Ready, Set, Learn—Coaching Skills to Increase Readiness

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Agenda:

• What is college readiness?
• Why is it important to our students?
• What is student success coaching?
• Key coaching skills to address college readiness
  ▸ Creating a safe environment
  ▸ Active listening
  ▸ Powerful, open-ended questions

What is college readiness?

College ready students possess the content knowledge, strategies, skills, and techniques necessary to be successful in a post-secondary setting.
Four Keys to College Readiness

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Key Cognitive Strategies
- Formulate
- Strategize
- Research
- Hypothesize
- Identify
- Collect
- Interpret
- Analyze
- Evaluate
- Construct
- Organize
- Monitor
- Confirm

Key Content Knowledge
- Components of Learning
- Self-Reflection
- Self-Awareness
- Time Management
- Goal Setting
- Leadership
- Study Skills
- Critical Thinking
- Social and Personal Responsibility
- Self-Efficacy
- Resource Utilization
- Study Skills
- Time Management and Goal Setting

Key Learning Skills and Techniques
- Goal Setting
- Persistence
- Self-awareness
- Motivation
- Help-seeking
- Progress Monitoring
- Self-efficacy
- Learning Techniques
- Time Management
- Test Taking Skills
- Note Taking Skills
- Memorization/recall
- Strategic Reading
- Collaborative Learning
- Technology
- Aspirations
- Norms/Culture
- Procedural
- Institutional Choice
- Admissions Process
- Financial
- Tuition
- Financial Aid
- Cultural
- Post-secondary Norms
- Personal
- Self-advocacy in an Institutional Context

Key Transition Knowledge and Readiness
- Metacognitive Skills: All learning processes and behaviors involving any degree of reflection, learning-strategy selection, and intentional mental processing that can result in a student's improvement to learn.

Impact on our post-pandemic students
- Changes in learning behaviors
  - Missing assignments at higher rates.
  - Increased discomfort in classroom discussions and advocating for needs.
  - More dependency on technology.
- "Learning loss": increased knowledge gaps and reduced test scores.
- More loneliness and mental health needs.

Conley, David (2014). Education Policy Improvement Center. Portland, OR.
The top reasons that students drop out

- Financial challenges, 30%
- Motivation or life changes, 24%
- Mental health challenges, 18%
- Academic challenges, 11%
- Social issues, 8%
- Other

How America Completes College 2024, Sallie Mae. June 2023

What is Student Success Coaching?

- A blend of life & academic coaching.
- A partnership which focuses on students’ goals and challenges.
- A process that acknowledges the impact of disability and systemic barriers to access.
- A safe space to share challenges and work toward solutions.

Benefits of Coaching

- Increases sense of belonging on campus
- Provides support and validates readiness needs
- Improves resource identification and campus resource navigation
- Allows exploration of challenging concerns
- Develops student decision making
- Empowers the student to identify options towards success
Coaching can be applied to any college readiness needs

- Learning new academic skills
- Building better habits
- Meeting friends or finding a learning community
- Taking care of yourself (sleep, diet, exercise, self-care...)
- Remembering to do things (medication, laundry, homework, etc.)
- Navigating relationships
- Encouraging help-seeking behaviors
- Defining boundaries
- Advocating for needs
- Increasing confidence and self-worth

Coaching for Readiness Support

1. Identify the challenge
2. Define what success would look like
3. Build awareness around the situation
4. Expand options for moving forward
5. Choose an action and develop an accountability plan

Core Components of Student Success Coaching

- Cultivating trust and safety
- Supporting a student focused agenda
- Using active listening skills
- Asking powerful questions
- Creating awareness
Create a Safe Environment

- Set the foundation in your work together.
- Use preferred names and pronouns.
- Be mindful of the cultural context of each student.
- Show interest in them and seeing their strengths.
- Honor their life experience and the impact of their disability.
- Acknowledge that college can be challenging.

Use Listening Strategies to Assess Readiness

- Listen with intent.
- Show interest.
- Notice verbal and non-verbal cues.
- Paraphrase without changing the meaning or tone.
- Empathize and validate their experience.
- Avoid interrupting or judgement.

Good Questions Can Build Readiness

- Increase awareness.
- Generate ideas.
- Identify where a student is on a continuum.
- Encourage help-seeking behaviors.
- Provide back-up plans.
Improve your Questions

- Open-ended
- How/what questions
- Avoid using ‘why’
- Non-judgmental
- Simple and one at a time

Sample Questions to Build Readiness

- What is your motivation for the topic?
- What is the next step?
- How confident are you in your ability to move forward on this?
- What resources would support you to be more efficient or effective?
- What ways have you considered?
- How are you organizing your time for this?
- How can you gather new insights or ideas?
- On a continuum from novice to expert, where are you on the scale around this topic?

Create Awareness for Students

Offer thoughtful constructive feedback with the student’s permission. Permission confirms openness to receive the feedback.

Acknowledge the student’s goals, insights, actions and effort. Invite them to reflect on their accomplishments to help create self-awareness.

Help students shift their perspective towards a growth mindset.
“For many of our capable students, college will be the first time they experience challenges, disappointment, and, at times, failure. Coaching sessions provide opportunities for increased self-awareness, meeting the need for agency and accountability, and interrupting patterns of procrastination that lead to periods of predictable overwhelm.”

Mary Jo Cavanaugh, Vassar College
Director of Accessibility and Educational Opportunity

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From Transactional to Transformational Coaching in Disability Resources 2023

Q&A
Resources

- ADDitude Magazine - https://www.additudemag.com/
- Self Determination - https://www.beselfdetermined.com/