A college degree is not a sign that one is a finished product but an indication a person is prepared for life.


Agenda
1. Science of Communication
   • Specific behaviors and nuances
2. Art of Communication
   • To elicit responses
3. Conversations we need to have with our students
   • How advising can be transformational
Transactional Model of Communication

Source
Feedback
Message
Receiver
Channel

Speaker (Source) must encode a message.

the content of what is said and how it is said.
Transactional Model of Communication

Source → Feedback → Message → Feedback → Channel → Receiver

Medium by which the messages shall be transmitted
- Can be visual, auditory, or both

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Transactional Model of Communication

Source → Feedback → Message → Feedback → Channel → Receiver

Listener must decode the message

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Transactional Model of Communication

Source → Feedback → Message → Feedback → Channel → Receiver

Verbal and nonverbal responses

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Three Codes of Communication

- **Language code** – anything that is spoken or written
- **Vocal code** (paralanguage) – the way we sound when we speak
- **Visual code** – what we look like when we speak
  - Nonverbal communication
  - Body language

Message – Meaning Mismatch

*How do you know that someone is being sarcastic?*

*How do you know that someone is kidding?*

Something in the voice or body language reveals the true meaning of what is being said.

Paralanguage

- **Volume** – loud or soft
- **Pitch** – high or low
- **Rate** – fast or slow
- **Pauses** – filled or unfilled
- **Emphasis** – combines the use of volume, pitch, inflection, rate, and pauses
Non-verbal Communication
(Body Language)

Facial Expressions and Eye Contact
• can be highly expressive
• heavily dependent on culture – no universal rules


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Non-verbal Communication
Gestures and Body Movements

• Emblems – exact verbal messages (i.e. thumbs up, in some cases expletives) – meaning will vary from culture to culture
• Illustrators – add to or clarify verbal meaning (i.e. using hands to count or indicate size)

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Non-verbal Communication
Gestures and Body Movements

• Regulators – control the flow of communication (i.e. pointing, showing the palm of the hand)
• Adaptors – habitual gestures in times of stress (i.e. rolling a pen, tapping fingers)

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Non-verbal Communication
Appearance
Says something about:
• who we are
• what we believe
• what our social status is (or what we think it to be)

Non-verbal Communication
Distance and Personal Space
• Varies from culture to culture
Physical Environment
• Can produce an approach/avoidance response

Non-verbal Communication
Time
Polychronic
• sees time as fluid
• whenever....
Monochronic
• sees time as fixed
• “on time”
• adheres to deadline
The Art of Communication

- Active Listening
- Reflection of Meaning
- Supportive Confrontation

Active Listening
Feedback:
- Paraphrasing – restating – can involve sentence stems
- Summarizing – key words
- Checking for accuracy – “check-out statements”

Active Listening
Nonverbal Attentiveness

SOLER:
- Squarely face the student
- maintain an Open posture
- try to Lean forward slightly
- be sure to make Eye Contact
- keep an overall Relaxed manner
Individuals have within themselves vast resources for self-understanding and for altering their self-concepts, basic attitudes, and self-directed behavior; these resources can be tapped if a definable climate of facilitative psychological attitudes can be provided.

- Carl Rogers (1980) A Way of Being

Reflection of Meaning and Feeling

Clarify the Student’s Needs

Questions:
• *What does this mean to you?*
• *What was the lesson in that experience?*
• *What have you always wanted to do? Why?*
• *Who is influential in your life?*

Supportive Confrontation

Techniques:
• Identify – discrepancies, incongruence
• Point it out – be descriptive and non-judgmental
• Evaluate – be mindful of tone, intonation, eye and body movement, expressions
• Reframe – help student see differently
Significant Conversations: Transformational Advising

Teaching is ... a process of working cooperatively with learners to help them change their understanding...

Learning is a change in one’s conceptions – a change in one’s understanding of something.

Paul Ramsden (2003) *Learning to Teach in Higher Education*

If Advising is Teaching

and Teaching is meant to transform and change the way students think and understand things,

then Advising is also meant to transform and change the way students think and understand

The advising session is meant to illicit change in our students. The way we communicate – the rapport we build – is meant to help students get to a place where they can better understand themselves and their education.
Breaking Bad News

**Bad news often threatens [a person’s] identity and challenges [his/her] sense of transpersonal meaning.**


Reframe / Transform

This is the moment when the advisor is critically needed.

The advisor can help the student find new meaning.

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We must never forget that we may also find meaning in life even when confronted with a hopeless situation, when facing a fate that cannot be changed. For what then matters is to bear witness to the uniquely human potential at its best, which is to transform a personal tragedy into a triumph, to turn one’s predicament into a human achievement.

Viktor Frankl (1946) *Man’s Search for Meaning*

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Advisors provide Environment to foster Change

HOWEVER,

• Students sometimes come into advising with only a marginal level of self-awareness
• Not all students are mentally ready for transformation

Illustrative Vignettes

Common theme
The student cannot get into the major because s/he has not been able to meet the criteria for admission to that major

Scenario 1 – “Easy”
• Student is aware of requirements and that she hasn’t met them
• In a “light state” of denial – hasn’t fully accepted situation
• Knows chance of getting want she wants is slim, but still hoping
Scenario 2 – “Medium”
• Student is more resistant to change
• Marginally aware of program requirements and his status in regards to them
• Level of denial stronger, but not completely unaware of situation

Scenario 3 – “Medium/Hard”
• Gives the illusion of comprehension and change, but not the reality
• Considerable resistance to change – looking for loopholes
• Back-peddles on agreements

Scenario 4 – “Difficult”
• Does not want to accept academic reality
• In complete denial - major chasm between “real self” and “ideal self”
• Not open to change
• May attempt to make advisor responsible for his failures
Each [person] is questioned by life; and [one] can only answer to life by answering for [one’s] own life; to life [you] can only respond by being responsible.

Viktor Frankl (1946) *Man’s Search for Meaning*

Review of Agenda

- Science and Art of Communication
  - the transactional model, the codes of meaning, paralanguage and nonverbal communication
  - active listening, reflection of meaning and feelings, and supportive confrontation
- How advising can be transformational
  - Advisors can assist students with reframing

Closing Thoughts

*If we really believe that advising is teaching, and that teaching, learning, or education is meant to change people, then we must accept that advising is transformational; it does involve having these significant conversations that can change the way a student sees himself and his education.*
Closing Thoughts

Suffering ceases to be suffering at the moment it finds a meaning, such as the meaning of a sacrifice.

Viktor Frankl (1946)  Man’s Search for Meaning

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