Co-learning case studies

Encourage exploration with prototypes
Our exploration course allows students to create a quick prototype regarding any tool or feature. Often students want to work on a technology I have no experience with. For example, last spring our students created a prototype that used eye tracking to track if the player blinked. I had never played with eye tracking and Unity, but I encouraged the students to look at different resources.

Keep up with Unity updates
While I know networking, Unity has changed their networking solutions a few times over the years. I've had to recommend tutorials for some of the newer solutions because students were making networked games on newer versions of Unity.

Playtest and provide feedback from the perspective of a user
I usually guide students looking to improve their projects in each sprint, so I not only comment on the coding and other technical aspects, but I also share my opinion on the gameplay and how I feel when I play their games.

Provide scope guidance
I am a supervisor for final year projects and there are always VR/AR/Unity projects that students bring from concept stage to final working prototype. Students work over two semesters in their final academic year, and in a lot of cases students are researching and experimenting in areas that I know little about. Guidance in the process is most important as well as keeping students focused and within scope, as they tend to expand their scope in an unmanageable way once they see the potential of what Unity can do.

Say “I don’t know, but let’s find out”

Be humble. Be honest. No one knows everything about the engine. This is why professionals specialize. We need each others' specializations. Say what you don't know, then point students to a starting point. Don't be afraid to tell students, "I don't know, but let's find out together". I love class periods when a student asks a question about how to do something, and then we as a class work out how we might implement this feature. Allowing students time to problem-solve and come up with new and different solutions is important.

Be open with your students

I find that my students quickly surpass my skills in certain areas of Unity and thus I try to foster a supportive environment by admitting to my students that I sometimes know less than them and focus more on debugging or architecture or design, etc.

Be a connector and supporter

I provide support and encouragement, help them set goals, and provide feedback on work. I also connect them with other Unity users and help them find resources when stuck.

Think out loud

I always announce that we are about to "learn together". Then I try my best to communicate my thought process.

Celebrate collective perseverance

Many times Unity will release a new feature and I will have the class look at it with me. We will play with the settings and see what happens. I remember there was one tool a while back, I can't remember what, but I couldn't get something to work, as we were all playing with it, and then one student was like, "I found it! You have to click the rollout at the bottom to set that setting". It was a great learning experience for all of us.