Try The Trend: Adding “Quick Coaching” Questions to Your Advising Toolbox

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One Question...

What’s one thing happening in your life right now that you are either excited, nervous, or proud about?
Claire Robinson (2015):

“Because ‘academic coaching’ or ‘success coaching’ is a relatively new concept on college campuses, little empirical evidence exists to support this role and differentiate it from other campus services such as academic advising, counseling, mentoring, and tutoring.”

Survey Says:

- Coaching is skill development
- Coaching is performance improvement
- Coaching is planning, questioning, and goal setting
- Coaching is navigation
- Coaching is individualized and ongoing support

IT'S NOT A COMPETITION, IT'S A DOORWAY

MARY OLIVER

PICTUREQUOTES.com
What is Coaching?
What do WE mean by “coaching”?

- Strengths based
- Focused on long term impacts as opposed to advice (which is intended to solve the immediate issue)
- Able to be integrated into other types of interactions
What do WE mean by “coaching”?

Coaching assumes:

◦ The student is the expert on their own strengths, weaknesses, and experiences.
◦ The student is resourceful and capable of examining their resources for solutions to problems
◦ The student is basically well; coaching is not a replacement for therapy
◦ The coach can lead coachees toward more complete understanding of their situation with skillfully posed questions, allowing them to progress toward their desired outcomes.
Coaching vs. Mentoring vs. Advising

MENTORING

*Mentor Guided*
- Two way conversation is the norm
- Advice may be a component
- Utilizes the experience of the mentor and others
- Guiding principle: leading by example

ADVISING

*Context Guided*
- Advisor often talks more
- Policy strongly influences the goals, discussion, and action steps
- Often focused on “right now” issues
- Guiding principle: empowerment

COACHING

*Student Guided*
- Student does most of the talking
- Student chooses the area of interest, coach’s role is to help them hone in
- Focus is long term impacts
- Guiding principle: agency
Coaching to the moment

Student clarity = Advisor efficiency
Hi Dean-

I wanted to check in with you and see how things are going for you this semester. When we last spoke, you were comfortable with your classes overall, and were utilizing tutoring in math and biology. It looks like the fall semester ultimately went well for you academically; how do you feel about it personally? Are you where you hoped to be at this point in your progress, and what areas do you still working on as a student? Let me know how you’re doing and if there’s anything I can do to support your continued progress.

From: Dean Winchester  
Sent: Monday, March 9, 2020 9:49 AM  
To: Mann, Nichole Angelique <nichjohn@iue.edu>  
Subject: RE: Checking in

Hi Nichole,

Last semester I think I did pretty well. And this semester overall has been going pretty well, as well. I am pretty comfortable in all my classes except for my microbiology class, my exam scores again are not where I would like them to be. But I started going to Dumbledore’s SI sessions before class and I’d feel like that is helping me, so I plan on continuing to go to the SI sessions. I feel proud of how far I have been able to come so far, at the moment I am working on trying to get my microbiology grade up to a B and the rest of my grades hopefully up to an A by the end of the semester. Areas I am still working on as a student is time management, but I think I have significantly improved from where I was earlier this year. Overall, I am doing well and look forward to the rest of the semester.

Thanks for checking in,

Dean Winchester
“Quick Coaching” is particularly useful when...

- You’re building rapport.
  - “What are you most looking forward to this semester?”

- The student is “stuck.”
  - “What’s your top priority in this moment?”

- Good-to-great conversations.
  - “What would take this situation from ‘yes’ to ‘YASSS’?”
More Than You Bargained For

- Powerful questions can, and often will, bring up things you didn’t expect.
- Be ready to refer.
  - Know campus and community resources for counseling, food insecurity, health care, housing issues, etc.
- Just because powerful questions bring something to the surface doesn’t make you responsible for fixing it!
  - Accept “big feelings” as part of the process, and acknowledge them without judgement.
- Your role is to help the student leverage the information that came up to facilitate their long term success.
Characteristics of Powerful Questions

- Rooted in genuine curiosity
- Open ended
- Intended to spark reflection
- Relevant to the student’s values
- Provoke student guided answers-no leading or menus
- Ultimately geared toward driving action
While she was at LifeBound, Maureen Breeze pioneered the use of the arc and the relationship of the powerful questions to Successful Intelligence.
Current State: The Situation As It Exists

- What do I need to know about you to understand who you are as a student?
- Which options are you seriously considering at this point?
- Which of these issues is currently using the most bandwidth in your brain right now?
- What function is this [behavior/attitude/person/situation] serving for you right now?
  - What is X doing for you?
- What have you already tried so far?
- If we asked Nice [Coachee] to step aside and invited Jerk [Coachee] to describe what was going on, what would they say?
Desired State:
What The Coachee Hopes Will Become

- What do you hope will change/stay the same?
- If all of the nurses/accountants/engineers/etc. were replaced by robots, what would you want to do instead?
- At the end of this semester, what do you hope your favorite instructor would say about you?
- What might surprise you when X happens?
- What outcome/option would be even better than [choice]?
- What if you DID know the answer?
Future State: What The Coachee Plans to Do Next

- What’s one thing that would help you move forward in this situation?
- What step seems possible for you right now?
- What would be a signal that you’re on the right track?
- How do you think [person coachee admires] might handle this situation?
- How soon does [step] need to happen for you to feel like things are on track?
- What could get in the way as you work toward this goal?
Coaching example: Emma
To Recap

- Coaching is a growing area of student success programming.
- Coaching questions can be used to enhance advising practice, even without taking on the role of coach.
- Powerful questions teach us more about our students’ perspectives and enable us to serve them more effectively and efficiently, with longer lasting impacts.
Thank You!!!

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