

Academic Coaching:

Facilitating learning through active listening, powerful questioning & reflective thinking

Glenville State University, September 2025

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NSF INCLUDES Alliance:

EXPANDING THE FIRST2 STEM SUCCESS NETWORK

Award Number: HRD-1834595; High Rocks Educational Corporation

This workshop is supported by the U.S. National Science Foundation under Award Number 2424568; WVU Tech, Fairmont State University, Glenville State University, First2 Network, High Rocks





AGENDA

Friday

- Workshop 1 – 5 (break 3 – 3:15)
- Dinner 5:30 - 6
- Keynote (The Little Theatre) 6 - 7
- Fun Activity 7 - 8

Saturday

- Breakfast 8 - 9
- Workshop 9 – 12
- Lunch

WHAT WE'LL DISCUSS

- **Key coaching skills**

Active listening

Learning autonomy/goal setting/action plan

Powerful questioning strategies

Setting expectations/follow up/accountability

Teaching Metacognition development

- **Discuss the concept, role and benefit of academic coaching on your campus**
- **Demonstrate behavior based learning - asking students questions that promote agency instead of solving the same challenges over and over**
- **Consider the concept of “consistency of care” - how academic coaching can be used across offices/departments/roles with a common goal of driving behavior based learning**
- **Identify coaching & metacognition as a transferable skill**



GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Participant Introductions and Reflection (part one)

Groups of three, choose a prompt below

- **What is one interesting skill or ‘superpower’ you have, or something that most people may not know about you?**
- **What is one aspiration you have for this school year?**
- **What is one thing on your bucket list?**



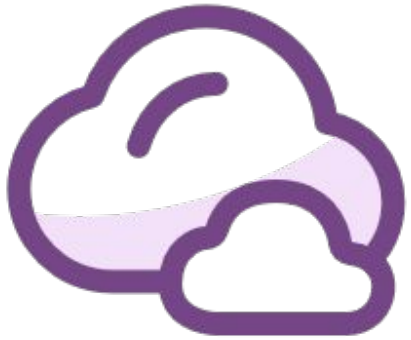
GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Participant Introductions and Reflection

(part two)

Reflection: Metacognition about active listening experiences; 10 minute to discuss, 5 minutes to report out on one of the following (Each group reports out one or two takeaways):

- **One or two ways that gave you the feeling that you were really being listened to**
 - **One or two ways that you as a listener tried to actively focus on your group mates' responses**
 - **Were there times as a listener that you started to feel distracted, and in what ways?**
 - **What, other than being distracted, are other things that sometimes get in the way of us being active listeners?**
- 



What does Academic Coaching mean to you?



Definition of Academic Coaching

According to the book “Self-Regulated Learning – Insights and Innovations” (Mistretta, 2025), one definition of Academic Coaching is...

- A specialized and **strategic support system** that can enhance **self-awareness** and promote **learning autonomy** through the use of **powerful questioning** and **active listening**.
- Academic Coaching facilitates an **equal-power, collaborative and student lead** dialog that **empowers** students to **take ownership of learning** and extends beyond traditional advising, mentoring and tutoring support.
- Students engage in a **reflective process** during coaching to address personal and educational challenges and **define short and long term goals and plans based on past success, new ideas and institutional support**.



PURPOSE – What's this all about?

The coaching session has multiple purposes:

- Introduce the coaching concept, purpose and **expectations of coach and student**
- **Learn about the student's** background, prior learning experiences, prior successes, interests, and concerns about college (Schreiner, 2018)
- Assist students as they discover skills they already possess and begin to **think critically** about ways they can use those skills to accomplish a task or goal.
- Help students **identify goals** that are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic & Timely) and that uncover their intrinsic **motivation** for success
- Encourage continued **goal setting** to establish **behaviors** that serve and support students as they **build successful academic habits**



ADVISOR OR COACH?

ADVISOR

- Academic Advisors: focus on **degree planning, coursework,** and **academic policies** required to complete their degree for their chosen career path or other educational goals

COACH

- Coaches: focus on the **behaviors and habits** that contribute to academic success and **provide information** to students regarding on- and off-campus resources

NACADA, September 2024

COACHING OUTCOMES



Students will be able to:

- **Identify goal** for a given situation
- **Build awareness** of self motivation and metacognition
- **Discover options** – Knowing your goal and “how you think about your thinking”, what’s next?
- **Develop a plan** – short and long term goals with the purpose of driving behavior change to arrive at a solution



Insert recording

What to take notice of:

1. asking powerful questions
2. student thinking about next steps and other goals they might have
3. making a plan



DEMONSTRATION REVIEW

Question: How did student responses become self-action centered as a result of the type of questions that were asked?

- we are looking for a shift in our coachee's awareness of responsibility to solve problems themselves, followed by goal setting (small, incremental goals, might not happen at first meeting)

WHEN IS COACHING A GOOD TOOL?



New student, or
new student to
you – Icebreaker,
building alliances



Resistant student –
Investigation/fact-finding



To discover a
student's level of
engagement and
motivation



Competing issues –
family,
transportation,
work, housing, etc.



You may need to
refer out to
another
office/offices



GROUP DISCUSSION

What are other topics, scenarios, situations that could benefit from coaching?



GROUP DISCUSSION

Discuss in small groups for 5 minutes, facilitators please share out

How can you use coaching with these students? What topics might they benefit from coaching on?

First Gen

Student who has had accommodations

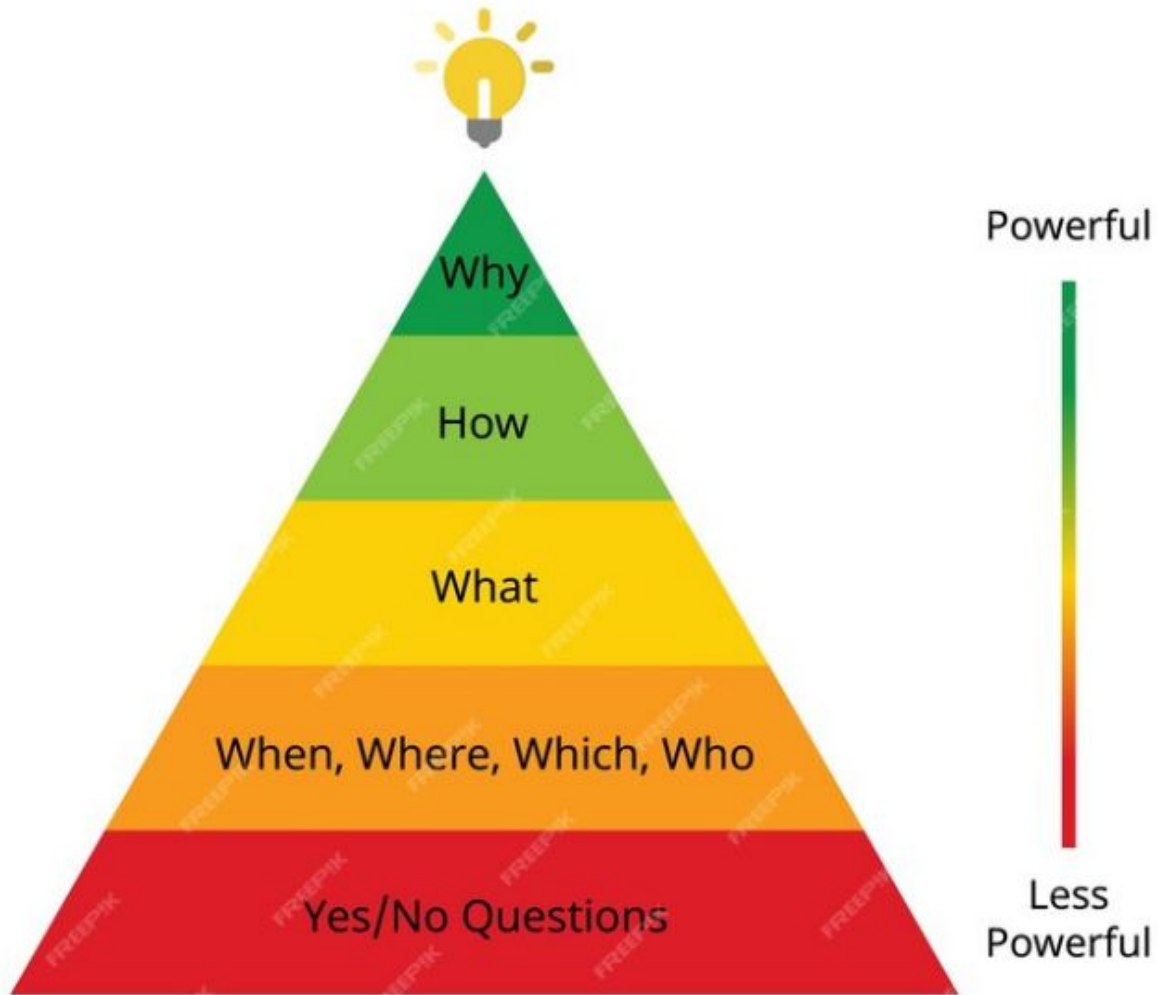
Non-Traditional

Low GPA

Overwhelmed

Commuter

Procrastinator



WHAT MAKES A QUESTION POWERFUL?

- Open ended
- Challenges thought or shifts student perspective
- Provides clarity or helps to make a decision
- Makes connections, an “aha!” moment

LifeBound, 2018



- Let them talk
- Awkward silence is ok
- Be curious about the fellow human in front of you

HOW TO ASK POWERFUL QUESTIONS

**ADVISING, MENTORING & COACHING WORK TOGETHER
TO IMPACT PERSISTENCE & RETENTION RATES**

**CONSISTENCY
OF
CARE**





Student Leaders - Also campus experts
-Excellent with “inside information” that others don’t have
-First degree help - Student prefer talking with other students
-Are the Advisor, Staff and Faculty best resource

Staff & Administrators - An important piece to the idea of “consistency of care”. Responsible for campus culture.

Coaches – Holistic and goal oriented process that helps students discover their strengths and opportunities for growth changing behaviors to develop habits

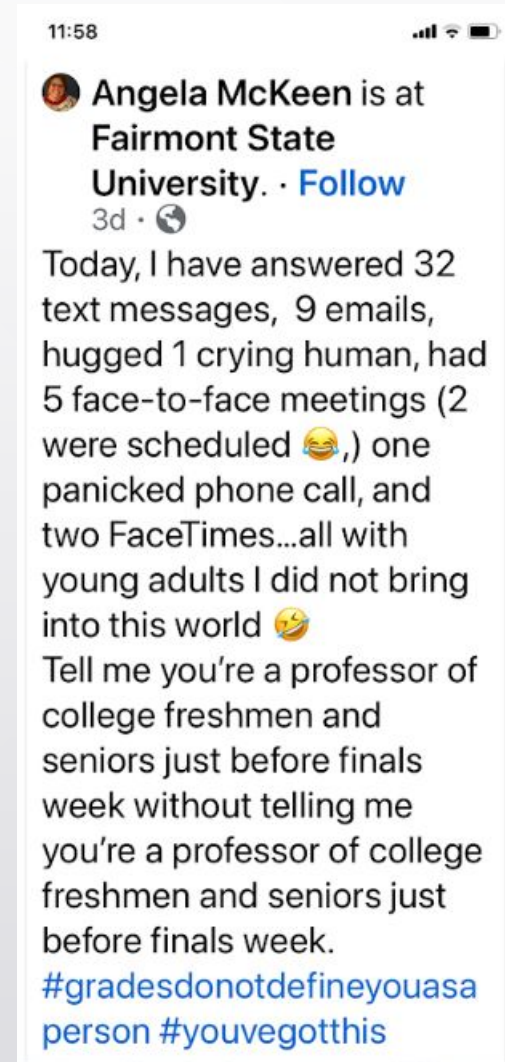
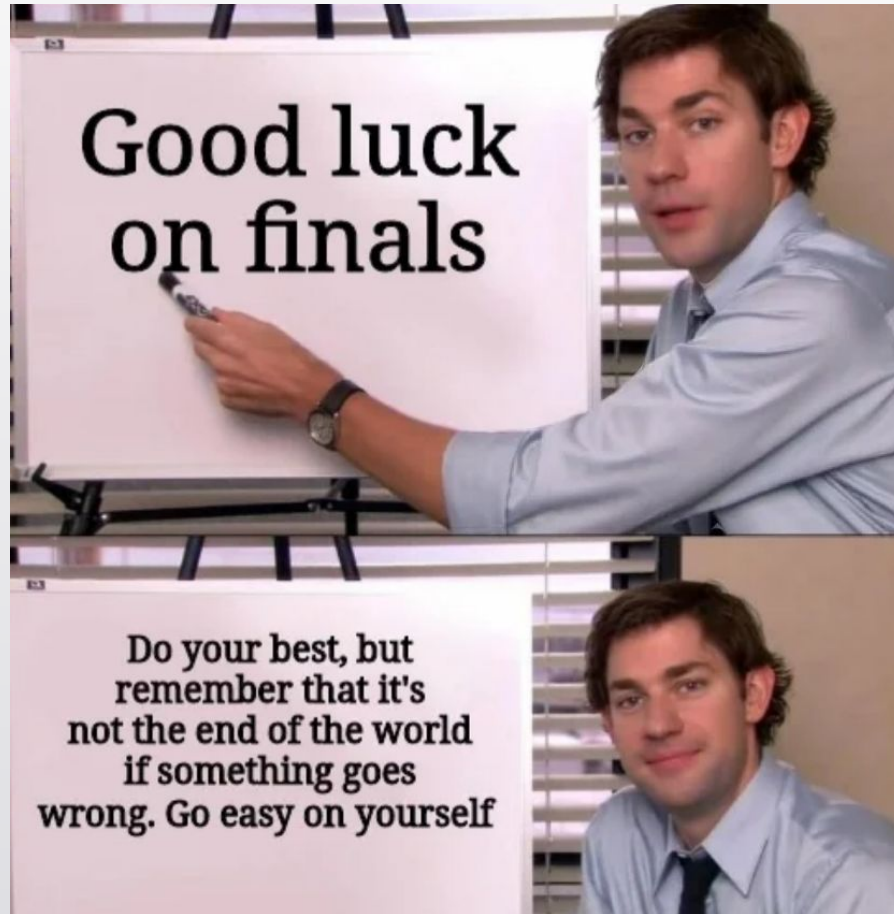
Advisors – Campus specialists in policy & program requirements, procedures & resources

- Use various advising approaches to work with students **to provide a specific solution** as appropriate (examples: developmental, appreciative, prescriptive)

Faculty – Major and program experts. Leaders in research, Industry specialists, mentors

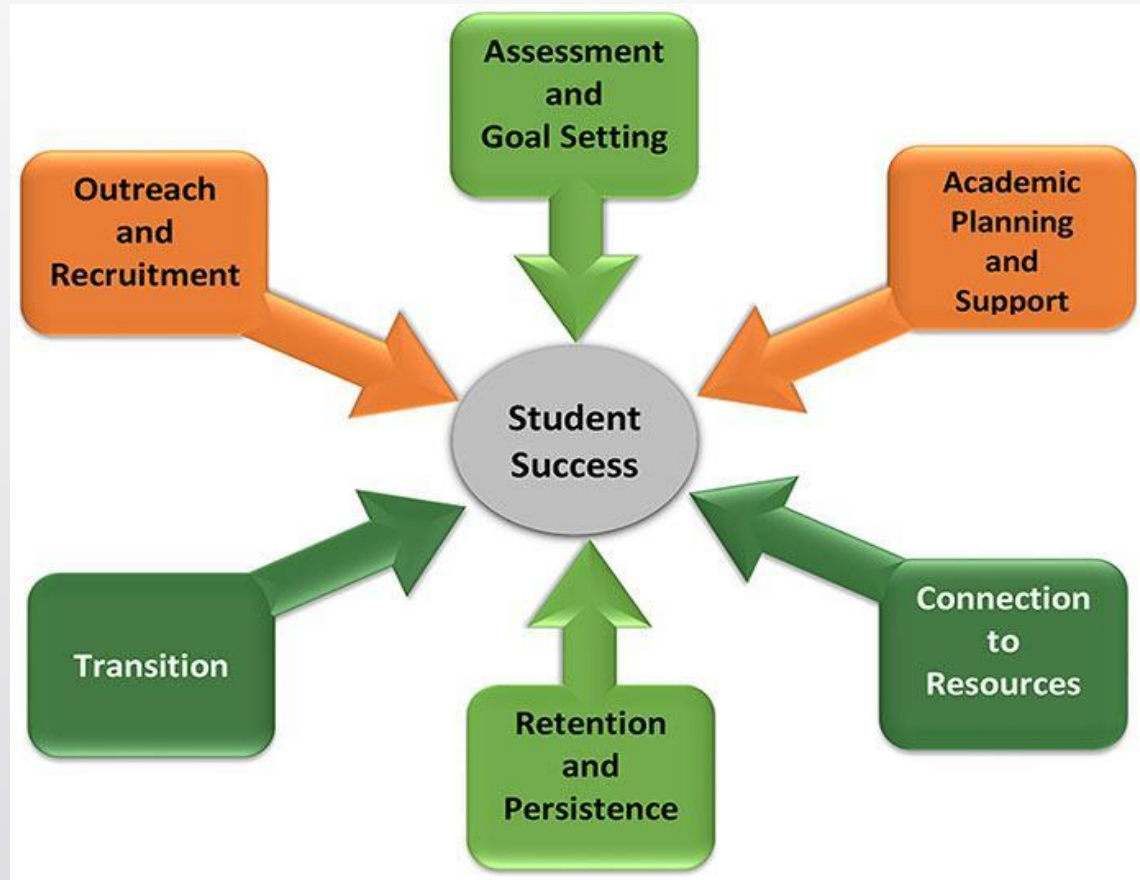
- Can be **both solution and goal** oriented – Goal- internship or research to get into grad school

KICKING THE TIRES



Courtesy Prof. Angela Flood

RETENTION & PERSISTENCE





RETENTION & PERSISTENCE

(coaching is transferable)

Several studies have suggested that persistence and retention are best improved when students have a sense of belonging, or 'fit', and when they feel they have a support system in place.

But how do we know if we are meeting them 'where they are' unless they ask for help?

A key to persistence and resilience is to teach asking for help as a skill set.

1. Not your fault - no shame, no blame for where you are/what your problem is
2. Is your responsibility - So let's brainstorm some options together.
3. You can't do it alone - Humans need community to thrive. You have a caring community on campus
4. Only you can do it - Let's think about ways you've overcome a challenge in the past, then make a plan for your current situation.



IN A NUTSHELL

- Can be used in conjunction with all services/offices and roles
- Use powerful, open-ended questions to develop goal, skills, action plan
- Focus on behavior change, goal setting and accountability
- Share information(as appropriate)-consistency of care
- Do what you can
- Goal: To have a 'culture of care' on campus

References

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REVIEW

- Review what we are looking for (questions, etc)
- Thoughts? Ideas?

insert Lifebound recording?



Team role play - Asking Powerful Questions

Scenarios -

1. New freshman student who is having trouble fitting in on campus
2. Student who is worried about passing a class after receiving a poor mid-term grade
3. Student who is having difficulty deciding on a major

POWERFUL COACHING QUESTIONS

The coaching session has multiple purposes:

Initial meeting/introduction

- Introduce the coaching concept, purpose and expectations of coach and student
- Introduce SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic & Timely)
- Learn about the student's background, prior learning experiences, prior successes, interests, and concerns about college (Schreiner, 2018)
- Assist students as they discover skills they already possess and begin to think critically about ways they can use those skills to accomplish a task or goal.
- Help students identify goals that are SMART and that uncover their intrinsic motivation for success
- Encourage continued goal setting to establish habits that serve and support students as they build successful academic behaviors

Key Words: Skill, task, goal, behavior, habit

The questions below are designed to learn about your student and to encourage critical thinking. Some are borrowed from other sources (cited below).

Sample Questions

- What would you like to focus on for our conversation? Is there something specific you'd like to discuss?
- What's the current situation?
- What would you like to take away from our conversation? What information would you like to leave our meeting with?
- What motivated you to go to college, why do you think it is important to get a college degree?
- Why did you come to XYZ University?
- What does your family think of your decision to attend college here?
- Why did you choose your major? What subjects do you enjoy studying the most?

- ☐ What kind of classes did you enjoy the most in high school?
- ☐ From what you've learned so far, is your major what you thought it would be? Are your classes what you expected to be like?
- ☐ What do you see yourself doing with your degree? What is your dream job? Do you know anyone who works in that field?
- ☐ Have you had a chance to check out any student organizations or club sports on campus?
- ☐ Are you a student athlete?
- ☐ Are you in the Honors program? (I will ask if I know they registered for the program)
- ☐ Do you work on or off campus?
- ☐ Do you live on campus, off campus or commute?

Questions to encourage further conversation

- ☐ How are you feeling about the semester? Your classes?
- ☐ Does anything seem confusing?
- ☐ Have you had any quizzes, assignments or tests yet? Are you able to see assignment/test/quiz grades for your classes?
- ☐ Have you been able to get to all of your classes on time? Are any classes virtual or are they all in person?
- ☐ Have you been able to access your LMS (Blackboard, e-Campus, Brightspace, etc.)?
- ☐ Why don't we look at your class grades together?
- ☐ Do you have questions about any other offices on campus or have you received any emails you don't understand? (Students tend to ignore emails about their bills, housing, accommodations their family might've set-up for them, or a myriad of other topics, asking them if they have questions about email can be helpful. Usually, directions to an office is all that is required of you).

Grade/course specific questions

The goal for these questions is to help your student consider time management, study habits, interest in courses, asking for help, and utilizing campus resources.

- ☐ Are the grades you have the grades you expected to get?

- ☐ In relation to your grades and how you prepare for tests and assignments, what has worked well for you in the past?
- ☐ What are some things you think you could do to prepare for exams? Assignments?
- ☐ What else could you do?
- ☐ Have you found a place to study where you can concentrate?
- ☐ How are you used to studying? Have you found that the way you studied in high school may not be as helpful in college?
- ☐ Have you created any type of plan to help you study/organize better?
- ☐ What are you currently doing to help you manage your time?
- ☐ Has the transition from the structure of High School to the freedom of college been a challenge?
I like to talk about the ways they differ to help them consider the many differences and how they are expected to be responsible for their time management with little training.
- ☐ When you received your grades for ____, what did you think or feel? Why do you think you felt that way?

Questions that ask about skills, goals and motivation

- ☐ What's getting in the way of your progress?
- ☐ When you think about ____ (how you manage your time, how you are studying, how you prepare for class) what ideas do you have?
- ☐ What are some things you could consider doing differently?
- ☐ Could you change anything about how you structure your day?
- ☐ What campus resources have you used, or thought about using to help you reach your goal of ____?
- ☐ When have you been successful in a similar situation in the past that required you to balance competing activities or needs?
- ☐ What is within your control?
- ☐ What's the cost of not taking action? What's the benefit of taking action?

Questions that are goal or task specific

- ☐ What is your desired outcome or goal?
- ☐ What's your biggest obstacle to achieving your goal?

- What is your plan?
- When will you start?
- What is a first step you can take?
- By when?
- How will you hold yourself accountable?
- What resources do you need?
- In comparison to when you came in today, how are you feeling about moving forward?
- On a scale of 1-10...
 - o how are you feeling about your next steps?
 - o how committed are you to...?
 - o how important is?
- How can I support you with your plan?
- How will you know you have accomplished your goal? What will that look like?

**If it feels helpful to take notes, please explain that they are only for your use and are confidential (unless it is a Title IX issue).*

**Please summarize your meeting in DegreeWorks, Navigate, or the system your Institution utilizes. These notes are a part of the student's record and should be general in nature, focusing on discussion topic and student plans.*

Sources

Appreciative Advising Questions. (n.d.). Retrieved December 4th 2018, from <http://www.indiana.edu/~iubac/Appreciative%20Advising%20Questions%20Spring%202011.pdf> (Developed by advisors from IU South Bend, Miami University of Ohio & IU Bloomington).

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Calibrate & Coach: Small Changes, Sustainable Success

Abby Chapman, MS, CSP

Department Chair of Engineering Technology

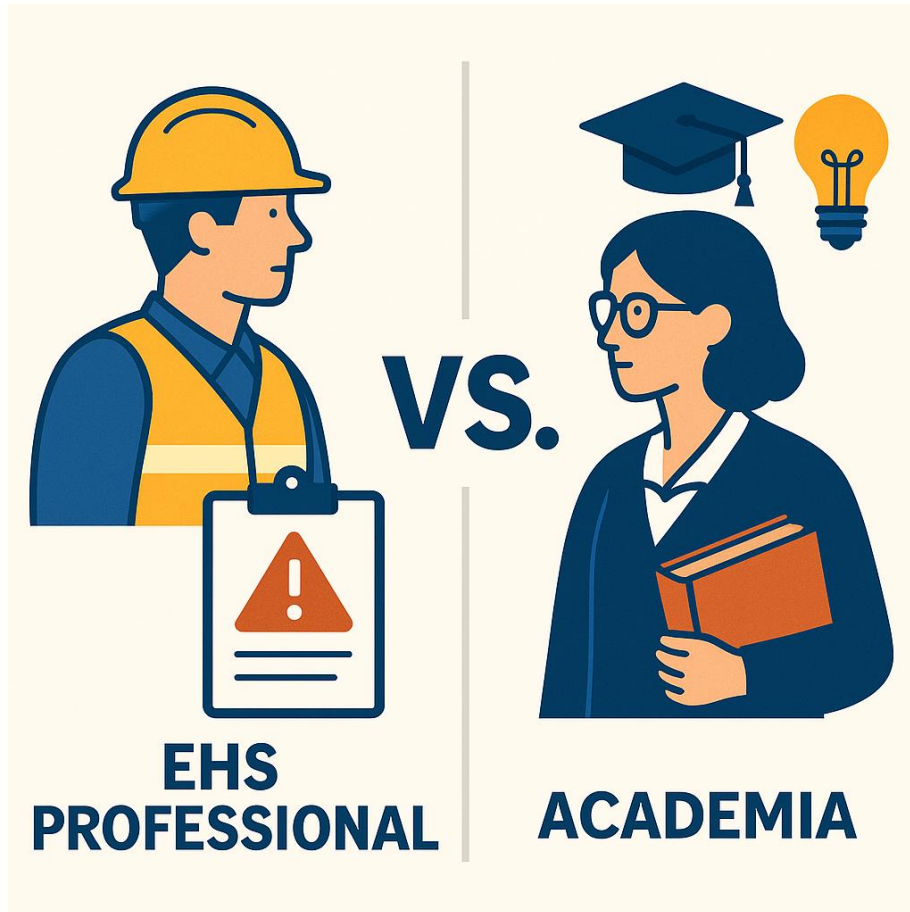
Associate Professor of Occupational Safety

NSF Award #2130106





EHS Background

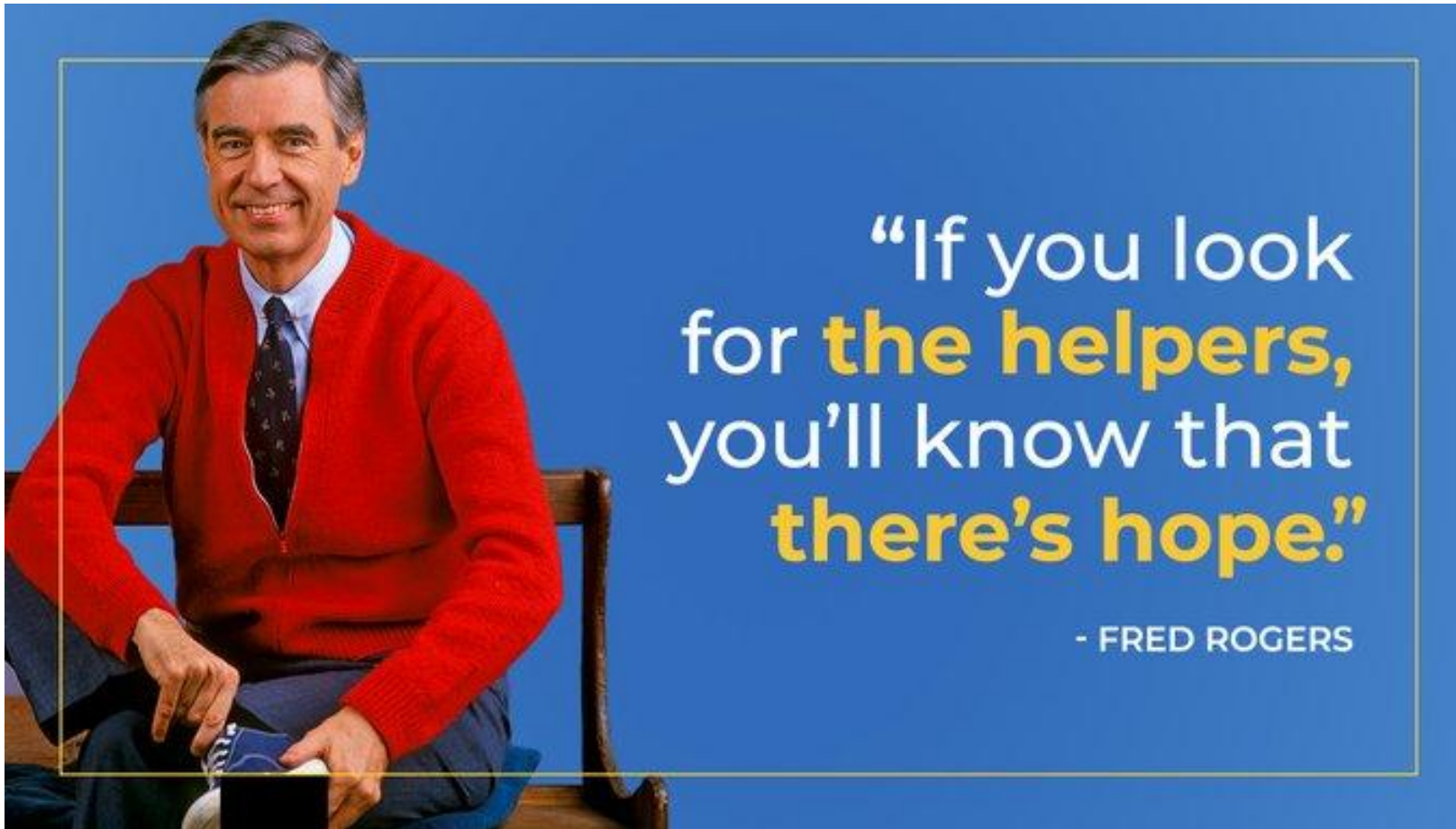


- 11 years in the aviation industry
- Internships
 - Power Generation
 - Higher Education (Workers Comp Case Management and Building Risk Management)
- Graduate Assistant at WVU

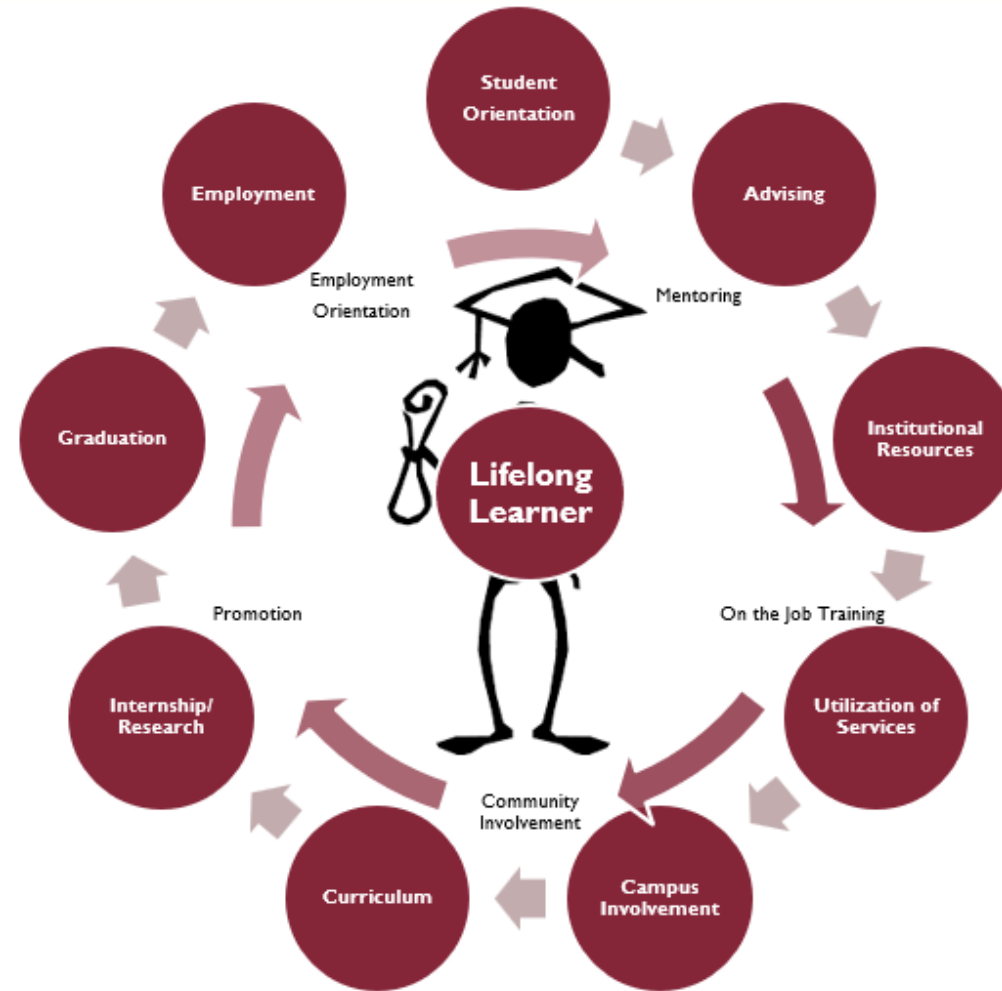
ENEMY #1

Shortcut,
Hasn't Gone
Wrong *Yet*





Mentorship is Cyclical



What is Academic Coaching?





TUTORING –
CONTENT MASTERY



ADVISING – NAVIGATION
AND PLANNING



COACHING –
BUILDING SKILLS,
CONFIDENCE, AND
OWNERSHIP

Solving Problems with 5 Whys



Goal Accomplishment Model



Top Student Challenges



Time Management & Planning

- Balancing classes with work or activities
- Procrastination, late assignments
- Trouble planning schedules



Academic Difficulty

- Struggles in STEM "gateway courses"
- Figuring out where to get help
- Lack of timely feedback



Motivation & Well-being

- Low motivation, "senioritis"
- Stress/anxiety before exams
- Needing help framing setbacks



Engagement & Belonging

- Skipping or inconsistent classes
- Commuter isolation
- Limited campus involvement



Career & Experience

- Readiness for internships, REUs
- Graduate or professional school path
- Overcommitted to activities



Admin Navigation & Equity

- Major, transfer, or registration needs
- Confusing policies/procedures
- Constraints on participation



Assess Resources – 5 Quick Buckets



People

Activities

Environment
& Materials

Rules and
Scope

Time

Plan Actions/Strategies

- Choose 2-3 easy-to-implement actions
- Frame it as continuous improvement
- Make it time bound
- Follow up on these items at your coaching meetings
- Communicate with the student's team



Monitor/Accountability Structure



TYPES OF FEEDBACK



OREO

TWO POSITIVE
THOUGHTS AROUND
ONE NEGATIVE
THOUGHT



MACARON

ELEGANTLY WORDED
POSITIVE THOUGHTS
AROUND ONE VERY SMALL
NEGATIVE THOUGHT



BLACK + WHITE

NO-NONSENSE
STRAIGHT FORWARD



OATMEAL RAISIN

POSITIVE, WITH BITS
OF NEGATIVE
SPRINKLED IN



SUGAR COOKIE

OVERLY SWEET
AND ULTIMATELY
UNFULFILLING



DOUGH

COMPLETELY
UNFILTERED

LIZ FOSSLIN

Practical Coaching Prompts You Can Use

What is your plan to tackle this?

When does this usually go off track?

What will you do, by when, and how will we know?

If Plan “A” stalls, what is your next move?

Collaboration and Best Practices



- Care-team alerts
- Warm hand-offs
- Bring support offices to class/events
- Shared Forms for real-time alerts
- Close the loop

Qualities of a good coach

Student-centered
care

Life Impact

Responsiveness

Availability

High
Expectations

Long-term
Mentorship

Inclusive

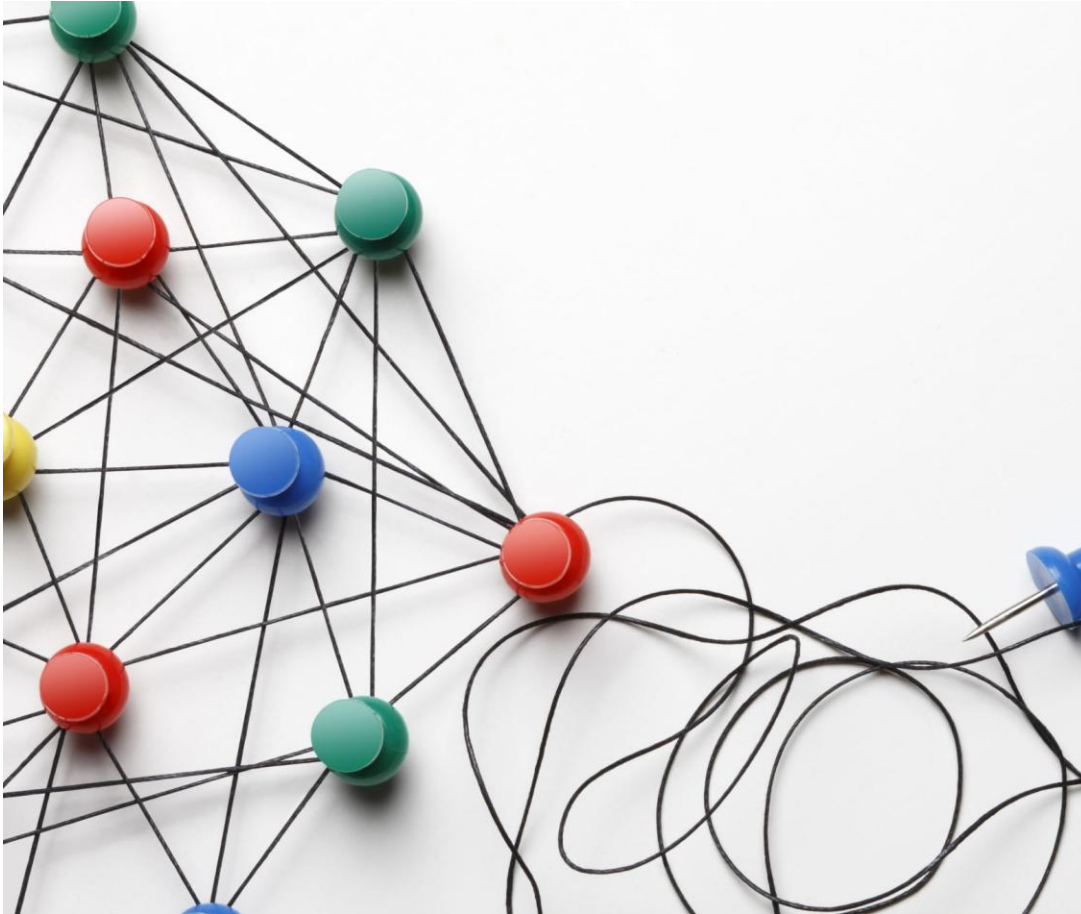
Confidence
Building

Empowerment

Professional
Readiness

Advocacy

Connecting the Dots – The Power of Why



- Muscle Memory
 - Practice
 - Purpose
 - Performance

What Coaching Strategy Will You Try?

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