

A Developmental Academic Advising Model

...A developmental academic advising model presumes that the advisor does not function in a prescriptive role, rather, she or he "serves as a facilitator of communication, a coordinator of learning experiences through course and career planning and academic progress review, and an agent of referral to other campus agencies as necessary (Gordon, 1988, p. 139)." In order to serve (in these roles)..., an advisor must enter into a partnership with his/her advisee and go beyond ensuring that the student is choosing coursework that is directly applicable to his/her major.

In developing his model of advising, Terry O'Banion (1972) suggested that developmental academic advising is composed of sequential tasks. These tasks are:

1. The exploration of life goals.
2. The exploration of vocational/career goals.
3. The choice of program/major.
4. The choice of courses.
5. The scheduling of courses.

O'Banion (1972) contends that many advisors begin the advising process with course selection and that often this happens because a student has already selected a major/program of study to pursue. It is presumed that a student has already gone through some systematic decision-making process and that, because of this, the focus of advising is appropriately on the course selection process. However, according to O'Banion (1972), the information we have about major selection has found that few students have actually engaged in any sort of systematic decision-making process to select a major. Consequently, the advisor's focus on course selection may, in fact, be a premature focus. If academic advising is viewed as a process with the outcome being the development of an educational and career plan for the student, then the primary focus moves away from merely course registration and toward helping a student evaluate and explore personal and professional goals.

Noel and Levitz (1989) have contributed significantly to our understanding of developmental academic advising by operationalizing O'Banion's model for advisors. They have identified key knowledge and skill areas for advisors within each of O'Banion's sequential tasks. These areas are listed below along with the associated sequential task.

1. **Exploring Life Goals**
 - o Know students' characteristics and development
 - o Understand decision-making process
 - o Know principles of psychology and sociology
 - o Possess skill in counseling techniques
 - o Appreciate individual differences
 - o Believe in the worth and dignity of all people
 - o Believe that all people have potential

2. **Exploring Career Goals**
 - Know vocational fields
 - Possess skill in test interpretation
 - Understand the changing nature of work in society
 - Accept all fields of work as worthy and dignified
3. **Choosing Programs**
 - Know programs available in the college
 - Know requirements of programs (special entrance requirements, fees, time commitments, etc.)
 - Know university requirements for transfer programs
 - Know how others have performed in the program
 - Know the success of program graduates
4. **Selecting Courses**
 - Know available courses
 - Know special information about courses (prerequisites, etc.)
 - Know rules and regulations of the college
 - Know honors and developmental courses
 - Know instructors and their teaching styles
 - Know course content
 - Know advisee's demonstrated abilities
5. **Scheduling Courses**
 - Know course schedule
 - Know all registration procedures
 - Know advisee's work and commuting schedule

Source: Noel, And Levitz, R. (1989). Managing retention through early intervention. Iowa: Noel Levitz Centers for Institutional Effectiveness and Innovation, Inc. p. 20.

Realistically, it is impossible for an advisor, particularly a faculty advisor, to have the time to become proficient in all of the areas listed by Noel and Levitz. However, a developmental academic advising model places as much emphasis upon effective referral skills as it does upon possessing specific knowledge and skills. Knowing where to refer a student and then facilitating the referral process is often the best assistance an advisor can provide.

From the University of Southern Maine:
http://www.usm.maine.edu/advising/hand_p7.htm