Teach Me How to D.O.U.G.I.E.

Teaching Soft Skills Through Academic Advising
Your Presenters

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What are soft skills?

Soft Skills are known as Common Skills, Core Skills, 21st Century Skills, Career Readiness, etc.

According to National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) “Career readiness is a foundation from which to demonstrate requisite core competencies that broadly prepare the college educated for success in the workplace and lifelong career management” (NACE, n.d.).
What are the top skills you are looking for in a CSU Graduate?

**DESIRED SKILLS**

- Technical skills/competencies
- Teachable/coachable
- Personal initiative/responsibility
- Critical thinking
- Problem-solving
- Effective interpersonal/communication skills
NEW COLLEGE GRADS LACK SOFT SKILLS, EMPLOYERS SAY

Employers want job candidates with “uniquely human” skills, but finding those candidates isn’t easy. Nearly 3 in 4 employers say they have a hard time finding graduates with the soft skills their companies need.

How would you describe the process of finding qualified applicants with CRITICAL-THINKING skills?
- Very or somewhat difficult: 64%
- Very or somewhat easy: 33%
- Don’t know: 3%

How would you describe the process of finding qualified applicants with COMMUNICATION skills?
- Very or somewhat difficult: 54%
- Very or somewhat easy: 43%
- Don’t know: 3%

How would you describe the process of finding qualified applicants with LISTENING skills?
- Very or somewhat difficult: 55%
- Very or somewhat easy: 42%
- Don’t know: 3%

How would you describe the process of finding qualified applicants with INTERPERSONAL skills?
- Very or somewhat difficult: 55%
- Very or somewhat easy: 42%
- Don’t know: 3%

Source: Cengage/Morning Consult, a 2018 survey of more than 650 employers and over 1,500 students.

Advising “is perhaps the only structured campus endeavor that can guarantee student sustained interaction with a caring and concerned adult who can help them shape a meaningful learning experience for themselves” (Hunter & White, 2004, p. 20). This will help them become successful both during and after their post-secondary educational experiences.
D.O.U.G.I.E. Method

Decision-making  Ownership  Utilizing Interpersonal Skills

Growth Mindset  Initiative  Effective Communication
Decision-Making
Decision-Making

**WHAT**

- The process of how people make choices among desirable or undesirable alternatives.

**WHY**

- “Every time the student needs to make a choice (of majors, of tracks within a major, of individual courses), the advisor has a teachable moment, and the excellent advisor seeks to help the students decide, in the context of his or her emerging understanding, the direction and goals as well as the logic of his or her education as a whole” (Lowenstein, 2005).

**How**

- Give student agency
- Listen to inner voice
- Turn off inner critic
- Open-ended dialogue
- Probing questions
- Find a safe space
- Personal expectations
- Take values into account
- Don’t be afraid to be creative
Cody schedules an appointment to discuss his Biology major. He is currently in the Pre-Med track, making good progress, and has a competitive GPA. During your appointment, he confides in you that he is unsure about his major and career goals. He isn't sure he wants to go to med school anymore. He wants to discuss options with you.

- Discuss Cody's personal objectives and goals for a career. What is it that he wants out of life (money, work/life balance, sense of purpose)? What are his expectations of a career?
- Remind him to listen to his inner voice & turn off his inner critic.
- Be creative! How can he decide if med school is for him? (coach him towards research/volunteering)
Ownership
Ownership

**WHAT**
- Taking control of decisions and actions
- Accepting responsibility

**WHY**
“When we teach students to become responsible advisees, we empower them to take ownership of their educational experiences and develop skills that are transferable to other dimensions of their lives” (Wallace, 2007).

**HOW**
- Ask for opinions
- Lay out the facts
- Brainstorm choices and alternatives
- Take a step back
Jordan emails you saying college is too hard, their professors don’t like them, and they want you to withdraw them from all of their classes. They are using federal financial aid and their parent’s military benefits. How can you help Jordan take ownership in this scenario?

- Ask probing questions to identify the source(s) of the problem and Jordan’s role in the circumstances.
- Discuss the facts (withdrawal deadlines, impact to financial aid/military benefits, GPA impact, etc.).
- Offer alternatives (academic resources, partial withdrawal, meeting with professors, support centers, etc.).
Utilizing Interpersonal Skills
Utilizing Interpersonal Skills

**WHAT**
- Interpreting social signals and cues in order to form an appropriate response
- Social intelligence

**WHY**
“Interpersonal skills are sometimes called employability skills. The word ‘employability’ is a tip-off about the importance of interpersonal skills: they’re so crucial that hiring managers really don’t want to hire candidates without them” (Doyle, 2020).

**HOW**
- Internships
- Volunteer opportunities
- Campus involvement
- Conflict resolution
- Active listening
- Assertiveness
- Empathy
PUT IT INTO ACTION

Rosalita is a first-gen freshman. After meeting with you a couple of times, you’ve noticed that she’s reserved and answers your questions primarily with “yes” and “no”. She wants to enroll in online classes next semester because she doesn’t feel like she fits in with her peers. How can you help Rosalita develop more interpersonal skills and gain confidence in interacting with others?

- Repeat Rosalita’s concerns back to her to ensure you are understanding correctly.
- Empathize - how can you relate to Rosalita?
- Help Rosalita articulate what she wants out of her college experience. How can she foster her personal growth?
- Encourage Rosalita to get involved - internships, volunteering, on-campus job, clubs, etc.
Growth Mindset
Growth Mindset

**WHAT**

- Mindsets are the sum of our attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions in relation to ourselves, others, and our environments.
- Fixed vs Growth mindset

**WHY**

- “The passion for stretching yourself and sticking to it, even (or especially) when it’s not going well, is the hallmark of the growth mindset. This is the mindset that allows people to thrive during some of the most challenging times in their lives” (Dweck, 2006).

**HOW**

- Positive reinforcement
- Holistic overview of the student
- Embracing/normalizing failure/setbacks
- Encouraging a “not yet” approach to learning
- Mindset GPS
  - Growth
  - Purpose
  - Social
PUT IT INTO ACTION

Ming is a Nursing major who comes to you complaining about her math course. During your conversation, you are worried about some of the statements she makes, such as “I’m so stupid! I made a 37 on the first quiz”, “I just can’t do math”, “I’m just so over this!”, and “I’m never going to be a nurse at this rate”. How do you encourage growth mindset?

- To combat the “stupid” mentality, discuss other classes/grades/successes.
- Normalize failures - all students have subjects which are more challenging. Share personal experiences.
- Take a “not yet” approach.
- Mindset GPS - Remind her of the bigger picture/purpose.
Initiative
Initiative

**WHAT**

- The ability to recognize and take on a task without having to be told what to do.

**WHY**

- "Employees who take initiative greatly enhance their chances for recognition, learning, advancement, pay raises, and bonuses - and have a more meaningful and exciting time at work" (Nelson, 1999).

**HOW**

- Power of the nudge
- Develop problem-solving skills
- Encourage growth & stepping out of comfort zone
Khamal is a rising junior who typically waits until the last minute to schedule his advising appointment and to register for classes. School starts next week, and he hasn’t registered. He has reached a point where he has finished all of his core classes and only needs major courses; however, all of the courses he needs are full. How do we help Khamal take initiative?

- Start with discussing how Khamal’s procrastination contributed to the problem.
- Help Khamal brainstorm solutions to the problem.
- Power of the nudge - Email Khamal after the appointment. Follow-up with Khamal the next day. Personal nudge at the beginning of next advising period. Small changes to his environment to assist in behavior changes.
Effective Communication
Effective Communication

**WHAT**

- Sending clear messages that can be accurately interpreted and easily received by others

**WHY**

“Effectively communicating ensures that you not only convey your message to someone but also let them know about your feelings and emotions. Whether it is amongst family members, friends, or office colleagues, effective communication helps individuals get through the tasks of life with ease” (*The importance of*, 2020).

**HOW**

- Ask for clarification - don’t make the leap for them
- Open-ended questions
- Power of the Pause
- Role-play
- Encourage introspection
- Encourage introspection
PUT IT INTO ACTION

You are forwarded the following email from the President’s administrative assistant.

FROM: johnnyboi7@hotmail.com
SUBJECT: URGENT!!!

My teacher says I’m in the wrong class.

- Ask Johnny(?) to provide more details - Full name? ID number? Which class? Why is it the wrong class?
- Empathize - this is stressful for the student.
- Open-ended questions - What outcome is he hoping for? Make him articulate what he’s seeking.
- Introspection - Why did he feel the need to escalate things so quickly? How could he have initially communicated more effectively to receive a more timely response/solution.
IT ALL FITS TOGETHER!
Advising is teaching.

Christopher Hunn defines a positive advisor role “as being honest, authentic, and transparent in your care for the student, while still asking the tough questions or challenging the student’s perceptions. When the advisor and student connect as unique individuals, great, constructive things can happen” (Wilcox, 2016).

- Encourage decision making
- Allow students to take ownership
- Exemplify utilization of interpersonal skills
- Foster a growth mindset
- Motivate students to take the initiative
- Demonstrate effective communication

Students will take cues from you! In order to help them build soft skills, we must teach them through doing, showing concern, and a holistic approach.
REFERENCES

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THANKS!

QUESTIONS?

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