## Reframing Struggle: Advising First-Year Students through a College-Readiness Approach

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#### Agenda:

- First-Year Challenges
- College and Career Readiness
- Ways to Respond
- Practice

## **First-Year Challenges**



High School	College
Parental support	Freedom
Explicit assignments and consequences	Student self-schedules
Smaller assignments	Larger, less clearly defined projects
Daily reminders	Syllabus
Frequent contact with teachers	Faculty office hours
Rules	Choices

#### Academics and...

- Waking up
- Getting along with roommates
- Making friends
- Balancing romantic relationships
- Managing stress
- Financial management

The impromptu frisbee game.....on the way to class.

- Going to bed
- Eating well
- Medication needs
- Laundry

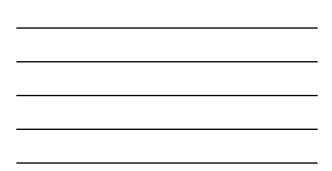
#### • Work schedules Cleaning

## **College and Career Readiness**

#### **Career and College Readiness**

A career- and college-ready student possesses the content knowledge, strategies, skills, and techniques necessary to be successful in the post-secondary setting.

	KEY CONTENT KNOWLEDGE	KEY LEARNING SKILLS & TECHNIQUES	KEY TRANSITION KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS	
Think	Know	Act	Go	
Problem Formulation Hypothesize Strategize	Structure of Knowledge Key Terms and Terminology Factual Information Linking Ideas	Ownership of Learning Goal Setting Persistence Self-awareness	Contextual Aspirations Norms/Culture	
Research Identify Collect	Organizing Concepts Attitudes Toward Learning Content	Motivation Help-seeking Progress Monitoring Self-efficacy	Procedural Institution Choice Admission Process	
Interpretation Analyze Evaluate	Challenge Level Value Attribution	Learning Techniques Time Management Test Taking Skills	Financial Tuition Financial Aid	
Communication Organize Construct	Technical Knowledge & Skills	Note Taking Skills Memorization/recall Strategic Reading Collaborative Learning	Cultural Postsecondary Norms	
Precision & Accuracy Monitor Confirm	Specific College and Career Readiness Standards	Technology	Personal Self-advocacy and Institutional Context	
				Conley, 20



#### Adaptability Learning Techniques Career Awareness Problem Solving Collaboration Resource Utilization Metacognitive Skills Communication Self-Awareness All learning processes and Critical Thinking Self-Care behaviors involving any degree of Goal Setting Self-Control reflection, learning strategy Self-Efficacy Initiative selection, and intentional mental Social and Personal processing that can result in a Involvement Responsibility student's improved ability to Intellectual Curiosity Study Skills learn. Leadership Time Management

"By elevating non-cognitive information to an equal position relative to content knowledge, we may find the missing link to the achievement gap more rapidly and effectively for students who possess the cognitive ability to improve their capacity to learn, but are limited by a lack of effective learning strategies and the appropriate mindset."

> - Dr. David Conley, Rethinking the Notion of Non-Cognitive

What could a student say that might signal a challenge in these metacognitive skill areas?

- Time management or goal setting
- Involvement on campus
- Self-care
- Resource utilization

## Ways to Respond

#### Name Transitional Challenges

Students might not realize that certain challenges are temporary and commonly experienced when transitioning to college. Without that context, they might interpret challenges as permanent, personal, and indicating lack of belonging.

#### How you can help:

- Be knowledgeable about common experiences within college transition
- Point out when challenges may be related to college transition
- Encourage patience and recognition of growth and learning

Examples of Naming Transitional Challenges

- "A lot of students find the first six weeks of the semester especially hard."
- "It can be easy to forget that you're not just new to college classes but also to a whole set of life skills that can affect everything."
- "Don't worry about not recognizing that term; colleges are famous for their use of jargon, and it can take time to learn it."

#### **Encourage Growth Mindset**

Struggles can come from fear that current challenges cannot be overcome since they are caused by unchangeable limitations of the student's capabilities; i.e., fixed mindset.

How you can help:

- Remind students that they are here because they believe they can learn
- Educate students about fixed and growth mindsets, neuroplasticity
  Ask leading questions to encourage growth mindset thinking

 "What's something you can do now that took a lot of work to learn?"

Examples of Encouraging Growth Mindset

- "I know it can be discouraging when something feels so hard at first.
   Sometimes learning requires a lot of effort and practice, but those are things that are in your control."
- "What have you tried that hasn't helped? What might you try next?"
- "If your classes feel too easy, maybe extra challenges could help you get to the next level. Have you talked with your professor about...?"

#### Normalize Help-Seeking Behavior

Some students resist campus support resources that could be useful. They may think their problems are not serious enough, that needing support reveals deficiency, or they may fear vulnerability and judgment.

#### How you can help:

- Avoid correlating use of services with personal value, identity, or potential
- Describe use of resources as smart, common sense, and conscientious
- Note how widespread and helpful resource use truly is

Examples of Normalizing Help-Seeking Behavior

- "A lot of my students have found that tutoring helped them better understand that subject."
- "You're here to gain knowledge, so take every opportunity to learn as fully as you can. It's always possible to improve."
- "Don't feel like you have to wait for things to get bad before seeking help; sometimes making small adjustments early can help avoid problems altogether."

#### **Quick Summary**

When we notice academic struggle in areas such as time management, goal setting, involvement on campus, self-care, or resource utilization, let's consider that these struggles might be symptoms of a larger transitional challenge.

We can help students reframe their struggle and regain control and confidence through...

- Naming transitional challenges
- Encouraging growth mindsetNormalizing help-seeking behavior

## **Let's Practice**

# In small groups, practice responding to the challenge signals we generated earlier with these reframing techniques:

- Name transitional challenges
- Encourage growth mindset
- Normalize help-seeking behavior

## Using developmental advising to address student transitional challenges

- What are the challenges?
- Discuss goals, options, and opportunities
- Lead with strengths
- Consider limiting beliefs
- Create an action plan for change
- Implement a system for accountability

### Q&A

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