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Developmental Academic Advising

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Developmental Academic Advising

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In 1972, Burns B. Crookston wrote an article in the Journal of College Student Personnel titled 'A Developmental View of Academic Advising as Teaching' - the term *developmental academic advising* was born.

Developmental academic advising is both a process and an orientation. It reflects the idea of movement and progression. It goes beyond simply giving information or signing a form. As Raushi (1993) suggests, 'to advise from a developmental perspective is to view students at work on life tasks in the context of their whole life settings, including the college experience' (p. 6). Developmental academic advising recognizes the importance of interactions between the student and the campus environment, it focuses on the whole person, and it works with the student at that person's own life stage of development. Numerous authors (Creamer, 2000; Creamer & Creamer, 1994; Raushi 1993; Winston, et. al., 1984) show that developmental advising is grounded in theory, including cognitive developmental theory, psychosocial theory, and person-environment interaction theory, as well as in theories that focus on specific populations.

According to Crookston, developmental academic advising 'is concerned not only with a specific personal or vocational decision but also with facilitating the student's rational processes, environmental and interpersonal interactions, behavioral awareness, and problem-solving, decision-making, and evaluation skills. Not only are these advising functions but... they are essentially teaching functions as well (p. 5).' Crookston believed that higher education provided opportunities for students to develop a plan to achieve self-fulfilling lives and that teaching included any experience that contributed to the student's growth. He also believed that students and advisors should share responsibility for the nature of the advising relationship as well as for the quality of that experience.

In his article, Crookson focuses on the difference between prescriptive and developmental advising. In prescriptive advising, a student would come to an advisor for a solution or an advisor would typically answer specific questions but would not address more comprehensive academic concerns. Developmental advising is based on 'the belief that the relationship itself is one in which the academic advisor and the student differentially engage in a series of developmental tasks, the successful completion of which results in varying degrees of learning by *both parties*.' Frost (2003) notes that 'developmental advising understands advising as a system of shared responsibility in which the primary goal is to help the student take responsibility for his or her decisions and actions' (p. 234).

Terry O'Banion, also writing in 1972 but in The Junior College Journal, described the five steps that he referred to as 'the dimensions of the process of academic advising' (p. 11). They included: (1) exploration of life goals; (2) exploration of vocational goals; (3) program choice; (4) course choice; and (5) scheduling classes. This model suggested that the picking and scheduling of classes needs to take place within the broader context of the student's life and career goals. O'Banion suggested that students should be responsible for making decisions throughout the advising process. Advisors are responsible for providing 'information and a

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climate of freedom in which students can best make such decisions (p. 11)'.

In conclusion, Winston, et. al. (1984) describe academic advising as follows: 'Developmental academic advising is defined as a systematic process based on a close student-advisor relationship intended to aid students in achieving educational, career, and personal goals through the utilization of the full range of institutional and community resources' (p.19). To advise a student developmentally, Kramer (1999) suggests the following:

1. know/apply student development theory
2. focus on students; their on-going needs over an extended period of time. One advising session builds upon another.
3. challenge students to achieve their learning potential and to take academic risks.
4. view students as active partners actively engaged in intellectual and personal growth
5. help students think about and articulate what is important to them in their academic as well as their personal lives.
6. set short-term as well as long-term goals, discuss ways to achieve those goals, and help the student monitor progress in fulfilling those goals.

NOTE: to read the original articles by Crookson and O'Banion, as well as others reflecting either on those articles or discussing different aspects of developmental academic advising, readers are referred to the Fall '94 NACADA Journal (14:2)

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