(7-8), 652-660
- Woolworth, R. (2019). *Great Mentors focus on the whole person, not just career*. Harvard Business Review.
- Zvolensky, M. J. Herschell, A. D. & McNeil, D. W. (2000). Learning to administrate, administrating to learn. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 31, 553-558.