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Wiser Advisor



ADVISING ADULT LEARNERS

Mickey Freeze

Academic advising involves a number of aspects as it relates to individual students. The way we approach and handle advising sessions can also vary depending on the student being advised.

When we advise adult learners or non-traditional students, we often need to focus on different things. Denise Hart, Director of Adult Education and creator of the Success Program at Fairleigh Dickinson University, mentions asking questions to adult learners in order to assess the following:

- Computer Literacy
- Writing Skills
- Difficulties in Studying
- Time Management Skills
- Stress Management Skills--- handling multiple commitments
- The Way That the Learner Prefers to Study

(www.academicimpressions.com)

Non-traditional students who have been out of high school for a long time will often not have the needed computer literacy skills, so it is important to be aware of that when advising them. The lack of computer literacy skills will affect performance in a number of courses. If the student already lacks writing skills, then the weak computer literacy skills will add to the difficulties of being successful in college.

Other issues for non-traditional students relate to the ability to balance school and life away from school. Non-traditional students often have families and thus we need to be able to relate to the challenges that they will be facing. Does the student have the commitment to school? Do the student have the time for school? Has the student come up with a plan to allocate their time appro-

priately? Does the student realize the course load that is appropriate for their given situation? These are important things to factor in when advising non-traditional students.

Denise Hart describes the differences between effective and ineffective advisors. She mentions that an ineffective advisor will ask, "Here is the spring schedule, what interests you?" Hart mentions that an effective advisor will ask, "Tell me a little about yourself. How's work? Do you have a hard commute?"



Hart emphasizes the importance of starting the conversation with the adult learner based on factors that will affect the student's performance. She also emphasizes the importance of advisors being able to understand and relate to the student's needs and not just focus on curriculum and course schedules. In advising it can be easy at times to just be focused on building a student's schedule and helping them to get into the right classes based on their placement scores and degree plan.

While advising is much more than building course schedules, it is still a very important part of the process. When students see that advisors know the material regarding degree plans and course schedules, they can develop a greater appreciation for the college and be more confident in their academic endeavors. Still, as Denise Hart emphasizes, when it comes to advising adult learners; advisors need to focus on the student's needs and be able to communicate with the student according to his or her needs.

Source: Fusch, Daniel. <http://www.academicimpressions.com/news/academic-advising-adult-learners>

Advising inspiration. . .

"I hold academic advising in high regard. The level of personal interaction that advisors experience does not occur in all courses. Advisors are central to retention and to student development. . . . I encourage you [advisors] to have passion for the role that you play at your institution. You are changing lives. Our world is changing. Today's excellence is tomorrow's mediocre performance. Together we have both the responsibility and opportunity to reach higher and to prepare for the future."

Pamela Shockley-Zalabak, Chancellor, University of Colorado at Colorado Springs

"Advisors as Interaction Designers" in The Journal of the National Academic Advising Association, Vol. 32, No. 1, 2012



Ozarka College Provides Life-Changing Experiences Through Education

ADVISING OBJECTIVES: How should advising interactions affect students?

Kay Adkins

It is well-known that the advising task is more than just helping students register for appropriate classes. Numerous studies have shown that the advising relationship is very influential to student development and persistence.

But what are some specific areas in which advising can help advance a college student's development? In what areas can we be proactive about teaching students to 'fish' (as opposed to handing them a proverbial 'fish' at each advising interaction)?

Since 1979 the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) has worked to develop and promote standards "that foster student learning and development, quality assurance, and professional integrity" (White, 2006).

The CAS Standards and Guidelines for Academic Advising note several "domains" of student development with specific desired 'learning and development outcomes' advisors can target to make the most of every advising interaction. These standards provide solid principles that can help institutions/advisors define their desired outcomes of advising, assess their effectiveness, and develop an action plan to better progress toward the desired outcomes.

Per the 2008 revision of the CAS Learning and Development Outcomes, the six "**outcome domains**" and some **desired "learning outcome" examples** are:



DOMAIN	DESIRED LEARNING OUTCOME (EXAMPLES)
1. Knowledge acquisition and application	Outcome examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student "personalizes learning"• Student "knows how to access diverse sources of information"
2. Cognitive complexity	Outcome examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student "assesses assumptions and considers alternative perspectives"• Student "applies previously understood information, concepts and experiences to a new situation or setting"
3. Intrapersonal development	Outcome examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student "employs self-reflection to gain insight"• Student "accepts personal accountability"
4. Interpersonal competence	Outcome examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student "seeks help from others when needed"• Student "works cooperatively with others"
5. Humanitarian and Civic Engagement	Outcome examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student "seeks involvement with people different from oneself"• Student "participates in relevant governance systems"
6. Practical competence	Outcome examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student "sets and pursues individual goals"• Student "manages time effectively"

Awareness of these outcome standards can help advisors be more mindful of ways they can appropriately challenge advisees throughout their educational experience. For more information about CAS advising guidelines and the Learning and Development Outcomes, visit www.cas.edu.

Sources:

White, E.R. (2006). Using CAS Standards for Self-Assessment and Improvement. Retrieved from the NACADA Clearinghouse of Academic Advising Resources Web site: <http://nacada.ksu.edu/Clearinghouse/AdvisingIssues/CAS.htm>.

CAS Learning and Developmental Outcomes (2008). <http://www.cas.edu/index.php/learning-and-developmental-outcomes/>



Ozarka College Provides Life-Changing Experiences Through Education

IF you are new to advising, it's good to know. . .

The WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN and HOW's of Entering Advising Notes

WHAT are advising notes?

Places in Sonis/MyOzarka to keep records of pertinent information on students that can be viewed by faculty advisors and student services staff to keep everyone informed as to that student's **changes, challenges, intentions, circumstances**, etc.

HOW and WHERE to enter advising notes:

In MyOzarka:

- Access the student's file
- Click on the Advising tab
- Click on Advising Notes
- Click on New Note
- Type and submit a note in the text box

In SONIS:

- Access the student's file
- Click on Advising Notes
- Click on New Note
- Type and submit a note in the text box

(Notes entered in one system can be viewed in BOTH systems!)

WHAT should be entered into the advising notes?

- For new advisees, note any plans the student might have already (interests, career goals, schools to which they would like to transfer

Cont. "WHAT should be entered. . ."

- Degree plan changes
- Main points of any counsel you give a student regarding challenges he/she is facing (i.e. when you counsel an advisee about dropping a class)
- Changes in a student's circumstances that potentially can affect his or her performance (i.e. a prolonged illness)
- Exceptions you make to standard procedure such as registering a student based on an unofficial transcript or unofficial placement scores
- Most any information that could later be important to you as a student's advisor, or to future advisors, or to administration

WHO uses advising notes and WHEN:

- YOU-when you are about to meet with an advisee and need to refresh your memory on your previous meetings
- FINANCIAL AID- to make sure that a student's new semester course load is in compliance with their degree plan which qualifies them to receive aid
- OTHER ADVISORS-when advisees are re-assigned to another advisor because they are in a new degree program
- OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF- at any point that additional information about a student's history could be useful

(Source: Joanna Fulbright. PowerPoint presentation. Advising Answers: Tidbits, tips and tools for successful advising of Ozarka College Students)

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