

Academic Advising in their Language: Communicating with Today's Students

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Overview

Engagement with students "where they are" has become increasingly complex for educational professionals as language and preferred modes of communication evolve at an ever-increasing pace. Demands of constantly-changing communication technologies combine with challenges of working with students accustomed to instantaneous feedback. Advising professionals may struggle to keep up with the latest forms of textspeak used by their students in relation to academic performance, major exploration, and experiential learning.

Academic advisors serve a unique role in student retention, managing expectations, and advocacy. In this webinar, the presenters will consider the importance of building rapport with advisees so they feel comfortable sharing their concerns. Drawing on Social Construction of Reality theory, participants will be challenged to think about their personal advising practices to accommodate (or not) the way students choose to communicate in order to instill self-efficacy. Effective ways that advisors can assist students to view experiences as growth opportunities will be shared, and strategies to instill self-efficacy will be explored.

[Academic Advising Core Competencies](#) that will be addressed in this presentation include:

- C3 – Understanding of theory relevant to academic advising
- C4 – Understanding of academic advising approaches and strategies
- I7 – Knowledge of information technology applicable to relevant advising roles
- R2 – Ability to create rapport and build academic advising relationships
- R3 – Ability to communicate in an inclusive and respectful manner
- R4 – Ability to plan and conduct successful advising interactions
- R6 – Ability to facilitate problem solving, decision-making, meaning-making, planning, and goal setting

Post-Webinar Activity Suggestions (following pages)

How do you engage with textspeak and slang?

Use this scenario to help examine your own communication style regarding textspeak and slang. Most useful when done in a group to share-back and discuss how people respond differently!

Meena is a Freshman. You hear from an instructor that she has been skipping class. You send her an email to touch base and get this response:

Ys need some help! 🙄

Scared about grdes 😞

✔ apt Tues?

(sent from Meena's iPhone)

You decide to respond via your college's email-to-text service. Write out your response below including any abbreviations, emojis, or lack thereof.

Take a few minutes to share your response or reflect on your own. Note whether a response shows:

- Active use of slang/emoji (you use informal spelling or emojis in your response)
- Tacit acceptance of slang/emoji (you don't use it yourself but you also don't point it out)
- Rebuttal of slang/emoji (correcting the use of language in some way)

Then refer back to the list of sociological questions below (discussed in the webinar) to help examine your communication style and think about or discuss if you would make any changes:

- Are you using textspeak or slang intentionally or accidentally?
- What formal and informal messages are you sending?
- What identities are you performing?
- When or if any norms/guidelines conflict, which do you conform to?

And if you're at the stage of creating guidelines around this topic (or advocating to change existing policy), how do your choices above intersect with our **Academic Advising Core Competencies**? In particular, you may want to look at:

C3 – Understanding of theory relevant to academic advising

C4 – Understanding of academic advising approaches and strategies

I7 – Knowledge of information technology applicable to relevant advising roles

R2 – Ability to create report and build academic advising relationships

R3 – Ability to communicate in an inclusive and respectful manner

R4 – Ability to plan and conduct successful advising interactions

R6 – Ability to facilitate problem solving, decision-making, meaning-making, planning, and goal setting

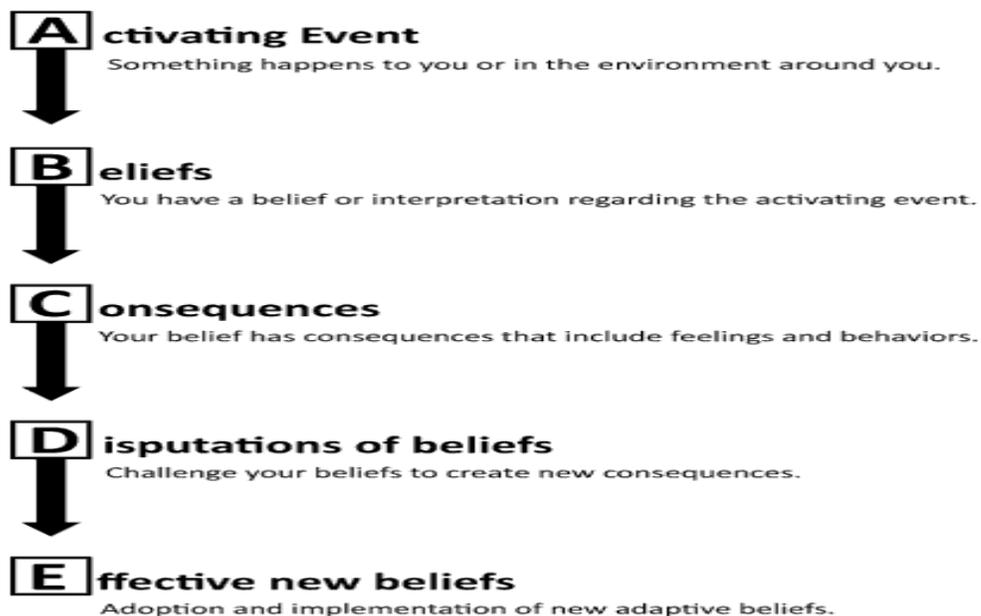
<http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Pillars/CoreCompetencies.aspx>

Utilize the ABC(DE) model to process through the following scenarios

- A = Activating Event** (Situation that occurred)
B = Beliefs (Thoughts regarding the situation)
C = Consequences (What happens as a result of A+B)
D = Disputations (Challenging irrational beliefs)
E = Effective New Beliefs (Implementation of new adaptive beliefs)

- Quinten is a junior majoring in Chemistry and has never earned a grade lower than a B. He just took an exam in his first 300-level Chemistry course and earned an F. Quinten thinks that, because he has never gotten such a low grade, he should change his major because this must mean he does not understand Chemistry.
- Chadwick is a sophomore who attends a university three hours away from his hometown. He is used to traveling home on weekends to visit his family and friends but can no longer afford to make the trip so frequently. This university is the closest university that offers the degree he would like to pursue, but he has been struggling with homesickness. He is worried he will either have to give up his dream or be unhappy for the next 2.5 years and is considering transferring or dropping out of college.
- Capri is a freshman who has a strong passion for music and has always wanted to pursue Music as a major. Capri's parents do not agree with this and want her to become a doctor. They have told her that if she does not pursue a medically-related degree, they will no longer fund her education. Capri has no interest in becoming a doctor but is worried that she will not be able to attend college without her parents' financial assistance and does not want to let them down.

ABC Model



TherapistAid.com © 2013

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Introduction



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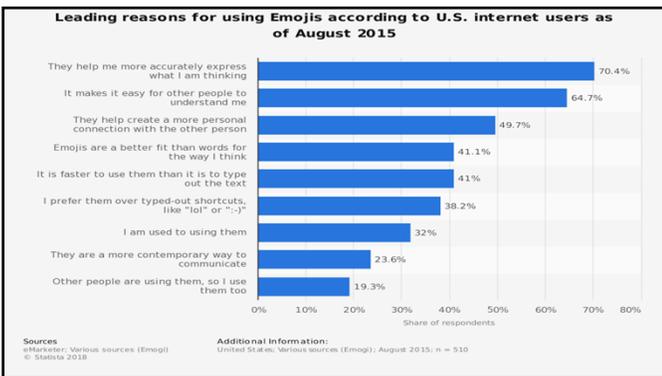


Social Construction of Reality

Our everyday actions and choices are influenced by our co-created and mutually reinforced cultural norms. Witt, J. (2016). SOC

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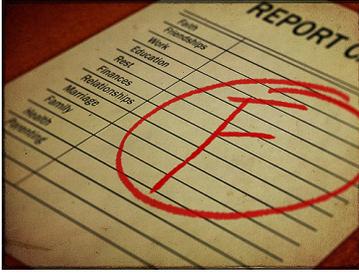


Photo courtesy of Chris Potter, Creative Commons



Typical Student Interaction with Academic Advisor

- Course schedule and questions regarding registration
- Academic performance
- Choice of major/potentially changing area of study
- Opportunities for experiential learning
 - Study Abroad
 - Internships/Co-ops
- Discussion of career search vs. graduate school
- Non-academic concerns impacting student experience



How Technology Impacts Advising Practices

- Students are used to technology that supplies instantaneous answers
- Sometimes answers are complex and/or need to be individualized



<https://www.securedgenetworks.com/blog/Technology-in-the-Classroom-Full-of-Choices>



How Technology Impacts Advising Practices

- Encourage students to make follow-up appointments
- In-person appointments (whether F2F or online) facilitate clarity
- Multiple conversations may be needed



Lasting Impact of Advisors

- Advisor interaction affects student retention
- Impacts other areas at the institution
- Helps students find their way
- Teaches student to become more self-sufficient
- Assists students in better understanding resources
- *Not just here for a class schedule!*





Lasting Impact of Advisors

- Assist students in building self-efficacy and identifying growth opportunities
- Students more likely to persist when surrounded by positive influences (supportive friends, family, faculty/staff)
- Encourage increased focus on self-care stress management
- Ensure that students leave feeling better and more confident

Advisors make a difference!



Counseling Skills

Active Listening

- Listening in a way that makes people feel understood
- Provide undivided attention
- Use appropriate body language and gestures
- Focus on what the student wants to discuss
- Use open-ended questions
- Reflect and summarize



Counseling Skills

Empathy

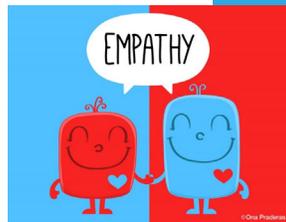
- Putting yourself in someone else's shoes
- Create a safe environment
- Appropriate Self-Disclosure
 - "I" statements
 - Refer only to your own experience
 - Be brief



Ahlefeldt, 2017



- Do not minimize feelings
- Avoid comparisons
- Focus on the student's reaction to the problem
- Avoid judgment and put aside your own viewpoint



Praderas, 2017

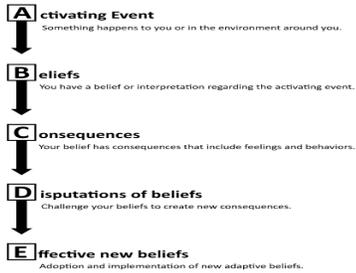


Counseling Skills

Positive Reframing

- Finding the good in every situation
- Identifying and disputing irrational thoughts
- Turning an experience into a growth opportunity
- Does not change the situation, but puts things in a healthier perspective

ABC Model



Positive Reframing Model

Communication Technologies



Constructing your Reality

Are you using textspeak or social media with students intentionally or accidentally?

What formal and informal messages are you sending?

What identities are you performing?

When norms conflict, which do you conform to?



Conclusion



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