

# — OPID – 2022 Spring Conference

## Agile Adventures in Mentoring: Experiencing the Journey

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2:15 – 3:15 pm



# Goals for Today

- Provide context for developing an Agile-informed mentoring model
  - Modifying story-based approach to mentoring
  - Process-based → human connections in safe sharing space
- Lessons learned from implementing a new mentoring program
  - Importance of building trusting relationships
  - Building reflective practitioners' skills = key element the mentoring process
  - Using metaphor of “writing a book” to frame personalized professional development.
- Reflect on presenters' ongoing experiences using agile and scrum in implementing a new mentoring model for instructors at the university level.

# Starting Point: Agile Mentoring Model Emerges from Rugby and Game Design

We designed this mentoring experience intentionally based on...

❖ **Agile... philosophy and practices as a framework**

❖ **Tenants**

❖ **Individuals and interactions** over processes and tools

❖ **Working on documentation** on the fly

❖ **Collaboration** over negotiation

❖ **Responding to change** as the plan comes to clarity

❖ **Scrum... philosophy and practices as a framework**

❖ **Framework**

❖ **Teams** addressing problems/issues

❖ **Productively** working together adaptively

❖ **Together** creatively contributing and delivering

❖ **Responding** and adapting to change to meet individual and collective goals/objectives

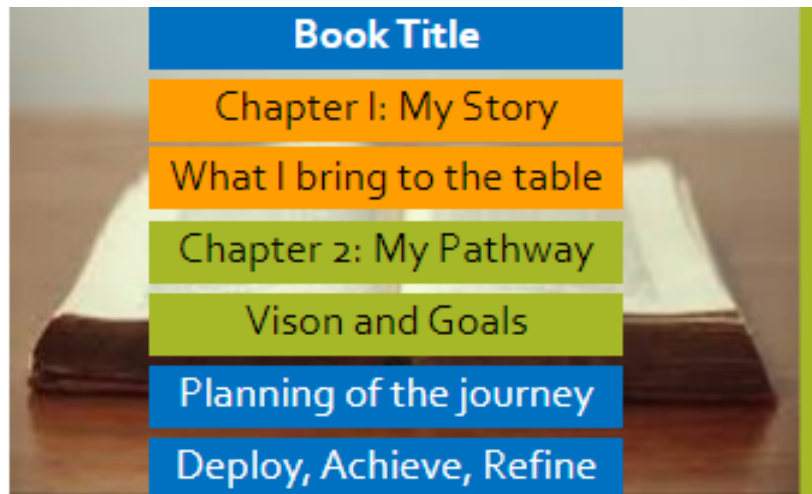
*Adapted from Schwaber & Jeff Sutherland, (2020)*

*Adapted from Agile Alliance (2019)*



# The Agile Model as We Saw It

## The Structure - Book Chapters to Establish Goals



### Agile Approach

Based on your story

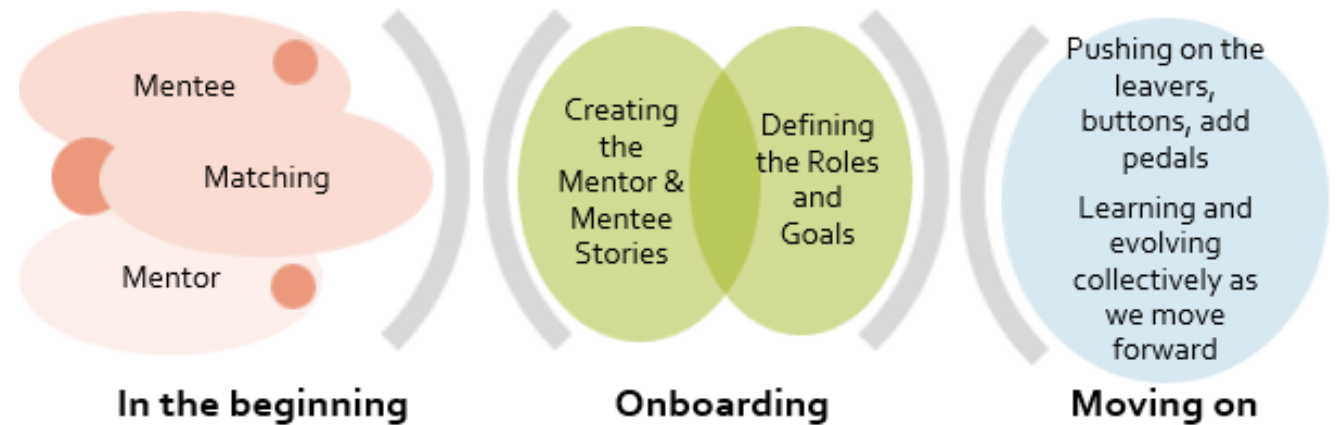
Where do you want the story to take you

What are your goals

How do we narrate your story

Being able to change the story

## The Process Model - Establish Trust & Set + Share Individual Goals



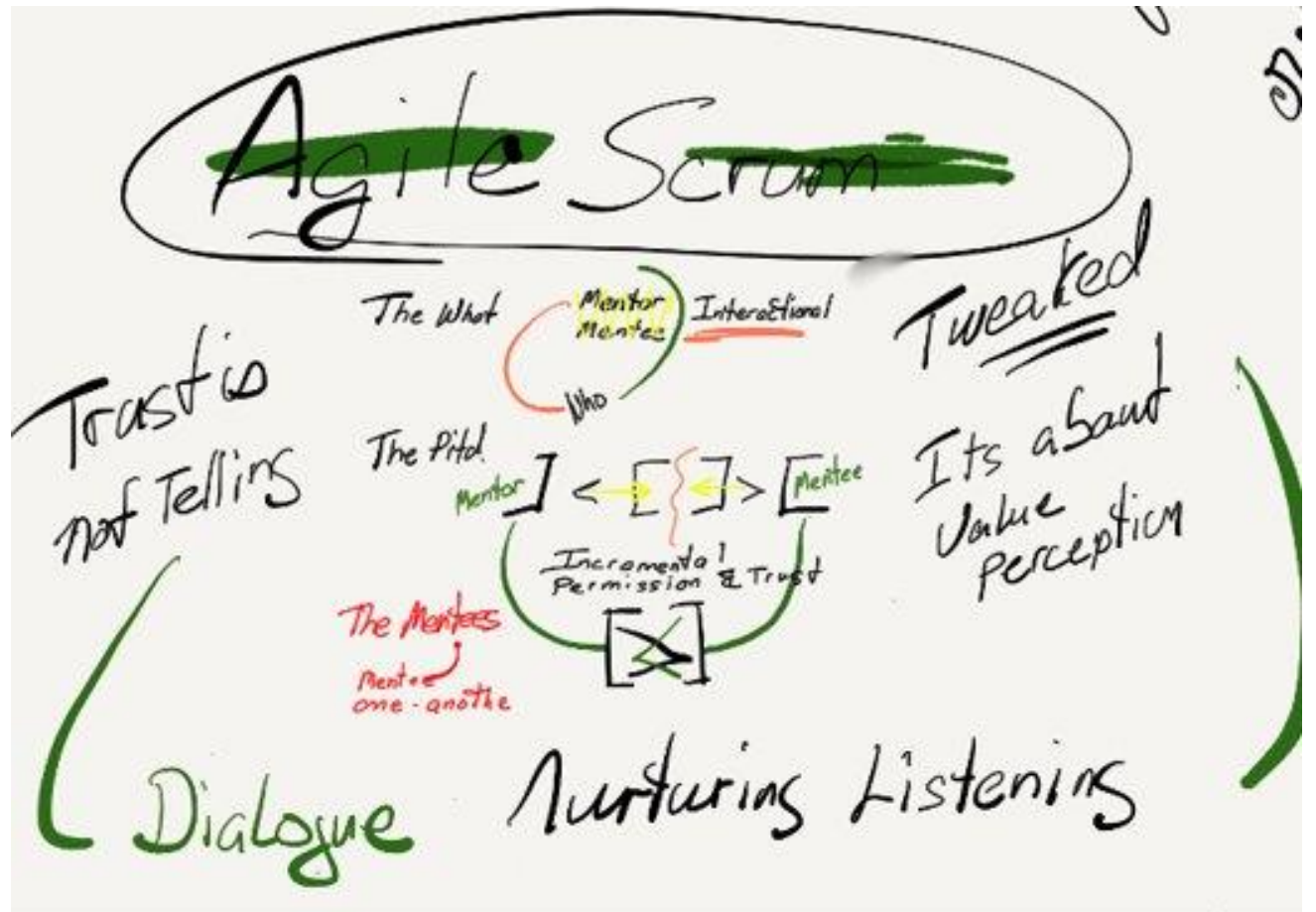
# Audience Poll – Your Experience

- What has your experience been as a mentor/mentee?



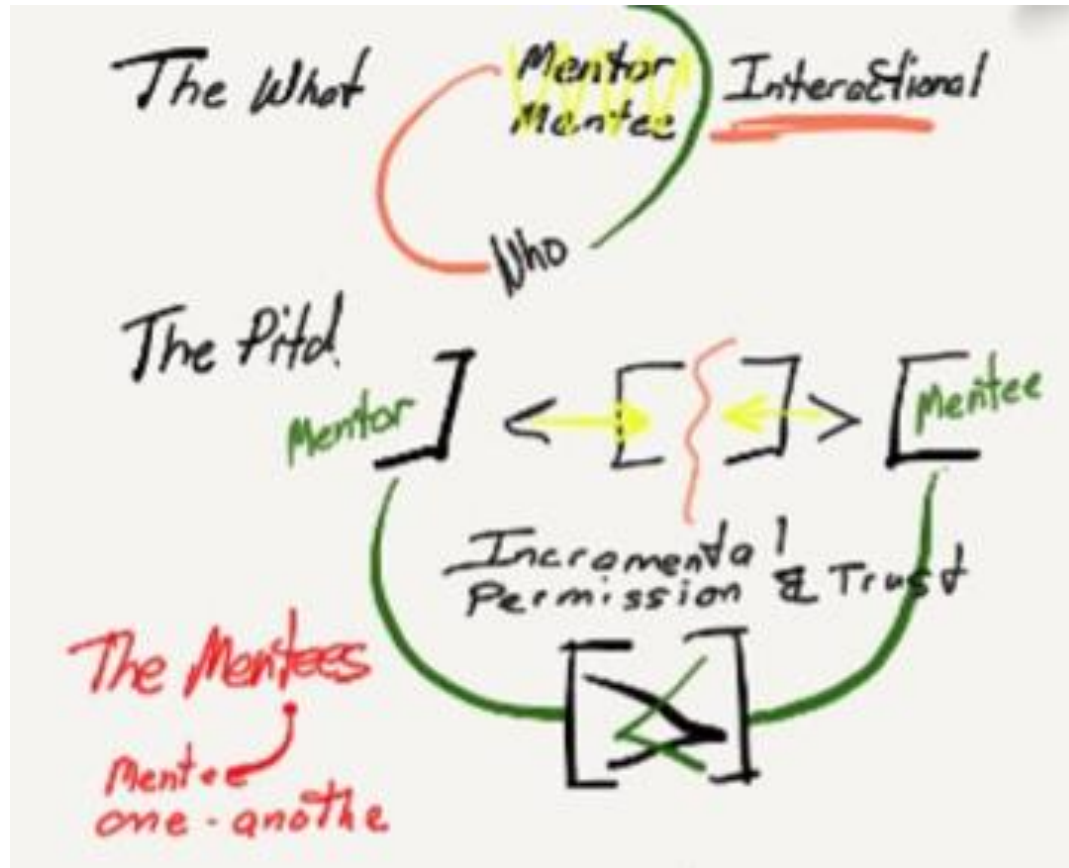
- The Model as We Experienced It

- Agile is for Mentors – Not Mentees
  - Meet ongoing/changing needs of mentees
- Trust took time
  - Mentors needed to be honest & vulnerable
- Mentors needed:
  - Listening skills
  - Nurturing skills
- Mentees needed:
  - Understand self beyond content expertise
  - Role in campus culture (teaching expert → engage learners)



x  
Its Beautifully messy //

# Establishing Trust – Creating safe space



## Building Trust = Time + Off Campus Meeting

- Mentors trusted one another from long-term previous personal relationship
- Mentees trusted one another from well-developed professional relationships
- Mentees needed to break out of co-dependent, but not culturally accurate paradigms to culturally-informed action plans

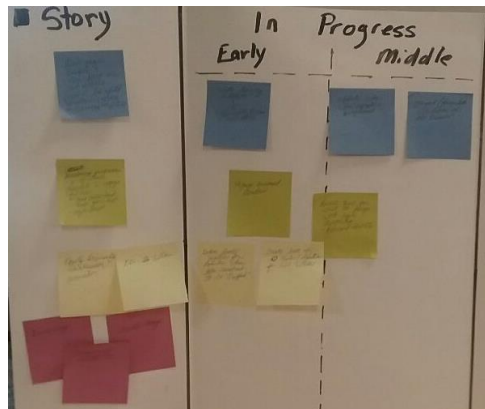
Teaching becomes “public practice” within context of mentor-mentee program as a safe sharing space

# Strategy Shift: Mentors With Scripts → Individual Needs

## Beginning Stages – Scrum Process For Mentors and Mentees

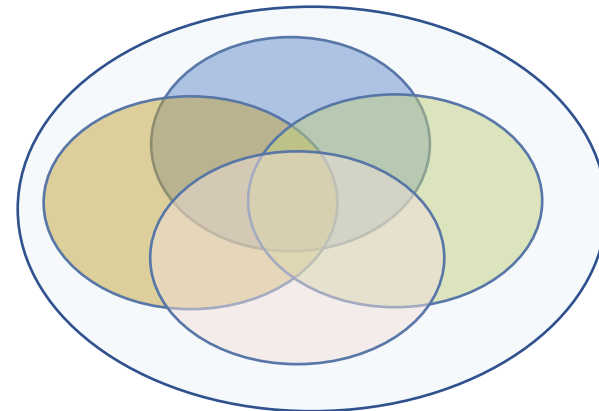
Agile: Epics → Stories → Tasks

- Process not well understood
- Mentors did not explain well
- **Mentors used Agile in planning**



## Building Relationships Building Community

- Mid-point Shift
  - power structure changes
  - shared insights and expertise
- Individual needs addressed
- Process informs/not drive mentoring





# Mentoring is about connection/humanity

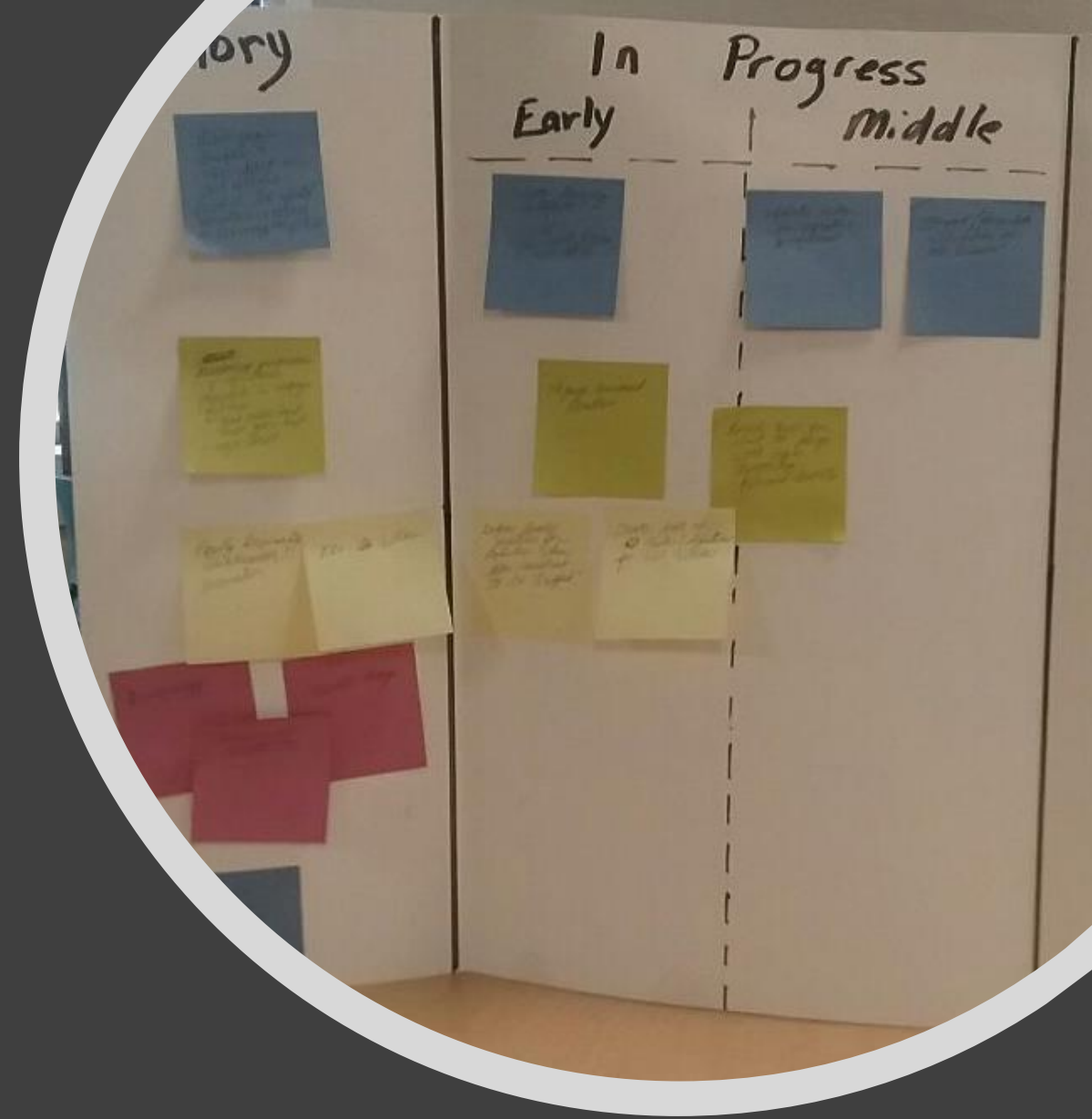
- Started with scrum & agile as a process
- Moved to writing a story and “book” with scrum and agile framed as SMART goals
- Shared own experience as stories to model and give mentees permission to write their own story
  - Did the stories help provide models OR
  - Did stories create a humanity that mentees could connect to?
  - Mentors had questions but answers had to come from mentees themselves.
- Collaborative conversations leading to growth for mentees & mentors
- Connects with - *Coyle’s Culture Code / Egolf & Chester (2013)*
  - Safety – welcomes a broad community with diverse perspectives
  - High Connectivity
  - Power structures = all equal & active contributors

# Mentor Questions → Builds Mentee Reflective Practice

- Helping see the difference between different culturally embedded beliefs about R1 universities versus regional universities
  - culture & expectations – levels of arrogance
  - conforming to institutional culture and student expectations.
- Two way process of giving permission
  - Mentee gives self permission to be vulnerable (needs to happen outside of tenure, promotion, retention strategies).
  - Mentors willing to be vulnerable as well.
- Mentoring process may have unintended outcome (observation – no data)
  - helping mentees see themselves as leaders/mentors/SoTL researchers
  - shift from being a victim to a self-advocate
  - confidence to speak up.

# Mentors' Reflection

- Agile mentoring model - overall is good
  - We see value of scrum aspects that lives in Agile
  - Mentors need to be agile
  - Mentors employed the scrum process in planning
  - Incremental permission to let go of scrum process for mentees
- Mentors need to develop listening and “counselling” skills
  - These listening skills and skills for guide on the side
  - Bridges idea of listening and evolving tools that work for the individual
- There are opportunities to rethink best practices for mentoring programs.
- Lessons learned are not limited to the importance of building trusting relationships,
- Building reflective practitioners' skills as a key element in the mentoring process.



# Questions?

- **What questions do you have?**
- **Any comments to share?**
  
- Contact Urs Haltinner - [haltinneru@uwstout.edu](mailto:haltinneru@uwstout.edu)
- Contact Sylvia Tiala – [tialas@uwstout.edu](mailto:tialas@uwstout.edu)



# References

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