

**A tribute article dedicated to**  
**Dr. Bob Stadulis, friend, colleague, mentor and former Editor of Future Focus**  
The Official Journal of the  
Ohio Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (OAHPERD)

### **Introduction**

Bob served the Ohio Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance for many years. He was a Division Chair for Sport Sciences, Future Focus editor, on the Memorial Scholarship Committee, and Parliamentarian. As editor, Bob was always ready to mentor new authors, guiding them through the publication process. He provided feedback and suggestions to help the publication become stronger. Bob would also solicit and encourage authors to submit manuscripts for Future Focus. I served on the editorial review committee and watched his mentoring of authors. I met Bob as a junior faculty member at Kent State University. He encouraged me to submit a manuscript to Future Focus, which I did after receiving the OAHPERD research grant.

### **On Mentorship in Education**

We find mentors in all shapes and forms and sizes in education, our personal lives and in most all other occupations outside of education. No tribute to Dr. Stadulis should start with anything other than published research about mentoring in education.

To understand how Bob provided his guidance and leadership as a mentor is to learn a little about what the scholarly literature says about mentors and their roles. For example, “Mentoring” is described by some of the authors in the field of education as “crucial for channeling the needs of the Protege on the right path to goal achievement” (Bărbuceanu, 2019, p. 45). In fact, other authors have described mentoring in this manner: “a developmental, circular process, in which the mentor guides, inspires, teaches and nurtures the protégé, who, can, in turn, become a mentor himself for others, sharing the same feelings and attention necessary in this relationship because those who received mentoring as protégés were more likely to become mentors themselves one day” (Allen, Eby, 2011). Other researchers in the field of mentoring in higher education (Lunsford, Crisp, Dolan, & Wuetherick, 2017) reviewed research published in this field and discovered that there are several types of mentoring: formal mentoring, informal mentoring, focus on career stage mentoring (early to mid and then late career mentoring), and group mentoring. These authors report that many early career proteges who were effectively mentored by senior faculty were more likely to receive promotions, improve their writing skills, and led to tenure and retention.

### **The Start of a Journey**

I was a younger ‘blue collar PhD’ when I first jumped aboard Dr. Stadulis’ ship. I was invited to be on the editorial board of Future Focus in 2008. I didn’t know much about peer review, except for the work I had completed on my dissertation. I was also invited that same year to serve on the editorial board of a national peer-reviewed journal (The Journal of Coaching Education). I was

really lucky to have two great mentors as editors of both of these journals for my foray into reviewing research.

I was never really good at reviewing methodologies or data analysis. My strength was in background research and synthesizing the results and conclusions based on previously published research.

Dr. Bob knew my areas of need and strength from judging my reviews and encouraged me to stick to my strengths and allow others on the board to fill in gaps in critiques of data and methodologies.

Bob demonstrated what we would all like to have from our mentors and teachers: focus on the things we do well and allow us to grow our areas of need.

I try to follow his lead in my everyday work with students and athletes of all ages, from Kindergarten through undergraduate and graduate level classes that I teach.

### **Guidance And Nurturing as a Friend and Editor:**

After Dr Stadulis recognized my interests in stretching my own limits, he agreed to allow me to write a column for Future Focus: *“Updating Your Coaching Toolbox: Bridging the Gap Between Coaching Research and Practice.”*

We started that column writing two articles each year that were based upon peer-reviewed research that I reviewed and then offered suggestions for coaches and teachers about how to apply that research in day-to-day classroom athletes and games and practices.

We understood that formal academic research was written in a language that few coaches or teachers would spend time reading unless it was placed into terms that would help them on a day-to-day basis. Bob always kept this goal in mind and was incredibly helpful in steering me back on the road when I veered off the path.

As a public education physical education teacher, I was lucky enough to not feel the pressure to get my research published in peer-reviewed journals. However, Bob helped nurture my enthusiasm to write and apply it to daily teaching and coaching practice.

My writing was very disorganized, wordy, and loose at the start, but Dr. Stadulis helped me soften my hard edges and encouraged my dreams to write a column that might help the teachers and coaches who are in the trenches every day.

Bob allowed me to strike a balance between formal academic writing and the ‘informal word’ of non-academic prose.

I never crossed my T's nor did I dot my 'T's, and I still don't know where semi-colons or colons are supposed to go. I still can't figure out when to use single or double quotes, and my sentences run on like out-of-control freight trains. Bob, the conductor, always got me back on track.

Bob nudged, reminded, honored and transitioned Future Focus from paper and pencils to an accessible, reliable online statewide publication. He managed these transitions with grace, integrity, and insightful vision. Those are true qualities of an exemplary teacher and an extraordinary leader.

### **My Personal Ties in Education and Bob's Role as a Mentor:**

I am lucky enough to be raised in a family tradition of devoted educators. Therefore, I enjoy a perspective that allows me to share the great role models in education and the not-so-great role models in the field.

I count Dr. Stadulis as one of our silent icons. He did his work quietly and unassumingly with little interest devoted to having a spotlight on him or assigning blame to others.

He is among the true pros who do their work, lead by example and rein in when the vessel veers off course.

He taught all of us how to be polished professionals through demonstrated leadership and compassion.

### **Testimonials from former students and colleagues:**

Ruthie K. (former student of Dr. Stadulis' at Kent State): *"He was always professional, and he absolutely took our publication to a higher level as he incorporated blind peer reviews, and he mentored many up-and-coming authors."*

Mary L. (Editorial Board Member). *"I met Dr. Bob, when I was hired at Kent State University as junior faculty member. Bob suggested I write an article for Future Focus. I took him up on his offer and submitted an article. He mentored me on that article and I was published. He always took time to offer suggestions to help guide us junior faculty members. I was asked by Bob to serve on the editorial committee. I gladly accepted and have proudly served under Bob's leadership. Bob, took our publication and raised the bar, by making it a blind peer reviewed journal. It has always saddened me that Universities would not accept a publication in Future Focus, as scholarship, even with all of Bob's leadership and work. He is always a professional and took time to mentor all those who wish to publish. "*

Garry B. (Editorial Board Member) *"I've really enjoyed being part of the Editorial Board of Future Focus over the past 12 years. Bob has served as Editor for all of the years that I have been on the Board. I have appreciated Bob's thoroughness, knowledge and the way he has communicated with editorial board members and authors who have submitted manuscripts. In*

*particular, Bob has helped numerous graduate students who have submitted articles. He has often guided them and taken extra time to help in fine tuning their articles based on the feedback from manuscript reviewers. His professionalism and experience has been instrumental in the success of Future Focus during the many years that he has served as editor.”*

**Personal Thank You to Dr. Robert Stadulis:**

Thank you, Bob-what an Incredible journey...right?! Please accept all of our testimonials to you as a token of our gratitude for your dedicated service. Thank you for steering our ship through troubled waters. We will be forever grateful for you and your first class approach to treating others. Good luck to you and yours in the next chapter!

Sincerely,

Michael P. Sheridan, Ph.D.

Mary E. La Vine, Ph.D.

Ruthie Kucharewski, Ph.D.

Garry Bower, Ph.D.

References

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