

Learner-Centered Academic Advisement

Dr. Emily Patterson Harris
Interim Dean & Associate Professor
School of Education & Behavioral Sciences
Langston University
P.O. Box 1500
Sammy Davis Jr. Drive
Langston, OK 73050
patterson.harris@okstate.edu

Dr. Orlenthea McGowan
Professor & Project Director
Department of Education and Professional Programs
Langston University- Tulsa Campus
914 North Greenwood Ave.
Tulsa, OK 74106
osmcgowan@langston.edu

Dr. John Sassin, CRC
Assistant Professor & Coordinator Rehabilitation Services
Department of Rehabilitation Services
Langston University-Tulsa Campus
914 North Greenwood Ave.
Tulsa, OK 74106
jsassin@langston.edu

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Introduction

“Great advising facilitates the learning process. Through self-reflection and synthesis the advisor is connecting the student’s thoughts and words to broader ideas, possibilities and options.” By Omar Ramirez

According to Hemwall & Trachte (1999) and Lowenstein (2005), one of the more unique and trending perspectives to transformative academic advising is the concept of using advising as a method of teaching and learning (learner-centered teaching). Commonly, faculty in higher education resist accepting learner-centered teaching strategies because they did not experience these pedagogies as a student (Eberlein, Kampmeier, Minderhout, Moog, Platt, Varma-Nelson, & White, 2008). Yet, evidence shows that students learn more by actively participating in their learning environment. Students reported higher levels of engagement in college courses when professors enacted active learning, collaborative learning, experiential learning, higher-order thinking activities, interacted with students, challenged students academically, and valued enriching educational experiences (Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005).

Being a facilitator of the learning process, using advising as a teaching process places the advisor in the role of a facilitator for the student in guiding the student in understanding their selected major, degree plan and future career options. Furthermore, Colleen Rose (2020) Student Services Coordinator and Recruitment Specialist at Indiana University Bloomington stated that, “Advising that only provides students with the opportunity to select classes misses a critical opportunity to connect students to a broad and deep understanding of their chosen discipline (including all the knowledge necessary to do it well and the purpose of earning a higher degree).”

The literature also reaffirms the goals of promoting and enhancing a growth mindset. Many factors in the university environment contribute to the development of the above, including curriculum, faculty engagement, physical environment, and access to resources.

Presentation Elements

According to Rose (2020), academic advising can glean much from learning theory and the scholarship of teaching and learning to inform effective advising-as-teaching practice with students. Therefore, this innovative presentation will:

- Provide an overview of principles of learner-centered academic advisement. These principles set the stage for discussion of the delivery of degree requirements to the student-learner.
- Review if the typical university degree plan themselves foster passivity
- Review a sample degree plans and academic maps

- Examine some LCT approaches incorporating advisement in the teaching and learning process: though the use of Backward Design, Flipping the classroom, Scaffolding Strategies, and Authentic/transparent assignments
- Review the difference between a passive degree-plan and an active degree-plan
- Review *Complete College America* - which recommends highly structured academic maps to enhance retention and graduation rates and
- Will address strategies on how to combine the need to communicate accurate information and encourage the student-learner as a proactive participant in the transformation of that information into a degree

Presentation Structure and Expected Outcomes

This profession presentation session will start with short introduction by the session presenters followed by the presentations from each of the faculty members, a group activity and participant dialog. The presentation structure will guide participants through a review of Learner-Centered academic advisement and provide tips and tools to improve the (teaching and learning) advisement process. The presentation will also guide participants through teaching approaches that can easily be transferred to advising for most student populations in a variety of academic settings. Some of these LCT approaches will include:

- Looking at Backward Design
- Flipping the classroom
- Scaffolding strategies &
- Authentic/transparent assignments

Future Plans

The goal is to enhance current degree plans in the School of Education and Behavioral Sciences and assist participants in enhancing their university teaching and learning/academic advising (with clear structure and a roadmap which the student completes in consultation with their advisor to engage the student as a more active participant).

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