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Understanding the Lived Experiences of Academic Advisors Utilizing Coaching Skills and Techniques

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UNDERSTANDING THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF ACADEMIC ADVISORS

UTILIZING COACHING SKILLS AND TECHNIQUES

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Jennifer Carole Halpern

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To: Dean Michael R. Heithaus
       College of Arts, Sciences and Education

This dissertation, written by Jennifer Carole Halpern, and entitled Understanding the Lived Experiences of Academic Advisors Utilizing Coaching Skills and Techniques, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgment.

We have read this dissertation and recommend that it be approved.

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Florida International University, 2022

DEDICATION

I dedicate this to my family who have supported me in so many ways throughout this

entire process. My mom Myriam, my aunt Mayra, my sister Janessa, my brother-in-law

Raul and my nephews Cayden and Caleb. I love you all so much. And to my

grandparents who were with me in spirit, your presence was felt immensely. This is for

all of you with all my love.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Students who need help and support often find themselves not getting the help they need or not knowing who to go to. Advisors at Florida International University have been trained to use college life coaching skills and techniques to help students who are going through a difficult time. The problem is that although most of the advising community has attended these trainings it seems that not every advisor may be utilizing the coaching skills and techniques with their students for a variety of reasons, and it is because of those different reasons that may be leading to missed opportunities for advisors to properly address an issue with their student and be able to help that student to come up with a possible solution.

This study aimed to better understand the experiences of academic advisors who have utilized coaching skills and techniques within their academic advising sessions. This qualitative interview study was conducted in which the volunteer participants completed a one-hour, semi-structured interview. The recorded interviews were transcribed and coded to identify themes throughout the responses. A total of 25 themes

were identified and put into five categories (a) benefits, (b) challenges, (c) skills and techniques, (d) advisor characteristics and (e) training opportunities.

The experiences of these participants show the ways in which utilizing coaching skills and techniques can prove to be an effective tool in terms of helping students and providing them with support. However, the experiences also demonstrate the kinds of scenarios that make using these skills and techniques difficult for the advisors. Finally, the experiences show that it takes a certain kind of person to be able to take on this role.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BLS	Bureau of Labor Statistics
CAPS	Counseling and Psychological Services
CASE	College of Arts, Sciences and Education
EQ	Emotional Intelligence
FIU	Florida International University
FTIC	First Time in College
ICF	International Coach Federation
IDD	Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
IDS	Interdisciplinary Studies
PSN	Panther Success Network
SIPA	School of International Public Affairs

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Need for the Study

Over the years colleges and universities have developed numerous student support programs to help students become much more prepared as they enter their postsecondary academic careers. According to Tinto (2017), such interventions must be provided proactively if possible but most certainly when the students encounter early difficulties in meeting the academic and social demands of university study. The purpose of these programs is not only to assist these students with developing the academic skills needed to be successful in their classes, but the programs have also become supportive in nature to help guide students who may also be dealing with personal challenges which can also negatively impact students academically.

These academic support programs that have been implemented across colleges and universities may come in the form of mentoring programs, bridge programs, and academic advising. However, more recently, a new kind of program has been making its way onto several college campuses, and that is College Life Coaching programs. Life Coaching programs have been implemented and used as a stand-alone department, but as the literature suggests, the life coaching role is one that can be combined within other university support staff roles such as academic advisors.

Something that we as university administrators hear from students quite often is that they needed help with something that is either academically or personally related, but that they either did not want to ask for help or they just had no idea who to go for assistance. The role of the academic advisor is an important one for students. Often the advisor is sometimes the only person a student has connected with during their entire

educational career. However, for some advisors, it may be difficult to navigate a situation with a student who may be going through a challenging time and is need of support. The college life coaching approach can be an intervention that advisors can use to be able to help and support their students in a time of need and determine the appropriate next steps.

At Florida International University, the College Life Coaching Department began providing college life coaching skills and techniques training sessions for the academic advising community. The purpose of those training sessions was to introduce advisors to the life coaching concept as well as to help them develop a set of skills that may be useful for when the advisor is confronted with a student who may be struggling academically or personally. The training that is provided sounds like it could be beneficial for the academic advising departments to become more proactive with their students by focusing on how the student is doing overall.

The problem is that although most of the advising community has attended these college life coaching trainings not every advisor may be utilizing the coaching skills and techniques with their students for a variety of reasons, which may be leading to missed opportunities for advisors to properly address an issue with their students and be able to assist them.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to develop an understanding of the experiences of academic advisors who have participated in the College Life Coaching training program at Florida International University and have utilized the coaching skills and techniques in their advising sessions with their students. Through semi-structured interviews, the participants were asked to describe their experiences, personal thoughts, beliefs, and

reflections on using coaching skills and techniques in their advising sessions. The data has been analyzed, and the results will provide insight into the experiences the advisors had when they integrated coaching skills within their advising practice. In addition, it will provide an in-depth look at how academic advisors feel about merging coaching skills into their advising role.

Research Questions

The research was guided by two research questions. First, what are the experiences of academic advisors who have used coaching skills and techniques in their advising sessions? Second, what do advisors think about the advising community integrating coaching skills and techniques within their roles?

Theoretical Framework

Abraham Maslow introduced his hierarchy of needs which is a theory of motivation that includes five distinct categories that influence one's behavior. Those needs are physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). The overall idea of this hierarchy is to say that individuals are instinctively motivated to achieve these needs and to maintain them as it will drive the person to become what they want to be. However, it is often the case where an individual may not know how to attain these needs and in those situations that person may seek support and or guidance from someone else. For one to be willing and able to help guide someone in attaining those needs, those in the field of psychology such as Carl Rogers, may recommend a humanistic approach when providing that kind of assistance.

Rogers, one of the founders of humanistic psychology, believed the humanistic approach was lacking within the other psychological disciplines (Rogers, 1963). In those

other approaches of psychology, there was a tendency to look at one narrowing aspect of the individual whereas Rogers believed it was important to analyze the whole person to help guide them to their sense of self (Rogers, 1963). Humanistic psychology, as it relates to coaching, is said to be the foundation of life coaching, for which the role of the coach is to take the client on a journey of self-discovery where they can better understand themselves (Brock, 2012).

Delimitations

While it may have been ideal to examine all College Life Coaching programs at colleges and universities, this research focused on a College Life Coaching program at FIU. FIU, being a top-tier, Hispanic-serving research university, was deemed to be an ideal setting for investigating the experiences of college advisors as they learned about life coaching skills and their application to their advisory practices.

Limitations

One possible limitation of this study was the sample size. Prior to the recruiting process, consistent with the research literature where data saturation is desired over mere number of participants per se (Johnson & Christenson, 2008; Seidman, 2013), I had decided that I would have at least 12 participants partake in the study. I also went into the study with the mindset that the more participants I could get the better it would be in terms of collecting the data needed to answer my research questions. Ultimately, I was able to get a total of 10 participants who agreed to participate in my study. I do believe that the timing of it all did factor in when I was in the recruiting process. I realized afterwards that I was reaching out to advisors to invite them to participate in the study during open registration which is the advisors' peak period. The advisors during this time

are busy meeting with students all day. I sent out so many emails that there were many who neglected to respond to my inquiries. This challenge was also evident when it came to scheduling the interviews as well. There were several occasions in which meetings had to be cancelled and rescheduled to a later time and date that best suited the participants.

Each of the ten interviews lasted for roughly an hour where all the respective participants were asked questions in a semi-structured format. The transcripts for each participant were transcribed and used for data analysis and interpretation. I completed the coding process to identify the common themes throughout the transcripts. In total, 25 themes were uncovered. Once those themes were coded, I went through the statements made by the participants to understand what was being said for each of the themes. Once that was complete it was time to put those common themes into categories which ended up being a total of five categories: (a) benefits, (b) challenges, (c) skills and techniques, (d) advisor characteristics and (e) training opportunities.

The experiences of these participants demonstrate the ways in which utilizing coaching skills and techniques can prove to be an effective tool in terms of helping students and providing them with support. However, the experiences also demonstrate the kinds of scenarios that make using these skills and techniques difficult for the advisors. Finally, the experiences show that it takes a certain kind of person to be able to take on this role.

The next chapter introduces the various kinds of literature that focuses on life coaching and academic advising. I specifically searched for articles that were in the following areas of interest: (a) life coaching model, (b) life coaching programs applied outside of higher education (c) life coaching programs in higher education, (d) different

academic advising models, (d) coaching and advising, (e) and critical analysis of life

coaching.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

This research study was focused on two main concepts: (a) life coaching, and (b) academic advising. Therefore, when I began researching articles in hopes of developing a better understanding of both concepts, it was important to think first about the kinds of literature I wanted to seek. I settled on a total of six areas of interest that would make up the literature review: (a) life coaching model, (b) life coaching programs applied outside of higher education (c) life coaching programs in higher education, (d) different academic advising models, (d) coaching and advising, (e) and critical analysis of life coaching.

When I first began my search for literature on life coaching, I started by specifically looking for articles that were about the life coaching model. Because not everyone may be familiar with the concept of life coaching, it was important to find an article that would describe what life coaching is and what it looks like. I was able to find several articles that both introduced the concept of life coaching as well as provide an illustration detailing the relationship between a life coach and the client. I thought this information would be helpful for the reader who has no idea as to what life coaching is and what the role of the life coach entails.

Because I found the definition of coaching, I wanted to find a study that was conducted that demonstrated how the life coaching model was applied in a real-life situation outside of the higher education setting. I found one research study where the researchers were analyzing a life coaching program that was being used as an intervention and looking at the effects it had on individuals that suffered from psychological, intellectual, and developmental disabilities.

My research study was specifically looking at life coaching within a higher education setting, therefore, I wanted to search for studies that demonstrated how a life coaching program was used in a post-secondary institution. One specific study that caught my attention was one that focused on looking at the effectiveness of life coaching for undergraduate students in the following areas: (a) awareness of values and alignment with decisions making; (b) confidence in goal setting and attainment; (c) confidence in choice of major and satisfaction with that major; (d) compatibility of choices with faith, values, and strengths, confidence in life purpose and (e) self-confidence.

Then it was time to look at what was out there in terms of academic advising specifically looking for information about the different advising models. One of the first articles I came across focused on introducing the readers to the three different advising models: (a) prescriptive advising, (b) developmental advising, (c) and appreciative advising. Then I began searching for any articles that touched on both advising and coaching and I found two that addressed both topics. This search led to six articles that centered around proposing changes to the current academic advising models by discussing a shift to integrate a coach-like approach where advisors would take on a more interest to the overall well-being of their students instead of solely focusing on their academics. The last research article I came across that pertained to advising and coaching, was an article that discussed exactly how the coaching model could fit in within academic advising.

Lastly, since I was reading up on the positive side to life coaching. It was important to see if there were critical pieces of literature that discussed life coaching from a unique perspective. I was able to retrieve an article by Vikki Brock, that was a critical

analysis of the life coaching profession. The article included distinct reasons to question the job of a life coach and most of it stemmed from how legitimate the position was to begin with.

That was my process when it came to gathering the articles needed to develop not only my knowledge within the areas of life coaching and advising, but to develop an extensive literature review that covered the topics that were closely related to this research study and that would provide the reader with the knowledge needed to understand the information that would come out of this study. In this next section, I will discuss the information that these articles shared on the assorted topics of coaching and advising.

What is Life Coaching?

What is life coaching? To answer this question as well as provide additional life coaching information I searched the International Coach Federation (ICF) website and included the information in this literature (https://coachfederation.org/). The ICF defines coaching as "partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential (https://coachfederation.org/)." The ICF is the leading global organization that professionally trains individuals to become certified coaches. In 2018, the ICF reported at that time they had over 25,000 certified coaches and 1,000 coaches who had reached the level of being Master Certified. A life coach is defined as a guide or a "thought partner," rather than an expert who provides advice (Newnham-Kanas, et al., 2011).

The role of the coach is to be curious and ask questions so that the clients can generate their own solutions. For example, one may feel that the reason they are not

doing well in their job is due to lack of motivation. The individual wants to work on gaining more motivation in hopes of achieving a promotion in the future. The coaching services provide a safe space for that person to talk about how they have been feeling and with the guidance of their coach are asked questions to help that person realize certain things that may be helpful and useful so that may become much more motivated. Coaching in higher education can help students in areas such as motivation but also with time management, developing effective study skills, and producing healthy mechanisms for dealing with stress, just to name a few.

The role of the life coach is often compared to that of a mentor. These are two roles that can offer support and guidance when it comes to helping people increase their self-esteem, self-direction, and overall efficacy and achievement. Cox and Ledgerwood (2003) make the argument that the distinction between the two roles comes down to the reliance on experience. The coaching practice does not rely on using the coach's personal experience and knowledge. Successful life coaching is client-centered, and therefore, if a life coach shares their own personal anecdotes that coaching relationships shifts from what was supposed to be focused on the client to now involving the coach in the matter which is highly frowned upon in the life coaching world. Mentors, on the other hand, differ from a life coach in this regard, according to Cox and Ledgerwood (2003), mentors may use their own personal knowledge and experience and freely share that with their client.

Jarosz (2016) describes the clients' relationship with their coach as feeling empowered and supported by the relationship and that they no longer feel as though their problems are unsolvable. Life coaching can be a resource that is supposed to enrich and

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enhance one's overall well-being and quality of life. A study was conducted that focused on the impact of life coaching on older adults. A survey assessed the role that life coaching played in the participants' health, fitness, and overall wellness (Francis & Milner, 2006). After the researchers analyzed the results of the survey, they concluded that life coaching helped the participants make permanent positive changes that led to an overall improvement in areas such as health, wellness, and their overall quality of life (Francis & Milner, 2006). The participants reported that their level of physical activity increased. They also made better food decisions. Lastly, they made more efforts to develop interpersonal relationships with others.

Although life coaching is another alternative to other kinds of interventions, life coaching does have its challenges and criticisms. One kind of criticism the coaching profession faces is when it comes to the regulations and professional training. Critics of the field say that life coaching is not held to the same standards when it comes to abiding by strict regulations in comparison to other fields such as psychology and counseling which are regulated carefully and rigorously (William & Davis, 2007). However, according to the ICF, there are no regulatory requirements for life coaching currently and the ICF is aware of this issue and admits it is a topic that the coaching profession struggles with.

In addition to this critique, another challenge that life coaches face is confusion from the client in terms of knowing what the coaching model is. The clients' confusions stem from not understanding the differences and benefits between life coaching and other helping professions such as mentoring and consulting. However, despite the challenges

and criticism, life coaching is a new cross-disciplinary profession that has been

consistently gaining more attention and recognition (Newnham-Kanas et al., 2010).

Relationship between Life Coach and Client

One of the factors that make life coaching another option for intervention starts

with the relationship between the coach and the client. According to Jarosz (2016), there

are a total of six components that make a successful coaching relationship. The first

component of a successful life coaching relationship is that coaching promotes what is

right in the client. Life coaching does not focus on healing or repairing what has been

broken (Martin et al., 2012). Instead, coaching points out the client's strengths as a way

for the client to realize what they can do to reach the goal they want to achieve without

focusing on the negative. The second component to the coaching relationship is to create

a safe and open environment in which the client feels comfortable. Such an environment

has no judgment and has a huge space for growth (Whitworth et al., 2007). This safe

space will allow the client to say whatever it is they want to say.

The third coaching component is that both the coach and the client equally design

the coaching relationship. It is important that the coach and the client clearly define and

design the relationship (Newnham-Kanas et al., 2010). One of the challenges of life

coaching is the client's confusion by it. Therefore, it is important that the process is

explained clearly and concisely so that the client is aware of what they are participating

in. The fourth component is that the relationship be client-centered and individually

approached. According to Whitworth et al. (2007), every client is different and has a

unique set of needs. The client may want more or less of something from their coach. It is

the job of the coach to know what they are and tailor their coaching skills to fit the client's needs.

The fifth component to a successful life coaching relationship is that coaching focuses on the client's whole life. The life coach and the client analyze various areas of the client's life to assess the level of satisfaction in each of those areas and their overall balance in life (William & Davis, 2007). Other areas to explore may include family, friendships, health, career, and finances. The final component to a successful coaching relationship is that the relationship is a dynamic one. As the client's situation changes the coaching relationship needs to adapt to those changes, which would require that the coach tailor the relationship to the client's potential new needs.

In addition to having a successful life coaching relationship Jarosz (2016) also discusses the four characteristics that must be done within the coaching process. The first one is that the coaching process has an objective. There is something that the client wants to work towards to fulfil some aspect of their life. Whatever that something is it becomes the objective for that coaching session. The second characteristic is that the coaching process is goal directed. The main purpose of life coaching is to move the clients onward and achieve their desired results (Nixon-Witt, 2008). Once the client establishes the objective, then with the guidance of the coach, the client can determine how they can achieve that goal or ways they can overcome a barrier.

The third characteristic of the coaching process is that it is client centered. Like that of the components of a successful coaching relationship, being client centered is part of the ongoing process as well. The client-coach relationship is a dynamic one, but it is all about what is the most important to the client at that time (Newnham-Kanas et al.,

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2010). The last characteristic of the coaching process is that coaching is rooted in the present and future oriented. Life coaching is rooted in the present, through the process, clients learn to be present in life and become more aware of what is going on around them currently (Newnham-Kanas et al., 2010). However, at the same time, life coaching is based on the belief that the clients can create their own future through visioning (Williams & Davis, 2007).

What comes after knowing the coaching process are the results of life coaching. Jarosz (2016) presents four outcomes that can occur because of life coaching. To begin with, it can bring the client to know their sense of self. The benefit of life coaching is that it can make someone realize his or her life purpose when they may not have thought it before (Creed & Blume, 2013). The second outcome of coaching is that it can help the client build the life of their dreams. Through coaching clients learn the ways they can achieve their goals and create the lives they have always dreamed of (Ellis, 1998).

The third outcome of life coaching is that it assists with behavior/personality change. According to Martin et al. (2012), there are traits that the client may perceived to be problematic and seek out life coaching to change that particular trait. The fourth outcome of life coaching is that it can improve wellness and the overall quality of life. Life coaching, consequently, can help clients make changes that can lead to an improvement in their health, wellness, and quality of life (Francis & Milner 2006).

Coaching Programs for Psychological, Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Life coaching has made its way through several interdisciplinary fields and has even found a spot within the realm of psychological and mental disabilities. According to humanistic theorists such as Carl Rogers, strong emotions can serve as triggers that

motivate individuals to modify their current life situations (Reeve, 2009). However, for some, the feeling can be very overwhelming. It takes a lot of psychological courage to navigate through major life transitions and for some people it is difficult to find the courage to act (Curtis & Kelly 2013).

Researchers Curtis and Kelly (2013) conducted a study that focused on the effects of life coaching on psychological courage and self-determination. A total of eight people between the ages of 28-60 years of age participated in a multiple case study where they had to complete a total of six one-hour coaching sessions that took place over the phone. The participants were chosen as they had indicated that they were either contemplating or were experiencing a major professional transition. The participants were given a pre-assessment survey, a pre-post Quality of Life questionnaire was assessed, the researchers took field notes, and a post interview was conducted as well. The results revealed that psychological courage can be strengthened by those who experience life coaching as an intervention.

Life coaching can also be a resource to assist individuals who suffer from intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Those who live with IDD deal with the stigma that comes along with it. Due to that stigma, it can limit the opportunities these individuals have to interact socially with others outside of those who are closest to them (like family and friends). These limitations can lead these individuals to have poor interpersonal skills, and overall, it decreases their psychological well-being (Dagnan & Waring, 2004; Havercamp & Scott, 2015; Nota et al., 2007).

Shipgelman (2019) introduced a case study that was conducted with two participants suffering from some form of IDD. The participants included one male

participant (who was diagnosed with cerebral palsy and wheelchair bound) and one female participant (was diagnosed with moderate level of cognitive functioning, low level of literacy skills and severe difficulty in mathematical skills). The study was conducted over a five-month period as part of a pilot life coaching intervention that was developed specifically for individuals with IDD. The data was collected through documents such as field notes, written feedback and tasks that were completed by each participant. By the end of the five months, the results of the analyses showed that the participants became more self-confident and had more determination to make changes in their lives. It was found then that these participants not only became advocates for their needs, but they did so while expanding their own social circles.

Coaching Programs for College Students

According to Lefdahl-Davis et al. (2018), college students tend to struggle with career indecision, life satisfaction, as well as academic and social challenges. Literature has shown that life coaching can provide an opportunity for these students to overcome these barriers and instead thrive in each of them (Lefdahl-Davis et al., 2018). The study Lefdahl-Davis et al. (2018) conducted focused on looking at the effectiveness of life coaching for undergraduate students specifically in the following areas: (a) awareness of values and alignment with decisions making; (b) confidence in goal setting and attainment; (c) confidence in choice of major and satisfaction with that major; (d) compatibility of choices with faith, values, and strengths, confidence in life purpose and (e) self-confidence.

The researchers utilized a mixed-methods design using pre and post surveys that were assessed of the students. The students also had an opportunity to sit in for in-person

interviews. The students attended a small, liberal arts university in the Midwest. Students were the coaching clients over the course of three years, from 2013-2016. There was a total of 94 coaching clients (students) that participated in this study. After analyzing both the quantitative results from the surveys as well as the results from the qualitative interviews, the researchers concluded that both results showed that there was a significant positive increase in each of the previous mentioned challenging areas.

Overall college can be a place where a lot of pressure is put on a student. The pressure can be so much to take that it can lead to elevated levels of stress which can be difficult to manage if the student does not have the proper tools to deal with the distress that they may be experiencing which can affect the student's overall mental health (Dougall & Baum, 2003). Researchers Fried and Irwin (2016) conducted a study to assess the impact of life coaching as an intervention for stress management. A total of 24 full time students between the ages of 17-24 were assessed using the Perceived Stress Scale and Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale which they were given pre-, mid- and post intervention. In addition to the survey, qualitative interviews were conducted before the interventions, in the middle of the interventions and post interventions. The participants had to attend a total of eight coaching sessions, which lasted anywhere between 30-40 minutes. The first data collection occurred before the first session, the second collection occurred after the fourth session and the last data collection was completed after the last session. The findings from this mixed-methods study found that there were significant improvements made when it came to the levels of stress and the student being able to manage that stress more effectively.

Different Advising Models

Currently, there are several different advising models that exist within the advising community (Crookston, 1994). The most traditional advising model is known as prescriptive advising. Prescriptive advising is the advisor-student relationship where the advisor goes over the student's major, discusses the program's requirements and what classes they should be taking. This advising model focuses on the education plan for the student. The advisor has the authority in this advising relationship, as they tell the student what they need to do, and the student abides by the information they have been given if they want to be on track to graduate.

Some in the advising community may say that there are some forms of coaching models that academic advisors are using today within their advising sessions and that is developmental and appreciative advising. According to Crookston (1994), developmental advising is a two directional kind of relationship in which the advisor and the students are engaged in a series of developmental tasks and upon completion of those tasks result in various degrees of learning by both parties involved. Developmental advising can also be viewed as not only focusing on the student's personal or vocational decisions but also facilitating in the student's rational process, environmental and interpersonal interactions, behavioral awareness, problem solving, decision-making, and evaluation skills (Lowenstein, 2020).

Winston and Sandor (1984) conducted a quantitative study that set out to understand how students felt about developmental advising. The researchers relied on survey distributions where they received a total of 306 student responses. After the responses were reviewed and analyzed, the researchers found that the students did in fact

prefer a developmental advising relationship as the students found it to be helpful both on an academic and personal level. Developmental advising does focus on the individual student's concerns, needs, and aspirations which goes beyond the traditional advising model (Gordon, 1994).

Gordon (1994) lists several reasons as to why institutions do not practice developmental advising. Those reasons range from the size of the campus to the types of students and changes within their profile, it also takes into consideration the philosophy of and the emphasis of advising, the type of delivery system as well as who performs advising functions all influence advising practices within the institution (Gordon, 1994). Gordon goes on to list a total of ten specific reasons that she has gathered as to why developmental advising is not widely practiced. It starts with advisors do not have the time to get that involved to them do not have the background nor the training to handle that kind of relationship, just to name a few, however, she does conclude her take on this by simply stating that it is until the administrators are convinced that developmental advising is at the heart of the institutional enterprise that little progress will be made (Gordon, 1994).

Another type of advising model is appreciative advising. Appreciative advising was developed based on positive psychology, appreciative inquiry, choice theory and reality therapy that relies on student-advisor relationship that co-creates the student development path that takes into consideration the student's strengths and emphasizes frequent contact between advisor and student (Bloom et al., 2008). These advising models are ones that take a comprehensive approach to advising by looking at the whole student rather than just looking at the student's grades and courses. These models have

shown a significant impact on the student's overall performance. Hutson and Clark (2007) studied appreciative advising on students who returned to school after being academically dismissed found that advisors who used appreciative advising in their sessions with these students had an increase in their overall grade point averages and persisted.

Coaching and Academic Advising

U.S. higher education institutions are under pressure to improve students' retention rates and reduce the amount of time it takes for a student to graduate (Soni et al., 2014; Ortagus et al, 2020). As a result, there are seemingly countless programs and services that are geared towards working with students to ensure that they have the resources that they need to be successful. Academic advising has always been at the forefront of those resources as they have the most interaction with students. Academic advisors are in fact one constant resource that the student can use to get guidance throughout all four years. However, some may argue that guidance has taken a more passive approach where the sole purpose of the advisor is to ensure that the students take the correct courses that they need to complete their degree (Tudor, 2018).

Although that is still an important aspect of academic advising, others may say that the role needs to evolve more and become more supportive in nature. It is important that advisors start to have more intentional conversations with their students, especially with the ones they notice are struggling academically (Karacay & Brunner, 2013). Advisors should also take an interest and discuss other important topics such as how students utilize their leisure time, how they can become more involved in volunteer work

and research, and finally, advisors should point out what kinds of sacrifices are needed to be made for the students to achieve their career goals (Karacay & Brunner, 2013).

What does a coaching model and an academic advisor model look like? Authors Jeffrey McClellan and Clint Moser (2011) introduce what they call 'The Advising as Coaching Process'. The merging of the two processes is a circular model which starts with active listening, followed by determining desire, dream, or problem, then evaluating what has been done so far, identifying options, selecting options and develop a plan, and lastly engage and evaluate. This kind of model differs from what the authors refer to as the "The Advising Process" in which the advisor starts by preparing themselves, welcoming the student, building that rapport, explore and clarify, advise the student, wrap it up, and lastly follow up. The goal of the advising-coaching model is to encourage student responsibility by taking a more question-oriented approach as opposed to a prescriptive approach to advising.

How does coaching fit in?

First, as the literature suggests, the conversation of merging both the advising and the coaching role has already begun. Literature supports the notion that the advising role needs to evolve and become more supportive in nature and for advisors to have meaningful and impactful conversations with their students. Second, as previously discussed in the literature review, with proper coaching training, advisors can provide students with the skills set they need to be academically successful to meet their overall academic and personal goals. Third, training advisors to have the coaching skills and techniques can be essential to avoiding hand offs. The university setting can be an overwhelming place for students, they may feel like a small fish in a big pond.

Therefore, when an advisor has a student in front of them that needs help instead of referring that student somewhere else where the chances of having the student go to that second person/department are slim, the advisor can provide the help and the support that the student needs at once. These skills can be crucial during challenging times like the state we were in dealing with a global pandemic in 2020. At the height of the pandemic, the university was primarily working remotely, and during this time, it may have been challenging for students to get a hold of someone or seek out the help they really need. Last, because of these reasons it may be cost effective for the institution to investigate developing a coaching skills and techniques training program for all the advisors as it may contribute positively to retention and persistence rates.

Critical Analysis of Life Coaching

The field of life coaching can be a helpful resource for individuals who lack the motivation to achieve whatever it is they want to achieve. However, as effective as this practice can be, the field itself does have its challenges. The first challenge has to do with the theories and the models that are rooted within the coaching discipline (Brock, 2009). The coaching philosophy was developed by integrating both psychological theories and models. The argument towards the professional field of coaching is that there are individuals who call themselves life coaches. However, a lot of these individuals are not certified psychologists, nor do they have any psychological background that critics believe to be important to effectively provide coaching services to a client (Brock, 2009).

The second challenge presented deals with the lack of uniformity when it comes to the body of knowledge of coaching (Brock, 2009). Life coaching has become so widespread, making its way into many kinds of businesses and corporations. When these

corporations hire a life coach, that life coach will tailor their services to better suit the needs of that corporation. This results in many kinds of coaching styles or approaches which is understandable however, there is a need for developing one concept of coaching so that there is a distinction between a traditional model of coaching and a model of coaching that is developed by an individual life coach to assist their "employer" (Brock, 2009).

Lastly, there exists a challenge when it comes to the client's expectations about what goes on in a coaching session and what a coach provides (Brock, 2009). Life coaching, although not a new concept, there are a lot of people who are not familiar with the idea behind life coaching. Therefore, questions like what skills coaches have and how do coaches are working in specialized areas when training and or certifications are not required are brought up how does one respond (Brock, 2009). In addition to that, how is this concept being advertised to others who have never heard of a life coach so that they understand before they go in for a session.

Remarks

Overall, the literature on life coaching demonstrates how this one concept can be used to support all diverse kinds of individuals. Whether it is helping those who are suffering from a mental disability or a group of undecided students what the literature suggests is that utilizing life coaching skills and techniques can lead to positive outcomes. The literature on coaching and advising seems to propose that a shift needs to occur within the academic advising community and supports the idea that academic advisors should take on a more coach-like role with their primary focus is about the students' overall well-being and to view the student in a more holistic way.

Although coaching literature advocates for life coaching programs to exist, the actual life coaching career field does still have its skeptics and faces criticism as it relates to the legitimacy of the profession. Regardless, it is a topic that even with its complexities is still met with interest as I continued to want to look further into coaching and academic advising and will explain in the next chapter what methodology I chose and how I designed the study.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

For this research inquiry, I have chosen to use a qualitative interview study approach. Researchers who choose to conduct a qualitative interview study, set out to either explore or discover a phenomenon (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). For this research it is about exploring and learning more about the experiences advisors are having using coaching skills and techniques and to better understand what they think and how do they feel about it. Qualitative interview studies allow the participants to go in-depth therefore providing a rich study with a lot of information that will eventually be coded to identify themes that may not have been clearly identified if not for the opportunity to ask these open-ended questions and to get the responses straight from the participant. For this study there were several predetermined questions, however, the participant interviews were conducted primarily in a semi-structured format which allowed for further exploration in other subject areas.

Participants and Setting

The participants that were selected for this study met three specific criteria. One, they were academic advisors. Two, they attended the coaching training program at Florida International University. Lastly, they confirmed to have utilized coaching skills or techniques. Due to in-person regulations as it relates to Covid-19, the research was conducted virtually. To recruit these participants needed for the study I used snowball sampling. I began by reaching out to the advisors whom I knew participated in the college life coaching training. I then asked those advisors if they knew anyone who fit the criteria that would be interested in participating in the study. I sent those advisors an email inviting them to participate in the study. The participants were self-selected and

asked to reply to the email invitation to let me know that they wish to participate in the research. Once I gathered the self-selected participants, each one received an email which included the consent form that provided them with the information as it relates to the study, and they were required to sign it and return it back to me.

When it came to the number of participants for the study, I was able to recruit a total of 11 participants, 10 were academic advisors, one male and nine female. The other participant was a representative from the College Life Coaching Program at Florida International University. It was important to think about two things when taking into consideration the number of participants: one, sufficiency, and two, saturation (Seidman, 2013). In terms of sufficiency, having enough participants, Seidman (2013) says one will know that they have enough participants to reflect that of the rest of the population so that those outside the participants are able to connect to those experiences.

It is important to think of the audience of readers and ensure that they will be able to empathize with what is being described. Regarding saturation, a researcher should avoid being in a situation where they are not learning anything new (Seidman, 2013). That could potentially happen when a researcher has too many participants. Seidman (2013) suggests that the one can determine the number of participants needed as the researcher should interactively reflect during each step of the interview process. If the researcher feels that he or she is not hearing the same responses over and over that will determine whether to continue with the next participant.

Instrumentation

The purpose of interviewing is because the researcher has an interest in understanding the experiences of others and the meanings that they make out of those

experiences (Seidman, 2013). To better understand the advisors' experiences utilizing

coaching skills and techniques, I conducted semi-structured interviews with each advisor.

Due to the current state of Covid-19 in-person interviews it was not an option. However,

I did utilize the Zoom Meeting application to conduct these interviews as an alternative

method. To ensure that each interview was fully captured, the Zoom Meeting application

does have both a video and voice recording option. There are numerous reasons why

recording the interviews was beneficial.

By using a recording device, the researcher preserves the word of the participants,

and it becomes the main resource for the researcher to go back to if needed (Seidman,

2013). The option to utilize voice recording is sometimes preferred over a video

recording in the event the participants want to remain anonymous. Participants also find

the device to be less intimidating rather than having a camera in their faces (Seidman,

2013). When it comes to full anonymity, the Zoom Meeting application is effective in

that the participant may choose to turn off their camera as well as give themselves a

different name and solely use the power of their voice. All participants were informed

about the recorded interviews on the consent agreement form in which they did have the

opportunity to opt out if they did not feel comfortable.

Procedure

Before the date of the interviews, each advisor was required to read and sign the

consent form, which they did receive via email. The consent form let him or her know

that they would be recorded and that the statements they made would be used in the

study. The consent form also reassured the participants that their information would be

kept confidential as well as maintained in a confidential manner. Once they signed the

consent form, they were asked to send it back to me via email.

Each participant was interviewed one time. The interviews lasted for an hour and

were conducted in a semi-structured manner. Each participant was asked the same pre-

determined questions that I had produced (refer to Appendix E for those pre-determined

questions). However, there were several occasions in which I asked the participants a

follow-up question as I wanted to further explore the response they initially gave to the

original question.

Data Analysis

Davidson and di Gregorio (2011) once described qualitative interview analysis as

the process of exploration, organization, interpretation, and integration of research

material. After the qualitative interview data were collected, I had to rely on a system that

would store that information and organize it in a way that would make it easier for me,

the researcher, to be able to effectively analyze it all. The NVivo software is a powerful

system that has an incredibly low learning curve, which makes it suitable for anyone and

everyone no matter the level of technological skills they may or may not have. NVivo has

many features that catered to the needs of this study. One important feature that NVivo

has is the capability of transcribing participant recordings. That feature was helpful for

this study as I relied heavily on participant interviews for collecting data. The software

also assisted with storing and organizing the data, which facilitated categorizing and

analyzing the information. Specifically designed for qualitative interview data, the

software can easily sort the information into groups such as themes, sentiments, and

attributes within seconds. This became an integral tool for the coding process for this research study.

The coding process is one that has several layers to it. Author Johnny Saldana, who has written extensively about coding for qualitative researchers, discusses the different cycles of coding and how to determine which cycle is better suited for the study. According to Saldana (2013), studies that ask ontological questions such as what are the lived the experiences of…? and or what it is like being…? Those questions suggest exploring the personal and the interpretive meanings within the data which can be done through the first cycle of coding. However, Saldana (2013), does also say that even though a researcher goes in thinking that they will only use one cycle, they should be open to the possibility of using more than one cycle, it just depends on what the researcher is trying to get out of the study based on the research questions.

In this research, the coding process was done in three phases. After the interviews were transcribed, I utilized the first cycle of coding to identify common terms and phrases that kept coming up throughout the participants' responses. To do that, I began by reviewing thoroughly each participant's transcripts. Every time I came across the same word or phrase being used, I would highlight the text and create a new code that would become the identifier for that term or phrase. For example, just to name a few, I often came across the words caseloads and appointments being used throughout all the participants' transcripts. Therefore, I created one code that was called Caseloads and another code that was called Appointments, using the NVivo software. I continued to highlight the text and created the different codes as I came across a unique term or phrase. However, when I did come across similarities in the text as the codes were saved

within the NVivo software, all I had to do was highlight the text within the transcripts and assign that text to a pre-existing code. All these codes became common themes throughout the data. A total of 25 common themes were identified.

When I could no longer create new codes from the data, I knew this step had been completed. I was able to move on to the second cycle of analysis which focused on understanding the statements that were made by the participants regarding each of these themes. During this period of analyzing the data I was also comparing the participants responses amongst each other that was made for each of the individual themes. I realized during this analysis that the participants would use the same term or phrase but reference it differently. For instance, when the topic of mental health was brought up by the participants, each had something different to say about that topic, especially when it came to the kinds of experiences they had with their students.

Once this second cycle was completed and I had a clear overall understanding of what each theme meant, I compiled all the information and was ready to move on to the third and final phase which was organizing the data by categorizing the themes into groups. I produced a total of five distinct groups: (a) Benefits, (b) Challenges, (c) Skills, (d) Advisor Characteristics, and (e) Trainings. These groups were created based on the participants' thoughts, feelings, and experiences they had for each of the themes. Each group was created into a bar chart that shows each individual theme and the total responses represents the number of times that theme was brought up within the data. The total responses for each theme were easily obtained as the NVivo software would keep track of all the references that were made as each text was assigned to a code.

Trustworthiness

About transparency, as a novice researcher something that I need to be cognizant of and explicit about is my own personal bias. This study is one that is personal to me. I was once a College Life Coach for Florida International University where I spent my time working with students while they were in their first year of college. I fully understand that the researcher's bias is a concern to the research community when it comes to conducting any kind of study.

Therefore, the question is how can I separate my thoughts and opinions on coaching and not let it impact my study? Should I necessarily ignore what I think altogether? Literature would disagree with those statements but instead would encourage researchers to become fully aware of their own subjectivity. They would go on further to suggest that one should use their subjectivity to their advantage throughout the research process as it may prove to be helpful. Peshkin (1988) argues that researchers should make a conscious effort to seek out their subjectivity, as it can be useful for shaping inquiry and its outcomes. After I initially read that statement, I came to the realization that it was due to my own personal subjectivity that brought me to want to research this topic to begin with. My firsthand experiences with coaching have made me curious and have piqued my interest in exploring in-depth the many ways in which coaching is being integrated throughout colleges and universities.

However, to be conscious of my subjectivity throughout my research I planned on using reflective journaling. The reflective process will occur when a specific task has been completed. After I met with each participant, I gave myself time to think about the interview and ask myself the following questions, "How did that interview go overall?"

"What could I have done differently?" "What am I doing well?" More importantly, I reflected on my role as the interviewer. I wanted to make sure that I was solely asking the questions during the interviews rather than inserting my own thoughts and opinions and allowing the participant to provide all the responses. I found this process to be helpful as a self-improvement tool but also to check in with myself to ensure that everything was going according to the research design.

Michelle Ortlipp (2008) found that using reflective journals was an effective way to create transparency within the research process while also exploring the impact of self-reflection on research design. In addition to the benefits Ortlipp (2008) states, the reflective journals may also be a resource in which I can refer to express my strengths and identify weaknesses that may potentially come up throughout the study, therefore serving as a learning experience. As I took the time to write my thoughts and feelings, I also met with my advisor countless times throughout the process.

Remarks

The purpose of this study was to understand the lived experiences of academic advisors utilizing coaching skills and techniques. Therefore, the appropriate methodology choice for this kind of study was to conduct a qualitative interview study. After choosing to conduct this study from a qualitative interviews' perspective, the research design was developed with this approach in mind but also taking into consideration the research questions that I was looking to answer. All of that went into determining who the participants would be, the participant recruiting process, the software I would use to help maintain and organize my data, to finally, the way I would analyze the data.

In the next section, I will be sharing the contents of an interview that I conducted with a participant from the College Life Coaching department at Florida International University. That will shed light on the implementation of the coaching program as well as touch on how coaching was introduced to academic advising.

Historical Information about the College Life Coaching Department at FIU

Before getting into the findings of the study it is important to get some historical information by understanding how college life coaching and academic advising came together in the first place. I did have an opportunity to interview a representative from the College Life Coaching program at Florida International University. I met with the representative to one, get information about the evolution of the college life coaching program at the institution, and two, it to get insight into how the collaboration between the coaching program and the academic advising community started and how that led to multiple partnerships with other academic advising units which contributed to the training sessions that were offered to all advisors. I also wanted to get their perspective about integrating coaching and advising together by having the academic advisors utilize coaching skills and techniques in their advising sessions. I figured who would know the ins and outs of coaching better than a certified licensed life coach like herself.

Evolution of College of Life Coaching

The College Life Coaching program was implemented at FIU in 2016. At that time, there was the director of the department and one full-time staff member who several years later would eventually become the manager of the coaching department. Prior to piloting the coaching services to students, the team (which again only consisted of two people) wanted to learn all there was to know about life coaching and coaching in higher

33

education. They took the opportunity to research other coaching programs by looking at what other institutions of higher education were doing. In the meantime, they were researching these coaching programs, they also enrolled for a life coaching certification program where eventually they both became licensed life coaches.

After establishing what the program would look like at Florida International University, they decided to pilot the coaching program in the summer of 2016, where they coached a total of 10 students. According to the participant, the targeted population for this pilot was students who were considered FTIC (first time in college students), and whose grade point averages were below a 2.0. The participant described what this time was like, "It was really just like, you know, getting our toes wet like just seeing like what it looks like to be meeting with students, talking about these types of topics." Then in the fall of 2016, immediately right after the program was first piloted, the coaching department went from meeting with 10 students to consistently meeting with a total of 50 students who fell under the same criteria as the prior group for coaching services.

After piloting the summer and fall programs, to be able to accommodate the growing number of students the department wanted to provide coaching services for, the college life coaching department had to increase the number of coaches it had. Therefore, for the launch of their spring program, the coaching team grew by adding two additional college life coaches. By then, the department established that their primary focus for the department was to continue to provide coaching services for those at-risk students. However, in 2018, the coaching department went through a transition. The former leadership had moved onto a new role at the university and the college life coaching department would now be under the Academic and Career Success division. As a result

of that transition, the coaching department began to expand their services as the then participant further explains, "It wasn't until 2018 that we joined this division that we then started opening up to either different populations and initiatives that we were starting or and also a lot more referrals."

The department continued to coach the at-risk student population who they refer to as the reactive student population, but slowly they began to identify several buckets of students they noticed that they started to see, "We have like three buckets. We have reactive students, proactive students, and referrals." According to the participant, as they described what coaching the reactive students was like, "They may not be open to it and they're doing it because it's a requirement and then we end up putting so much more effort and time then they don't show up." On the other hand, coaching proactive students seems to be an easier population to meet with. The participant proceeded to describe this specific group of students,

> So, these are incoming first-year students that it is their first or second semester
> that they are not doing bad, but they have lower test scores, we offer them either
> individual or group coaching services, and for those students, the goal is to be
> able to provide the support that now they are transitioning into college. They are
> identifying new personal and academic goals.

Integration of College Life Coaching and Academic Advising Department Collaborations

After the coaching department established their student focused initiatives, requests for collaborations with different units and colleges across the university began. It started when the coaching department was initially approached by one of the managers of

an academic advising unit who asked if the department would be able to conduct

coaching training for the advisors. Soon after conducting that first coaching training

session for the academic advisors, requests for more coaching training sessions

specifically for the academic advising community started to come in more frequently. At

the time this interview took the place, the participant had mentioned that they had

collaborated with the College of Arts, Science and Education (CASE), College of

Computing and Engineering, and the College of Business, "Right now are three of the

ones that we that we worked with last year." To develop an appropriate training session

for these colleges, the coaching department must first find out the needs of the college, as

the participant elaborates,

> We ask them, like out of all your students, who do you think needs to be coached
>
> the most, but like could really benefit from this? And we are not talking about,
>
> like, these students that are about to be dismissed because there is only so much
>
> you can do at that point.

After that initial meeting with the different colleges, it was clear that each of them

had different academic indicators that would determine whether the student was headed

towards a successful path in their program. According to the participant,

> And, they said the first-year biology students that have between a 2.0 and a 3.0
>
> and have failed math or chemistry, College of Engineering and Computing that
>
> have in between a 2.0 and 3.0 but have failed the math, College of Business has
>
> their own warning label that they are identifying students have been like repeating
>
> a course of main core course.

The end results of meeting with each of the colleges was that the coaching department was able to tailor a coaching intervention for the students that better suited them and their program's needs. For the School of International Public Affairs (SIPA), the participant spoke briefly about the intervention they produced for the students at this school, "And so with SIPA we used to do workshops. Now I hate that we call them workshops because it is not a workshop. What we do is a group session, it is a one-time group session."

This is just one example as to how the coaching department collaborated with the colleges. Another way in which the coaching department collaborated with the colleges and schools was by developing their own coaching for advisors training. The training that the coaching department was able to develop for the academic advisors included an introductory session on college life coaching followed by an emphasis on teaching advisors the coaching skills and techniques. To get buy in from the advising community they first had to let them know that the coaching department existed and that started with getting the word out to the advising community of their presence,

> So, we would do presentations at different advising events. So, like the
> professional advisors' meetings, we would talk about the services, and we have
> training available, and we have, you know, and I would just be open with
> everyone, and I would be like, this is what we do. This is what we can offer. We
> can help you if you want, whatever you want.

After speaking at numerous advising events and seeing the demand for further training, the coaching department was able to develop their own college life coaching training sessions. The department implemented a three-part training series, with part one

of the training focusing on the coaching philosophy and the skills. Part two included training activities such as role playing, round robin and breaking out into groups. Finally, part three focused on coaching tools and specific coaching topics. The participant addressed what the goal of these coaching trainings was,

> I always say two things. One, I am not teaching rocket science. I am teaching you things that you already know. But I am putting a different twist on it and making you think about which of these skills am I already using and what do I want to work on moving forward, take this for what it is, reflect on your own skills.

In my discussion with the participants, it was very clear that the purpose of these training courses was not to have the advisors become coaches but instead it was an opportunity to learn skills that could be helpful and useful during an advising session. As the participant stated,

> I understand that there are a thousand other responsibilities the advisors have. However, if the opportunity presents itself, there's ways that you can utilize coaching skills and strategies without making it a whole coaching session. It is about changing. It is not giving anybody more work. It is instead of telling a student, so why are you in biology instead saying also what brought you to biology or what made you pick biology as a major? And it just softens it a bit. It makes it a more empathetic and human-like interaction, not transactional.

The coaching department moving forward was able to continue to offer these trainings throughout the year to accommodate newly hired advisors, as well as to give anyone and everyone an opportunity to learn about college of life coaching and the skills that are associated with it. Again, these skills are to be used to provide support for the

students. During part two of the training, there are several topics that are addressed as those seem to be the most common ones with which students tend to struggle. The participant mentioned some examples of those key topics that are covered in the session and phrased them in question form to get the advisors to think about how they would address these matters,

> So, like how do you talk about time management? How do you talk about study strategies? How do you work with students that are resistant or that are upset or, so it is more application? It is all about asking the right questions. So, it is like basic coaching questions that can help them assess so that then they can advise better.

Advisor Challenges

The intention of these training courses, according to the participant, was to inform the advisors of this approach and learn some new skills that would be helpful to them during an advising session where a student may need help. One of the most important statements the participants made during our interview was when they said,

> And I think something we have tried to get across is there's times where you need to take your advisor's hat off and put your coach hat on just briefly. But because of a student saying, I am overwhelmed with my schedule, then you do not say, well, you need an agenda, and you need this, and you need that, because that is not the conversation that it is going to be the most helpful. Instead, ask them, well, what do you tell me a little bit more about what you've what is going on that is making you feel so overwhelmed and, you know, what do you think would improve your system and what has worked for you in the past?

After speaking about the trainings and understanding the reasons as to why the academic departments found it important for their advisors to learn coaching skills, I was curious to hear from their point of view the potential challenges of integrating coaching skills and techniques within the advising community. The first challenge the participants mentioned had to do with the advisor's approach to coaching and their perception of what coaching was not coaching at all. The participant talked about one example of that saying,

> They will be like, well, so I was talking to my student, and I told her x, y, and z like and I am just like that is not coaching. Like they are talking in the trainings as of like they get. But then they are like doing the opposite of coaching. I have never had someone say like, oh, I cannot see myself doing this because if somebody says like, look, I do not have time for that, then I say, no, no. I am not asking you to change anything of the timing of your sessions. If you only have 15 minutes to meet with a student about strictly advising and you do strictly advise. However, if that session starts with the student bursting out into tears and saying, "I don't think I'm meant to be in college, that is not your time to be advising. That is a really great opportunity to ask one or two questions."

Another challenge the participant spoke about had to do with what the advisors' role has become at the university, they referred to it as "the reality of what advising responsibilities has become." Advisors today are not only helping students with advising them on what classes to take, their job entails so much more because of the pressures of the metrics. On this subject matter, the participant further elaborated by saying the following,

Ideally, we could do more to help advisors be more like coaches in their interactions, but realistically, a substantial portion of their job has become talking about excess credits, calling students that have not enrolled, calling students who are about to lose aid, it has become more unfortunately, student success initiatives have become more of a transactional kind of thing.

It seems that due to these new priorities for advisors it can lead to many missed opportunities to help students because of the amount of importance that is placed on the metrics. It is something that the participant recognizes and understands is needed but what about the other side of higher education, they said "which part of it is like, ok I mean it helps, it helps with that stuff. But then the other part of it is like, but then what are we missing because we are so focused on like numbers." It looks like the reality is that there are circumstances within advising that do not lend themselves to allow for coaching to occur and this is just one part of it.

We spoke about the importance of timing and the student-advisor relationship and how that fits into the coaching approach. From the point of view of the participant, it is easier to have a coaching conversation when the advisor already has an existing relationship with the student and they are meeting with the student during a non-peak period both to which they said, "Some advisors like have great relationships with students or students are coming in during non-peak time. So, they can have these more developmental like coach like conversations. But when you are meeting with students in the middle of like peak registration time, like you are like in and out in and out."

Future Advising-Coaching Ideas

As the interview ended, I was curious to hear about any potential plans or ideas that the coaching department may have in development in terms of coaching and advising. The participant mentioned that the department was exploring the idea of taking the coaching training to another level. The participants discussed how they reached out to the person who was responsible for creating the coaching program at Florida State University which is a very well-known post-secondary institution and especially known for their successful coaching program. They spoke about potentially outsourcing the training through Academic Life Coaching, which is the certification program a few of the coaches from the department had completed themselves. However, the participant did mention that there are a few obstacles that come with developing a training program like that one. To begin with, a training program like that once can be very costly, and according to the participant who said, "but we don't have that kind of money to be having everybody do that training"

Another idea would be to continue to conduct these training sessions in-house but provide some sort of micro-credentialing. In this scenario, the advisors who attend and complete all the required training would receive a badge upon completion. This kind of training program, according to the participant would not make the advisor a certified coach but it is another professional development opportunity for them to further enhance their skills and receive some recognition for it.

Whether or not these ideas will ever come into fruition, it would be interesting to see how coaching and advising continue to come together and evolve as the roles become one.

Remarks

  Personally, for this study it was important to meet with a representative of the coaching department to not only get the historical information as to how the College Life Coaching department came to be but also to learn more about how coaching was first introduced to the advising community. It was insightful to hear from the participant how the department was first approached with the idea of providing these training sessions for advisors and what the reason was behind doing it. It was very telling in terms of what the advising culture was like that prompted this to happen in the first place. I also think that giving the participant an opportunity to reflect on those trainings and to disclose the challenges that they saw themselves when it came to very beginnings of integrating coaching and advising was beneficial and overall enriched this study and gives the reader something to really think about.

  In the next chapter, we get into the findings from the participants of the study by revealing the different themes that were identified throughout the data and go in-depth in terms what those themes revealed in terms of the participants overall experience with utilizing the coaching skills and techniques as well as address their thoughts and feelings on integrating college life coaching with academic advising.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

After interviewing each of the participants and spending countless hours analyzing their responses, the data uncovered common themes throughout that I was looking forward to learning and exploring more about. A total of 25 themes were identified and each one was grouped based on what the participants said about these themes. The first group, titled Benefits to Utilizing Coaching Skills and Techniques, consisted of four themes: (a) Student Empowerment, (b) Engagement, (c) Collaboration, and (d) Exploration. The second group, titled Challenges to Using Coaching Skills and Techniques, consisted of five themes: (a) Parents, (b) Personal Struggles, (c) Redirect to a New Major, (d) Caseloads, and (e) Appointments.

The third group, titled Different Coaching Skills and Techniques, included a total of nine themes: (a) Time Management, (b) Study Skills, (c) Goal Setting, (d) Active Listening, (e) Open Ended Questions, (f) Probing, (g) Action Plan/Tasks, (h) Provide Resources, and (i) Follow Ups. The fourth group, Advisor Characteristics, was made up of five themes: (a) Empathy, (b) Sensitivity, (c) Open Mindedness, (d) Patience, and (e) Non-Verbal Cues. The final group, titled Suggestions for Future Coaching Training Opportunities, consisted of two themes: (a) Shadowing, and (b) Role Play, as seen in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Common Themes Identified
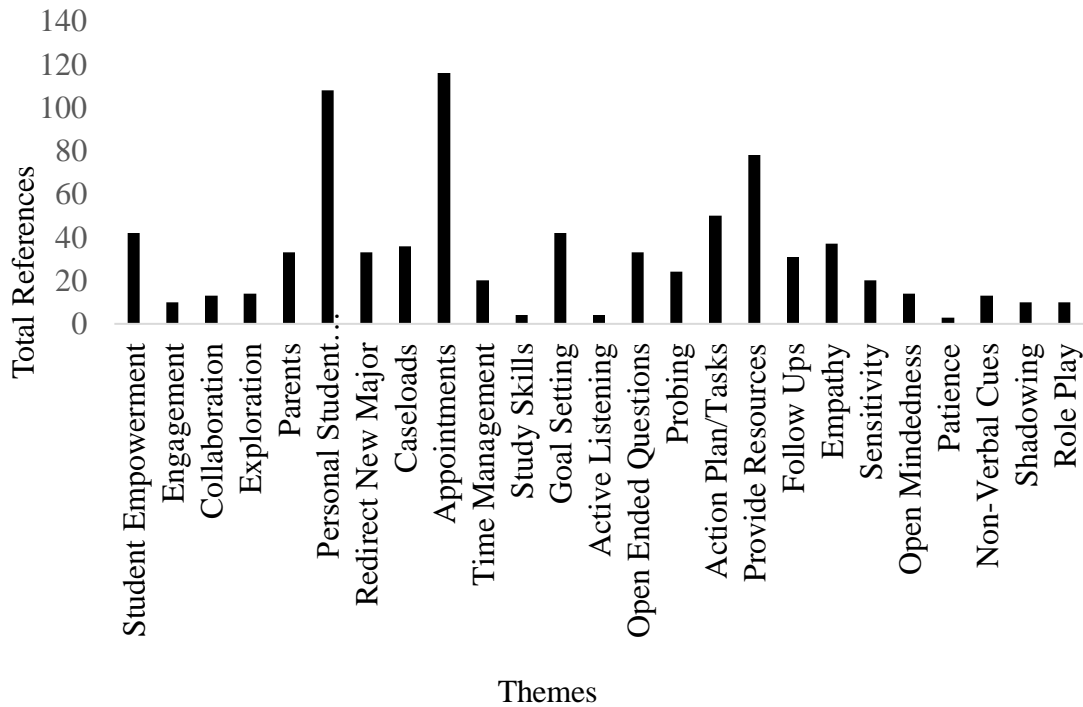
Note. These results show the different themes that were identified and the number of times they were referenced in the data. As seen in the Figure, appointments were the most referenced theme followed by patience which was referenced the least number of times by the participants.

The first group that will be discussed will touch on the benefits of utilizing the coaching skills and techniques were based on the themes that were presented the participants noticed a few behavioral changes in their students when they had the opportunity to utilize the coaching skills and techniques on their students during their advising session.

The themes also revealed the many challenges that the participants encountered where they felt that it was too difficult to use the coaching skills and techniques during

the advising sessions. Or there were instances where using the skills and techniques was impossible given certain circumstances which will be addressed specifically later in the chapter.

Finally, the themes revealed the overall thoughts and feelings that the participants had about the possible integration of college life coaching within the advising community. For instance, there were certain interpersonal traits that kept coming up in the data which was further explained by the statements made by the participants that these were traits that as advisors were important to have to effectively use these coaching skills and techniques on their students.

Other themes that came up that would provide insight into the overall thoughts and feelings about integrating coaching and advising had to do with specific training topics. The participants mentioned frequently the idea of offering training sessions that would allow for opportunities to shadow other advisors as well as allow for role playing where one could practice their skills and techniques onto someone else.

In this section, I will be discussing the different themes in greater detail while also sharing several student experiences that the participants were able to recall throughout the interviews that will further illustrate some of the points that will be addressed in this chapter.

Benefits to Utilizing Coaching Skills and Techniques

The literature presents life coaching as an alternative approach for assisting individuals who may be dealing with certain obstacles that they wish to overcome. Or, they have a goal they wish to achieve. In either one of these circumstances, the individual may seek the guidance of a life coach to help guide them by using a series of skills and

techniques that would have that individual produce their own practical solutions to resolve their own matter. Life coaching literature also illustrates how using this approach can positively enhance an individual's overall personal development. It is for these same reasons that if used properly, college life coaching may be a helpful tool that academic advisors can use on their students if they feel it is appropriate and that the student may benefit from having a coaching session.

After meeting with each of the participants to get a better understanding of their experiences when they utilized the coaching skills and techniques within their advising sessions, what they recalled seeing the most from their students was several developmental behavioral changes after the student had that initial coaching experience with the participants. Some reported that students became much more empowered, by wanting to take sole control of their situation. Other participants said that using the coaching skills and techniques encouraged students to explore more about themselves and allowed them to open more.

The participants also discussed how they noticed at times that their relationships with their students became more of a collaborative working relationship. Rather than having that typical advisor-student relationship, where the advisor gives the information and the student receives that information, there were instances where the two came together to learn together. Lastly, the participants noticed that in using certain coaching skills such as setting an agenda, asking open-ended questions, and coming up action items, the students were able to be much more engaged with their advisor during these sessions.

Empowerment

The participants noticed that after having a coaching session with their student the student felt and became more empowered after their conversation. The participants enthusiastically described it as seeing first-hand how much the student wanted to achieve and how willing they were to do whatever it took to get it done, whatever the case was without having the advisor do all the work. One participant said that "coaching allowed me to put some of that responsibility on the students." It is not surprising that frequently the students want their hands to be held throughout the process and instead of having someone resolve their problems for them. However, the participants referred to their students as being adults, especially now that they were in college and how it was important to treat them like adults. The participants wanted to encourage their students to be independent and using the coaching process as a tool was an effective way to get the student to become more independent.

The first step to becoming independent was for the student to take ownership of the problem or challenge at hand. By utilizing the coaching skills and techniques one participant said that "you're giving them autonomy, giving them authority over their situation." As a result of having a coaching session with their advisor, there seemed to be a shift that took place where it was now the students that wanted to do whatever was needed to resolve a particular matter. The coaching process reinforced these students to begin to trust their own intuition more, as one participant reflected on this point,

> Empowered because they realize, like, you know what I mean it was great to talk to this person who led me to this realization, but I did not know it. I did have that within me. So, they can learn to trust themselves more.

Although there was this sense of empowerment from the students, the participants did express how they felt that sometimes the students just needed that initial push, that sense of encouragement for them to take that first step, as one participant said,

They feel empowered to come to me, or they feel empowered to decide and then just check with me instead of waiting for me to give them the answer or not feeling confident in themselves, because I just gave them the answer.

To help with the process of guiding the student to decide, something that the participants did try to reframe from doing was to tell the students what to do. As one participant put it, "we're here to help them, but we're not here to do it for them." Instead, they left that for the students to produce all on their own but for the participants it was about asking the important questions, the thought-provoking questions to get the students to think.

The first step in getting the students to think about what steps they wanted to take was to identify what the main problem was. Once that problem or agenda was clearly identified, which the participants said was the student was either struggling academically or dealing with a personal issue, and it was discussed at great length, towards the end of the conversation one of the most frequently asked questions by the participants was "ok, what is it that you want to do to resolve this?" By asking this one question it forced the student to think about it and to come up with specific steps or ways in which they want to go about handling the matter on their own. Although the goal is to have these students face the challenges head on, there are instances where guidance from the advisor is still needed and welcomed. One participant commented further on this point in which they described as having numerous times where they did assist the student by providing the

different avenues to them however it was highly advised by the participant that now that the student was aware of all the different options that it would be up to the student to think about each option and to decide what would work best for them. The participant said that she would conclude this kind of conversation with the student by saying, "these are your options; you have to make the decision for yourself."

Once the decision was made by the student, it was according to the participants, an effective way to place the ownership back onto the student and it also made the students more accountable for their actions or lack thereof. The accountability piece became an important coaching tool when the advisors would meet with that student again during a follow up meeting where details of the previous session would be discussed. The most common follow up question that has been asked by some of the participants was "so I know the last time we met we spoke about this, and you said that you were going to do this, how did it go?" This was an opportunity for the student to reflect on the decision they made and whether it was something that worked for them to help them resolve an issue or overcome a certain barrier. One participant detailed their experience of seeing a student feel that sense of empowerment,

> Where you are in life and putting them in their own seat of empowerment, there is a change in their demeanor. They will be like, oh my God, I got two A's. I am so happy. Oh, thank you so much. And I am like, you see, does not that feel good. So, they feel empowered after that conversation. And you can see that, and they will tell you, I feel so much better. I feel so much clearer. So, it is a great opportunity, and if you get to do it, the student benefits tremendously.

The utilization of the coaching skills and techniques allows the advisor to sit back and ask the thought provoking questions while the student who is mostly in control of the conversation, decides what steps they are going to take in order get the desired outcome they want. This kind of approach promotes empowerment on behalf of the individual. By the participants using the skills and techniques of college life coaching puts the onus on the student but helps with laying the foundation so that the student can develop themselves as independent individuals who can resolve their own matters therefore empowering them to do so (Figure 2).

Figure 2

Benefits to Utilizing Coaching Skills and Techniques
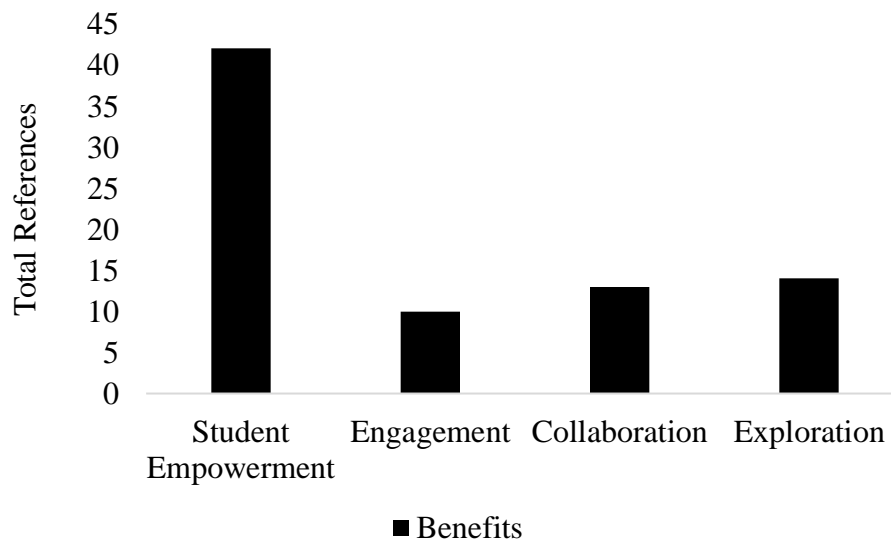
Note. These results show the total number of times the participants referenced these themes and referred to them as the benefits of utilizing the coaching skills and techniques. As seen in the Figure, student empowerment was the most referenced whereas engagement was referenced the least.

Exploration

Colleges and universities can be known as a place of self-discovery for many students. For the participants, they spoke about how using these coaching skills and techniques was helpful in terms of getting to know and understand the students. According to them, it was an effortless way of finding out the student's likes and dislikes. The skills and techniques were helpful when it came to really focusing on identifying specific goals that the students wanted to achieve. The participants also reported relying on these skills especially when they were having discussions with their students that were focused on the student's future career plans. Advisors are accustomed to meeting with students who are undecided about everything and need guidance to decide what their interests are.

The participants found that by using certain coaching skills and techniques helped to initiate these kinds of conversations with their students and eventually as the conversations progressed the skills encouraged the students to explore more about themselves so that they can find the answers themselves. Whether the session was focused on looking into other majors or just simply trying to find out the students' interests, some of the participants found themselves asking certain types of questions to provide an opportunity for the student to take the time to reflect on the question and open more. One participant discussed the types of questions she likes to lead with to get the students to explore more about themselves, "Exploration is involved because you are asking those questions, what do you like about your major? Why did you select your major?"

To the participants' perspective, a student who is willing to explore more about themselves tends to also be a student who is open to the idea of experiencing a coaching session with their advisor. As one participant mentioned, "those are the kinds of students that you're like, you know what I'm going to like, really dig deeper with this student." It seems like if a student is more closed off that is a strong indicator to the participants at least, that this student may not be as receptive to being on the receiving end of the coaching skills and techniques.

According to the data as it pertains to exploration, these coaching skills and techniques appeared to be the most useful when the participants would have conversations with their students who may have been unsure about their majors or what careers they wanted to pursue. One participant spoke about how it has been her experience that the coaching skills and techniques have been better suited for these kinds of career focused conversations, "so there's a little bit more exploration I think that happens with career that might not happen as much in my personal experience with just general coaching and advising." It is common for students to enter the college of university not knowing what they want to major in and therefore, declare themselves as an exploratory major (undecided), one participant spoke about one instance where through using the coaching skills and techniques they reassured and encouraged their student by telling them "Take your time and like exploring these different programs, reach out different advisors to review the requirements." According to the participant, it is about giving that student the time and space to determine whether that is for them, "they need that space exploration with their major."

Based on the findings from the participants', the way in which the coaching skills and techniques are designed conceptually allows the advisor to ask thought-provoking questions to their students as well as encourages the student to take the time that they need to put that student in a mindset that gives them an opportunity to explore different aspects of themselves, such as major exploration and career exploration, which are the two common circumstances that advisors encounter frequently.

Collaboration

The relationship between a student and their advisor is an important one. It is important for the advisor to build rapport with their student and to develop a level of trust. Often, the student-advising relationship is the only relationship a lot of these students make during their college career as developing new relationships can be hard to do in the university environment. This study, based on the accounts of the participants, found that using coaching skills and techniques may aid in developing a collaborative working relationship between the student and the advisor.

The participants made it known that when they had an opportunity to work alongside their students it was a learning experience which they enjoyed. One participant spoke in detail about one collaborative experience she had with one of her students. The participant met with a student who wanted to discuss looking into different career options that the student could be a possible suitable candidate for after they obtain their degree. There was one career field that the student was interested in, but both the student and the participant were not too knowledgeable about.

The approach that the participant's took in this scenario was to not only suggest that the student look into it, but the participant wanted to become better informed about it

as well. The participant's response to that was "I haven't heard of that yet, but I will learn about it, and I want you to learn about it too." The participant said she gave herself "homework" and encouraged the student to do some research on their end and that they would meet again to discuss their findings together. The participants often referred to this kind of working relationship between the advisor and the student as a "joint process" and a "shared responsibility." By incorporating these coaching skills and techniques, one participant emphasized the importance of this collaborative relationship with the student by saying, "Hey, we're in this together, let's do it together."

It seems that when a collaborative relationship cannot be fostered between the student and the advisor, the student may not reap the possible benefits that come along with having that kind of relationship with their advisor. One participant concernedly said that "if I'm just there holding their hand and pulling them through the whole process, then we did nothing." It makes the job of the advisor easier when "they're more involved in the process" as one participant stated when referring to the students. Students do not have to feel like they are alone in this entire process. They should always know that there is someone there who is willing and open to working through it with them together.

Engagement

As a result of developing a collaborative relationship with some of their students, the participants reported that they noticed an increase in the level of student engagement after utilizing the coaching skills and techniques. One participant acknowledged the approach as it relates to engagement, "Coaching kind of showed us how to engage the student." According to the data, some participants reported this elevated level of student engagement which was evident to them by the number of appointments that were made

by the students. This was especially apparent during the pandemic where the university had transitioned to working and conducting classes remotely.

Participants noted that during this historical time a lot of their students felt alone, lost and overall disconnected. They missed that human connection that they were used to getting while they were on campus. After the transition to remote learning the only person, those students had that they knew they could connect with was their advisor. Due to that accessibility, students were increasingly scheduling advising appointments, and some were meeting with their advisors more frequently than usual, one participant stated, "we actually had a higher show up rate than we did in person, less cancellations."

It was not surprising that during this time, some students wanted to be able to go to someone to talk to them and be able to express their thoughts and feelings. Once the pandemic began, at first, getting a hold of someone became a challenge and the university engagement was at a loss because how can one be engaged when essentially remote. However, one participant said about utilizing the coaching skills and techniques during this time in their advising sessions was,

> It opens an opportunity to just engage students in a different way. And we need to, I honestly believe we need to, especially with where we are now in higher education. I think we need to be engaging them beyond just what is going on with your classes, like understanding the student.

The purpose of these advising appointments is mostly informational to talk about educational related topics. However, in recent times these same appointments also served as an opportunity for students to engage with their advisors. These sessions have given

students a space where they can connect with another human being to receive the help and support that they may need at that time.

Remarks

One of the ideas of life coaching is to be able to provide the individual with the support they need to help that person grow, to overcome and to achieve whatever goals they have set for themselves or to improve an aspect of their life. In no way is it part of the coaching process to have the coach provide the client with all the answers and to do all the work. It is about providing a space where someone is there to guide the individual, but it is the individual themselves that come to their own conclusions. There is a lot of personal growth that does take place in the coaching process.

Based on the participants responses, using the coaching skills and techniques provided an opportunity for a discussion to take place where the student was able to identify challenges that they wanted to overcome or find ways to work towards a goal. What these participants described seeing firsthand after they incorporated the coaching skills and techniques with some of their students was a positive shift in the student's personal behavior, but they also noticed that the relationship between the student and the advisor changed in a positive way. If an advisor can provide an individual student with a space where the advisor can effectively use this coaching style to help that student, the student may be able to recognize for themselves what they need to do to be able to reach their full potential and be successful.

Although utilizing the coaching skills and techniques may have its benefits, the process is not always an easy one as it does come with its challenges. In the next section,

I will discuss the challenges that the participants encountered that made using the coaching skills and techniques either difficult or impossible.

Challenges to Utilizing Coaching Skills and Techniques

The literature on life coaching does highlight the ways in which the process may be effective and impactful when it comes to the livelihood of an individual. Literature does also present the challenges and the criticism that the field of coaching has had to face over the years. Life coaching in higher education specifically in academic advising is no exception. From the advising community, when it comes to using the skills and techniques, there are both circumstances and moments that have presented themselves that simply do not allow for coaching to take place for several reasons. Some reasons are beyond the advisor's control. For example, there are some people who may be receptive to the idea of coaching while others may be very apprehensive about the whole concept in general. The participants reported that some of the students in their caseload who were dealing with personal struggles of their own were not open to the idea of coaching. There were also external factors such as parental involvement that the participants said made it impossible to coach the student.

Aside from hesitation from individual people, there are also structural and operational challenges that do not allow for coaching to occur. Although the participants discussed having several positive experiences and outcomes when they utilized the coaching skills and techniques with their students, they did also address several challenges that they encountered themselves where they felt that because of the circumstances made it difficult to even attempt to use these skills at all. One of those circumstantial challenges they were faced with was the length of time they had to meet

with their students for appointments. Another advising structural challenge was the overall student caseloads that each participant was responsible for overseeing, which was made up of hundreds of students. These are just a few obstacles that have become a challenge for these participants whose intention was to want to use the coaching skills and techniques but given one of these circumstances were forced to not use them.

Structural and Operational Challenges

A few of the challenges the participants discussed had to do with the current advising model. The participants mentioned that the way academic advising is conducted at the university poses a challenge and hinders the many opportunities that these participants may have had to use to the coaching skills and techniques. As a result of these advising obstacles, there have been numerous missed opportunities to help students who may be dealing with academic related issues or even personal struggles that could benefit from their advisor's help.

Student Appointments. The most common finding in terms of challenges the participants experienced as it pertains to the structural format of advising as seen in Figure 3, was the student appointments. For students to speak with their advisors they must first schedule an appointment with them. The participants reported that they had a total of 30 minutes to meet with each student. The overall complaint from the participants was that 30 minutes was not enough time for one, properly advise the student in terms of their academics and secondly, to be able to conduct a coaching session.

Figure 3

Challenges to Utilizing Coaching Skills and Techniques
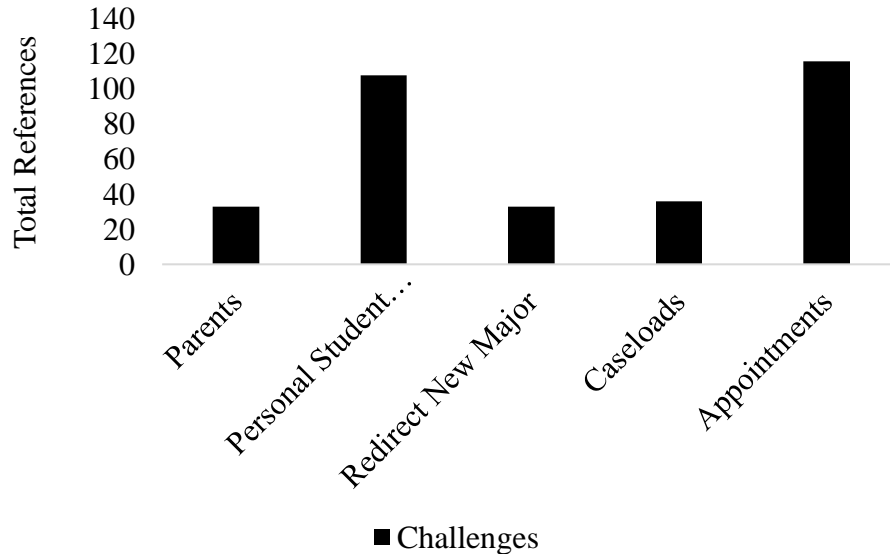
Note. These results show the total number of times the participants referenced these themes and referred to them as challenges that they faced when they tried utilizing the coaching skills and techniques. As seen in the Figure, student appointments were the most referenced whereas parents and redirect to a new major tied for least number of references.

While discussing the challenges of student appointments, one hurdle the participants say they currently encounter is that the student appointments are already pre-designed. Per the academic department's primary agenda, the advisor in those allotted 30 minutes is required to discuss certain academic topics with the student. According to the participants, covering those academic topics in most cases, they would usually take up that entire appointment therefore leaving no time to discuss anything else or to at least do a check in with the student. One participant elaborated further,

> So, in those 30 minutes, we have many things that we are supposed to touch on
>
> and to the point that we must check off boxes. And make sure that we talk about

career counseling and make sure that we talk about grade forgiveness and these things. So, to take 30 minutes to let the students set the tone and the agenda, I was like, this is unreasonable.

Another participant spoke about the limited time they must meet with their student because of certain topics they have to discuss with their student,

And even like within our department, we have some requirements that students must meet, like the foreign language requirement. I do not think any other college has that requirement. So that's an additional 10 minutes. I am explaining to the student that you can satisfy this requirement with X, Y and Z. And then I get the wonderful question. But I thought my foreign language was satisfied from high school. No, it is not. So that takes 15 minutes where I am explaining that to the students.

Some participants did say that sometimes they had the flexibility to go over those 30-minute appointments. One participant said that this flexibility is afforded to certain programs who do not need to take up the full 30 minutes as well as students who simply do not need the entire time with their advisor versus the first-year student,

But again, it depends on your college because something in nursing takes longer to do than a major in the Green School. So, I mean, again, it depends on what you are in there for because sometimes you do not use the full 30 minutes. Sometimes the student has enrolled in their classes, and they just want to say, hey, you know, how many credits do I have left or if their last semester and they do not have any requirements that they just want to have that reassurance that am I clear to graduate. Yes. Make sure you put your application in for graduation and let them

know about commencement and all of that. So, it is not always 30 minutes, but like a first-year student takes the full 30 minutes, a transfer student takes the full 30 minutes, especially the first two appointments with them. It takes time.

Another instance where the participants felt like they had the time to extend was if they did not have another appointment scheduled afterwards then they were able to extend the appointment for the student if it was needed. However, extending appointments does become difficult to do especially during the advising peak period which occurs during the registration period. Some of the participants reported that during this time they are completely booked the entire day with back-to-back appointments.

In addition to these student appointments, the participants also mentioned that there are other tasks that they must complete that are student appointment related. For instance, one task that must be completed after each appointment is the advisor must complete an advising report. The advising report, which is a summary of the appointment, is made available to the student on their advising portal, also known as Panther Success Network (PSN). This means that if every student attends their appointment and the advisor completes the report right after the meeting with the student which can take a few minutes to complete, this leaves little to no time for extending the session at all. This time limit makes it difficult for the advisors to initiate or even have a coaching session with their students. One participant response to this was, "Because we only have 30 minutes and 30 minutes doesn't allow you to get to like a reflection question." Another participant responded in frustration by saying, "I do have to catch myself because when you're doing like eight appointments a day and everything in between, sometimes, you you're just kind of like rushing through this."

Allowing for extra time for the appointment became impossible for some participants who reported that during the pandemic, they saw an increase in demand for appointments while there was a significant decrease in cancellations or no shows. One participant said, "Especially when the pandemic started, everything shut down, like nobody missed appointments." That same participant noticed that the students they did not meet with as much before the pandemic were making it to their appointments during the pandemic.

Based on the participant responses on this subject, it seems that for advisors to be able to utilize more often the coaching skills and techniques, the participants suggest that there needs to be some adjustments made when it comes to the timeframe they have to meet with their students. It seemed apparent that the participants liked the times that they had when they were able to be flexible with their student appointments and allow time for the student to discuss topics other than those that are academically related, but those opportunities do not occur often.

Student Caseloads. Aside from the challenges that stem from student appointments, the participants did say that a contributing factor to their overwhelming appointments was due in part to their student caseloads. Upon being hired, each academic advisor is assigned a certain number of students that they become responsible for. The advisors are responsible for the students in their caseloads by making sure that they are following the program requirements and that they are performing well academically. Several ways the advisors are to stay on top of them is to check in on their students by sending the students an email or giving them a call and of course by meeting with them.

The participants I interviewed for this study on average had student caseloads anywhere between 400 to up to 700 students at one point or another during their advising career. Based on the responses, there is an overwhelming consensus amongst the participants is that they have too many students to be able to coach and support them. For them, an obvious solution to the problem would be to simply decrease the caseloads significantly so that they are in a position where they would be able to provide support to those who need it. On this topic, one participant said,

> I mean, it is beyond our control, but you know, when you do have a smaller caseload, you are you know, you are able to attend to the student better, you are able to attend to and it is not just your appointments.

Interestingly, it seems the number of students that makeup a caseload is said to vary from one academic advisor to another due to the position that they have, and it also depends on certain circumstances that may occur within the academic advising department. For example, one common circumstance that occurs within the advising department that several of the participants have dealt with before is when a colleague from their department resigns from their advising position. As a result of this resignation, that former advisor's student caseload needs to be redistributed among the current working advising team. Of course, this adds even more students to the other advisors' already existing caseloads.

Another instance where the caseloads also seem to differ in size depends on which advising level position the advisor has. Currently at Florida International University, there are three levels of advisor positions. The higher the level of the advisor the less of a student caseload they have because the duties and responsibilities of that

advisor is to work on projects that are typically metric focused. Whereas those that are in entry level advising position, The focus of those who are in entry level advising positions is solely on their students which is why they have many students in their caseload. One participant further explained this point,

> I mean, for example, I am an advisor one. So, I see mostly students and then we have some other tasks that we do. But then like an advisor two and three, they have certain things that they are doing, like excess credit.

For an in-depth look at the job descriptions of each advising level positions refer to Appendices A-C. For those advisors and the participants that I spoke with that have an overwhelming number of students in their caseloads, there is concern that they may not be able to help all of them especially those who they know are struggling. "I have a 600 caseload, so I know already that I am not going to make impact," said one participant angrily. The participants I interviewed expressed that they want to be able to help their student and be available to them when needed, but as it stands currently, the caseloads that they have pose a major challenge in providing opportunities where they can help and support their students. Based on the discussions with the participants it may be beneficial for the academic departments to re-evaluate their student-advisor ratio to see if there is way to accommodate advisors by allowing them the time and space to use these coaching skills and techniques.

Student Specific Challenges

In addition to the structural and operational challenges advisors face, the participants also spoke in-depth about the obstacles they encounter that involve the students directly. There are students who are going through personal challenges. Those

challenges can be due to familial situations. Or the student may have other commitments to which they have to attend such as a full-time job. Another reason could be that the student is dealing with personal obstacles such as mental illness or academic factors that may have a serious effect on them.

For some of the participants, they felt that they were either not equipped to help or they dealt with resistance from the student. Some of the participants talked about how academic advising is a profession that keeps one on one's toes because every day is something new and one can never prepare themselves for what is going to happen or who it is they are going to meet that day. That is the one aspect of the job that the participants say makes it so unpredictable. It is these kinds of situations that make it difficult and even impossible for these advisors to use their coaching skills and techniques to further assist these students.

Personal Student Struggles. The data show that the participants were often meeting with students who were dealing with various personal issues and or commitments. To get a better sense of the student's personal situation, one participant would often resort to asking one specific question to try to get the student open and provide more information,

> Pretty much asking them, you know, is there any sort of extenuating circumstance that you are going through, something beyond your control? You do not have to go into the details, but I just want to know so we can, so I can let you know what the next steps would be.

The participants reported that most of the students in their caseloads were either working a full-time job while attending as a full-time student, as one participant put it,

"they're working full time jobs and doing like full-time, full-time coursework, 12 credits." Another participant commented on the same point saying, "sometimes also with students you know, it's their working, they have a lot on their plate." One participant said, "I'm working with a population right now that's older and they have a lot of responsibilities." On the other hand, you have students who may come from a household where the parents have lost their jobs, or the student themselves have experienced a job loss and are now dealing with the implications that come along with unemployment. As one participant said, "The student might have been struggling with like losing their jobs or having to find a new job to support their families and maybe someone in their family had lost a job."

Aside from job commitments or lack thereof, the participants also reported that some of their students were also experiencing other extenuating circumstances such as financial problems, students falling ill, or students taking care of someone who was sick, this was especially evident during the pandemic. One participant said, "I have had students who have lost family members and failed classes because either they lost a family member, or they had to take care of a family member. I have had students who have gotten sick where they got Covid." Another participant like the previous one recalled what she heard from her students,

> Everything. I mean, financial was number one. A lot of them are either losing their jobs or their families are losing their jobs. I have had several who lost family members. I have had many who were diagnosed and sick. I have had some that were hospitalized.

Other participants shared a medical experience one of her students was having while she was abroad, "I have a student in Hungary, and she was in a bad car accident. And so she was, you know, I mean she had to have surgery because one of her vertebrae was crushed." Students who found themselves in these serious situations wanted to know about the options that they had in terms of their academics; they were not in a place to have their advisor coach them in any way.

Lastly, when the university transitioned to remote learning due to the pandemic a lot of students struggled with this mode of instruction. One participant described this time by saying, "I mean a lot of students are having a very difficult time." Another participant reiterated a statement she heard from one of her students who said, "It is very difficult right now. I cannot handle online learning." Students were very concerned about their academic performance during this unpredictable time, one participant referred to what students were saying during this time, "they have expressed concern with how they're performing in their classes as a result of the virtual method." One participant gave a detailed description about what she saw happening with her students that were struggling with remote learning during the pandemic,

> My in-person students with English it was more difficult and creative writing
> because with English we have different tracks. I think that made it difficult
> because a lot of what happens in English is in class discussions. It is like shared.
> Many conversations are taking place and that was not happening remotely, having
> difficulty keeping up with the coursework, because they knew they needed to
> manage, they needed to self-manage, and they were not used to submitting just

coursework online and not being able to have conversations with professors or with classmates.

As a result of these circumstances, most of these students were placed on either academic warning or on probation because of their grade point averages falling below 2.0. The participants said some of these students who found themselves in these situations were receptive to the advisor utilizing coaching skills and techniques while others, due to the time constraints that the student had because of their personal commitments and circumstances, preferred a prescriptive advising approach. One participant did express how they feel when it comes to these students in particular, "the struggling students are the ones who need coaching the most." Though these students are only reaching out to their advisors to tell them the information that they need to know. For example, in which classes they need to enroll, or what do they need to do to appeal the semester for medical reasons.

For these students, even though they prefer the prescriptive advising style it was still important for advisors to be aware that their student may be going through something as it can be a piece of information that can be used down the line should anything come up. One participant said the following, "Sometimes there's, you know, these underlying issues that at least we can kind of try to detect."

What the data here indicates is that there are students who are really dealing with some demanding situations. However, what is happening to these students is that they are typically seeking out ways to resolve their academic troubles without having to have an in-depth conversation about it. Students who are in inconvenient situations could benefit from an intervention like coaching which would provide them with a space where they

can talk about their difficulties in greater detail. That did become a challenge for some of

the participants who were able to sense that there were students who needed the extra

help and would have benefitted from having a coaching session. One of the participants

was quoted saying, "You're working with different students who are struggling, and they

need a lot of guidance, and they need a lot of help." However, it seemed to the

participants that the students overall did not have the time to really spend with them

talking about these issues which prevented the usage of the coaching skills and

techniques.

> **Mental Health Struggles**. Another common obstacle the participants reported

hearing from their students was that they were experiencing mental health issues. The

literature on life coaching emphasizes that this approach is not to cure the individual who

may be suffering from a mental illness. What distinguishes between a life coach and a

medical professional is that the life coach is a resource that can be used to help the

individual learn how to manage their mental illness so that they can learn to live with it

and still strive to live a healthy lifestyle. The participants say that these past two years of

dealing with a global pandemic may have been attributed to seeing more of these kinds of

cases. The participants reported that their students were specifically struggling from

mental illnesses such as suffering from depression and anxiety. Two of the participants

recalled instances with two of their students that either disclosed or showed signs of

mental distress. One participant recalled an incident that occurred in his office, "He just

was having a panic attack and literally was bent over against the wall inside in the

office." Another participant spoke about a session she had with one of her students,

She just had a really horrible time with certain classes. She did not have to get into the details. She just started to cry and started to say so I really got off track. I got really. And she is just she got depressed. She was suffering from depression.

One of the biggest obstacles these participants faced was not knowing how to help these students that were showing signs of mental distress during their appointment. For one participant, she saw similarities between coaching and counseling, "again, going back to my thoughts on the fact that coaching is very aligned to some actual counseling." Some of the participants I met with did have some counseling background which they found to be helpful when they had a student who was in distress. One participant who has a counseling degree said the following,

> My degree is in counseling. So, a lot of it seemed counseling related. I would not say I had huge insights from it because I was like, oh, these are counseling skills. I say the biggest thing was more like, oh, this is really nice.

However, the other participants I met with felt that they were not equipped to assist these students which is why often the participants would have to refer the students to seek out professional help. One participant said the following about not knowing how to better handle these kinds of situations,

> You know what a student that fails all their classes, there is something going on there. So, what if that is something really bad that should be addressed with, like a professional? And so, if we do not have the tools to, like, pull the information out of them or if we do not have the tools to know.

In the meantime, the participants have referred these students to the university's Counseling and Psychological Services (also known as CAPS) which is a counseling

service that is provided free of charge to students. However, at the time this interview took place, one participant did disclose a time they met with a student who was having a tough time and wanted to speak to someone about it to get help. The participant referred that student to CAPS so that she could get the support she needed. The participant reported that the student could only get on the waiting list. The participant said, "CAPS is busy now you know. There has been a real I think there has been a real uptick in people requesting therapists so she could only get on the waiting list."

Academic advisors are told to refer students to the proper services that the student needs to get help. When a major event occurs that may cause distress the message from the university to the students is to contact the Counseling and Psychological Services or the department of Student Affairs, and for faculty and staff, they may contact Employee Labor Relations. What is happening is that there is no way to keep up with the demand and that leaves the students and the faculty/staff with nowhere else to go to with their struggles, which can lead to making matters even worse. In coming to this realization, some of the participants did express that it would be beneficial for them to be trained on how to approach and coach these students who may be suffering from a mental health condition or experiencing a life crisis if the students are unable to seek the help from the professional due to the heavy demands of these services.

Redirect New Major. One of the toughest conversations these participants say that they must have with their students is when the student must be redirected to a new major. Redirection is a conversation that takes place when students are not performing well academically in their current program. For one participant, speaking on behalf of their programs, "We have a handful of students that need to be moved on." When the

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redirection conversation occurs, advisors provide the student with major/program options they must choose from and declare. According to one participant "those conversations are hard where we have to redirect them." For the advisor, because it is difficult to have these conversations, one participant spoke about the role of the advisor and the approach they must have when they are talking to a student and redirecting them, "I think that you need to be able to have very strong redirection skills." The participants described that these kinds of conversation can go one of two ways. First, there are students who are more aware of the situation. They understand they are not doing well and have accepted the fact that they need to choose a major that is better suited for them that they can be successful in.

Second, there are other students who do not take the news very well and refuse to accept it. The student does not want to be removed from their current major and put into a different one. One participant said after they had a conversation with one of their students heard that student say the following, "I do not want to think of an alternate plan. No, no. There is no alternative plan." Another participant shared a similar sentiment when it comes to these students saying, "They don't want to see any other alternative than whatever their set goal is or was." The participants say that they must work hard with these students to help them come to the realization that they have to be redirected. One participant discussed how there have been several occasions where they had to ask their supervisors to get involved in the session and assist them with the student. The participants say that these kinds of students are difficult to coach when they have this kind of mentality and are not willing to explore other options that could potentially benefit them overall.

Parents. The participants in this study seem to suggest that students who need to be redirected towards a new major who display this kind of resistant behavior are dealing with underlying pressures. The participants say that when they are meeting with a student who is reluctant to accept reality and change majors it is often because they do not want to disappoint their parents who may have persuaded their child into a specific career field.

There is an abundance of literature that supports the idea that a parents' involvement in their child's education is important to that child's overall academic performance and progression. There is a difference, however, between being a supportive parent and a parent who may be overbearing and controlling, which is also known as being a helicopter parent. According to the participants, sometimes even the presence of a parent or parents in an advising session can hinder the advising or coaching experience rather than help.

Some of the participants in this study have extensive experience with dealing and handling the parents of their students as a few of them mentioned that they themselves used to work in the K-12 education system before they transitioned to working in post-secondary institutions. The participants discussed about the challenges that came with having to deal with the 'helicopter parent' and how they noticed that when there is a strong parental presence in the session or there has been a parental influence it can make utilizing the coaching approach on the student very difficult. Some participants reported having sessions with their students where the parents were not only present in the session but often would do most of the talking. One participant shared her experience and how she handles those kinds of situations,

And then usually like there is a there's a handful of students I have that the parents are always in the advising session, and I try I already know that is going to happen. So, I try to make sure that the student has the opportunity to talk to me and address me, because at the end of the day, the student is getting an education not the parent.

On the same subject, another participant said,

And I make them feel comfortable and that I let them know I am like, you know, I am going to be addressing him or her, the student I am going to be addressing so and so most of the time, feel free to ask me questions, but I will be addressing them because it is their meeting.

The participants noticed that sometimes having the parent present in the advising session can change the behavior of that student. One participant described an instance where the parent was part of the session, and the student seemed very guarded and did not say much. One participant shared her experience where the parent had a dominant presence in this advising session, and she described how she was able to bring the focus back to the student,

So, I kind of feel that happens when the parents are in the advising session. And I had a situation a few days ago with a student and her mom was there and they did not have the camera on. So, I just heard them talking. So, I had to make sure the parent, your child is she ok with you being in this session because that automatically you are not giving the student a child a chance to talk like she is this is her grades in her class. So, in that aspect, I kind of feel it as a protective, guarded student because the parent is doing all the talking. And I have to kind of

bring it back to addressing the student that students will not take any classes. The student is the one that is earning these grades. So, I try to include both of them in the conversations. And then sometimes I do have to let the parent know that your student is here not you so the student will feel fine that they are kind of guarded in the sense of the parents doing all the talking. So, they say what they have to say. But I still try to keep it very focused on the student.

In addition to the parents attending the advising sessions, the participants also mentioned that it can be challenging when there is a strong parental influence that has been made on the student and it affects the track the student is on academically. One participant mentioned that sometimes parents get so involved as far as how many credits the student should be taking and what classes they can or cannot take. One participant spoke about how parental influence can sometimes cause the student to get off track,

I am glad that you are here for support. And I am here I am here to help you, too. But just keep in mind that I am going to be looking at them, like, the whole time. Yes, well, yes. Just pretend I am not here. You know, we do not want to intrude. And yes, they do have a lot of questions, but I make them feel like, you know, you're welcome in this space because your child allowed you to be welcome in this space. But they are my focus, you know, and then parents often parents ruin their students like trajectory.

This is more apparent when the advisors and students are having discussions pertaining to major selection or career paths. Sometimes those decisions were not made on their own. Instead, the decision was made for them already. One participant spoke about one instance they had with a student where the student wanted to figure out what

major to declare. The participants wanted to know more about the students' interests by asking the student what sort of things they liked. After going back and forth the student did tell the participant a particular area that they would love to learn more about. The participant responded with the following question, "So you know what, what's keeping you from studying that?" The response from that student was, "My mom and dad." These are just some examples as to how parents may make it difficult for the advisor to be able to utilize the coaching skills and techniques with the student.

Remarks

There are several recommendations that have been made when it comes to effectively using the coaching model. One of those recommendations involves having the coach create a safe space for their client that is conducive for the coaching process to effectively take place. What the coaching literature suggests is that not being able to provide a comfortable environment for the client will make the coaching process difficult and less efficient. What the response from the participants puts forward is that currently there are structural challenges within academic advising that these participants believe make it difficult to use the coaching skills and techniques. They have these large student caseloads which they are expected to meet with in a limited timeframe. Aside from that, they are also having to handle the added responsibilities that come with the advising role, which only seems to further cut down the amount of time they must help and support their students.

There were also instances where the participants found themselves confronted with student-related circumstances that they did not feel like they were fully equipped to tackle on. The participants reported meeting with students that are facing hardships of

their own because of external factors such as family life and other personal commitments. The students typically are resistant to coaching, even though they need it the most, as they are unable to take the time or to make the time for themselves to get guidance from their advisor by experiencing a coaching session with them.

These kinds of positive outcomes are the results of the skillset that these advisors learned in the coaching trainings and used themselves during their advising sessions. In the next section, I will be discussing the specific coaching skills and techniques that were used by the participants.

College Life Coaching Skills and Techniques

The coaching literature that focuses on the introduction of this approach supports the idea that knowing the philosophy, or the ethos of life coaching is important to know when it comes to this method as it is different in comparison to other methods of assistance. However, when it comes to the practice, there is an emphasis in the literature that states the effectiveness of life coaching starts with learning and being able to demonstrate the specific coaching skills and techniques that are encouraged to be used with clients or in this study with students. The purpose of using these certain skills is to be able to get the client to open, get them to think and reflect.

To be able to guide the student where they first begin by identifying a problem which is also known as setting the agenda for the conversation. After that agenda has been set, the coach begins to ask a series of thought-provoking open-ended questions which is to assist that student by having them produce a specific plan or steps that they want to take to resolve their agenda. There are countless different coaching skills and techniques out there. However, the participants in this study reported a total of nine

different coaching skills and techniques that they used: (a) referrals, (b) action plan, (c)

goal setting, (d) open-ended questions, (e) follow ups, (f) probing, (g) time management,

(h) study skills and (i) active listening as seen in Figure 4.

Figure 4

College Life Coaching Skills and Techniques
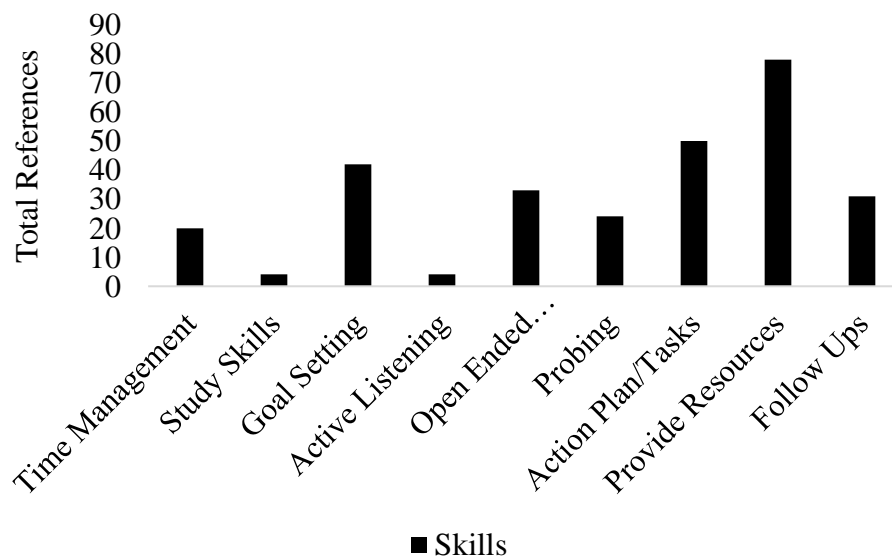
Note. These results show the total number of times the participants referenced these themes and referred to them as the various kinds of coaching skills and techniques that they used with their students. As seen in the Figure, the referral process as well as providing the students with resources were the most referenced skills whereas study skills and active listening were referenced the least.

Referrals (Provide Resources)

The most used coaching skill and technique by the participants was referrals to

resources that would be helpful for the student to either resolve an issue or to overcome

whatever challenges they were facing at the time. The university has multifaceted

services that are there to help students who may be struggling academically. The

university also has support services that can assist students who may be dealing with

personal obstacles. For example, departments such as Fostering Panther Pride focus on helping the homeless student population. Every year, there is an advisor's forum that takes place. Part of the forum's agenda is to introduce the academic advising community of any new and existing services to make them aware of what is available for the students.

It is important that the academic advisors are well informed of all the services that are available on campus so that in the event they have a student that could benefit from a certain area the advisor knows where to refer that student to and to also inform the student of what services are out there. The academic advising role is a valuable resource itself, as stated by one of the participants, "You know, we're a point of contact, we're like one of the first if not the first." Which is why as one participant said regarding the role of the advisor as it relates to the resources, "You have to step in and share as much knowledge, resource and information as you can." The participants discussed how often they informed the students that they did have access to tutoring services and that those services were free to them, "Letting them know about tutoring services."

Although that was a recurring student concern, the most common referral that the participants made to students was referring them to CAPS, Counseling and Psychological Services at the university. The participants spoke in great length about how they encountered situations with their students who were struggling with mental distress. Some disclosed that they had students who were dealing with depression, others say that their students had some level of anxiety, then there were cases where a student was going through a tough time in their life and needed someone to talk to about it. One participant spoke about a scenario that they had after meeting with a student who seemed troubled

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how they were able to sense that something was going on and referred that student to counseling, "Obviously, if there's more to it, then that's something that I would have to point them in the right direction with like, hey you know, there are other services on campus if you if you need that particular assistance."

A frequent topic of conversation the participants mentioned that they had with their students was centered around the topic of career paths or changing their majors. For most of the participants, they came from an academic department that deemed this topic to be especially important. A few of the participants spoke about how within their departments there was a career counselor that was hired to have in-depth conversations with students who wanted more information about the career fields that they may be interested in. Although there was a career expert throughout the academic departments, it was still important for the advisors to be given some tools and resources that would aid in facilitating these kinds of conversations.

Therefore, the participants found it helpful to either refer the student to a career counselor or provide the student with a career-oriented website with which they themselves were familiar to obtain more information. One participant said, "I'll say ok, here are some websites that I use look up career to get a career profile, such as BLS, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, so I'll give them the links." Another participant mentioned workshops that the student may find to be useful,

> And if they are in like a cluster or idea that we typically will talk about like work
>
> experience, internships, transferable skill sets, or even like doing LinkedIn,
>
> learning to like to do professional development or workshops like ways that they

can educate themselves on the field that they are choosing to go into and making

sure that you never know what you are going to like until you get into it.

For students who were struggling in their classes, most participants said that they

encouraged their students to speak with their professors. One participant said that "also,

like trying to tell them whenever you are encountering an issue, reach out to your

professor, your teacher's assistant. to find out why you are not doing so well on your

exams or what it is that you can improve." Often, the participants said that students felt

intimidated by their professors which made it hard to approach them in person or even

communicate with them by sending an email.

One participant described helping one student by pretending to be the instructor

and having the student speak to the advisor so that they can practice what to say to their

real professor in hopes of making it easier to approach their instructor. The participants

did make it clear that at the end of the day they are human and do not always have the

answers or have the capability to resolve the matters of the student themselves. However,

even though they may not be able to resolve the issue it is important for them to be

resourceful, as one participant said, "You provide them with the information."

Action Plan

The second most common coaching skill and technique the participants used was

creating an action plan with the students. In the coaching process, an action plan or action

items, are specific tasks or steps that the client wants to take to try to overcome an

obstacle or to try to achieve a goal. To some of the participants, ending a session without

having a plan in place does not help the student nor does just giving the student the

information, "Here's your classes bye, you know, that doesn't necessarily mean that they

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have an action plan that they can resolve themselves." To one of the participants, they compare the action plan to putting guidelines with one participant saying "we need to put some parameters on this, your homework" this helps to keep the student on track and to hold them accountable. Another participant encourages students to produce a plan as a tool to set them up for success, "Let us come up with a game plan. We must figure something out that will set you up to be successful." However, before concluding the coaching session with an action plan, the student first must set an agenda. The agenda is the topic of conversation that the student wishes to discuss that day. Once an agenda has been set for that session, it is the role of the coach to begin their line of questioning. As the session ends, the coach will circle back to the agenda to develop an action plan with the client.

After discussing the agenda and asking the thought provoking questions, as the conversation was ending, one participant spoke about how they like to sum up the conversation by asking the following question, "OK, you talked about this today, how do you want to go about resolving the issue?" Another participant likes to close the conversation by asking these questions, "how can we plan together to make that happen?" The student then determines what specific and measurable tasks that they want to do that they think would help them. The participants often referred to these tasks as being "homework" for the student to do. For some students, it is important to set deadlines to reinforce the importance of getting these tasks completed, one participant goes over the action plan by saying, "These are things you need to do, and this is a timeline."

After coming up with the plan, some participants take the time to summarize what was spoken about and make that summarization available to the student so that they can

refer to it. One participant described what their process is after they meet with their students, "I put in the action plan like this is one, this is what we talked about, all sorts of different options like this." Lastly, one participant likes to remind the students that they must hold up their end of the bargain by saying "I've laid the foundation for you, now it's just up to you to come through and deliver."

Goal Setting

Some students enter university with certain goals they want to achieve whereas others are unsure and have never set a goal for themselves before. For advisors, having goal setting conversations with their students is important and a part of the advising sessions. The practice helps the advisors to get to know their students better. It is important for advisors to know the student's goals and be able to use that information for future sessions as a tool for evaluating the student's academic performance to ensure that they are still aligned with the student's goals.

The participants in this study mentioned that goals that their students would share with them centered around their future and was heavily focused on what they wanted to achieve in their life especially when what they saw themselves doing in terms of their future profession. However, some participants shared that a lot of their students struggled with establishing their own goals and that their role as an advisor was to help to get the student to think about it. One participant spoke about her experience having met with both a goal-oriented student and a student who is all over place,

> I always ask them before I even get into anything like what are your goals with this degree. And some of them have very clear goals and some of them are like, I am all over the place and these are my thoughts.

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For those students who find it difficult to come up with their own goals, utilizing coaching skills and techniques can be an effective tool to get students to think about setting goals for themselves. For the participants, when those kinds of conversations did occur, the participants relied on asking certain questions to their students. Some of the kinds of questions the participants would ask the student to get them to think would be, "What are your true goals for your academics and your career development?" "How can we achieve those goals?" and lastly "How can you help me help you achieve those goals?" The purpose of those conversations, according to the participants, was to help the student to create a path(s) for the student to achieve their goals. As one participant said asking these kinds of questions, "Show them that there's multiple paths to get to their goal."

The participants mentioned several useful tools when having these conversations such as having the students create specific goals instead of broad ones. As one participant shared, it is difficult to achieve a goal that is broad "I even think about myself, sometimes you come up with your goals and they're very vague, and you think why I'm not meeting my goals unless you come up with very specific goals." After developing specific goals, it is important for the student to stay on top of them, as one participant said, it is important to "keep track of how they are accomplishing those goals." The participants also encouraged their students to come up with multiple goals. As it relates to goals and the pandemic, one participant said she advised the student to think about having multiple goals, "You need to come up with more than one career goal for yourself because the pandemic has shown all of us, that the world is unpredictable and that the plan in one day could go up in smoke the next day."

Open-Ended Questions

The kinds of questions being asked are crucial when having these kinds of coaching like conversations. The participants reported using mostly open-ended questions to guide them through their coaching conversations with their students. These kinds of questions allow for the advisor to get to know their student. One participant relies on asking open-ended questions to learn more about their student, "I feel like it's really important to ask those open-ended questions and not to assume certain things." The participants reported that by asking open-ended questions, they felt they could dive deeper into the conversation, and it led to the student to be more open to them. One of the participants said that using open-ended questions is, "Super, super, super helpful, and they give a lot of insight to what a student is going through, it helps them like the lead conversation." One participant noted that using open-ended questions really helped them to take on a supportive role, "Trying to be very broad and open-ended in the beginning and try to have the student lead the conversation."

There are academic programs that lend themselves to this line of questioning more so than others. A few of the participants discussed how one of the programs that they advise for, Interdisciplinary Studies Program (IDS), which was previously known as Liberal Studies Program, makes it easy for them to ask their students open-ended questions. One participant said, "Liberal studies, IDS, they require more coaching because there are a lot of open-ended questions in their lives. They are not settled on a major. They are not settled on a career path." The data revealed that asking open-ended questions gave students an opportunity to explore and open more about themselves which allowed the advisor to provide the student with the support they needed. One participant

spoke about how much she enjoyed talking to students who were in this academic program because it allowed for deep meaningful conversations to occur. The participant's said the following "I'm finding about myself you know what I liked, I liked exploratory, and IDS and I liked having that open-ended conversation."

Some of the kinds of open-ended questions the participants would ask their students were, "How are you?" "How are you getting involved in school?" and "How are things going?" As much as these kinds of questions allow the student to respond openly and be helpful for the advisors, asking open-ended questions can also be challenging for the advisors. As one participant said, "you never know how someone is going to answer a how questions or a what question, it's very difficult." Earlier, it was mentioned how being an advisor has its unpredictable moments, not truly knowing how a student is going to respond to a question that they are being asked can be considered one of those moments. As one participant put it, "I think that's part of a can of worms that opens up when you ask those what and how questions and ask them to look within for their real interests."

It is hard for one to prepare themselves for what someone is going to say, "What are they going to say if I ask this what or how question, how am I ready for what happens after that." This is a challenge that some of these participants have experienced themselves but for most of them asking these open-ended questions has been a helpful tool, "So I think it has really helped me be very broad with my questions. Better than being too specific in the beginning."

Probing

This type of line of questioning, the open-ended questions, or the asking of questions in general can be referred to as probing which is a coaching technique that some of the participants mentioned that they utilized frequently with their students to obtain information from them. However, for the participants, an advisor cannot simply go into a conversation and ask direct questions. For one participant, they spoke about their overall approach, "I kind of just talk to the student and find out where they're at, how they're doing." Another participant provided a detailed scenario when it comes to how she approaches her students when she wants to probe them with questions to get information out of the student,

> So, I usually start off by asking how they are doing, you know, how is it going? How are your classes? Very warm. And then they will just really start opening. And I say, hey, you know, I notice, you know, you are not doing so well this semester and they will just open, hey, you know, I am having some difficulty with the class or whatever, and then I make recommendations for what they should do. So, I like it when I am probing, it really depends on the student as every student is different. I mean, it is sometimes, you know, they have a serious personal situation that is happening. And I tell them, you know, if you are not comfortable speaking with me about it, that's fine.

The participants discussed about how they knew that something was going on with their student and sometimes the only way they could find out was to probe the student by not just asking any question but by asking the "right questions to further help them out" as one participant stated. While another participant further elaborated by

agreeing that using this technique of asking questions is an effective way to get more information out of the student, "So really just trying to find out what's going on their life." There are some specific kinds of questions that some of the participants ask their students that they know will trigger that student to talk. For example, one participant relies on asking, "Do you work?" and "How many hours a week do you work?" to get the student to be open about their personal life. Another question that some of the participants like to start their conversations with their students is by simply asking, "How are things going?"

This technique has had some of the participants really think about the kinds of questions they ask. For example, one participant said, "To help my students, even the way that I ask questions. It has made me more aware of also the way I ask questions." For one participant, she hopes that by meeting with the student several times and having asked them numerous questions that they eventually come up with their own, "And I hope that eventually they do not need the prompting. But at the very least they are coming up with their own questions."

Follow Ups

The findings show that with all these countless conversations that the advisors are having with their students it is equally important for them to follow up with those students. Especially for them to check in on the ones who have disclosed that they may be struggling with something whether that is something academic or personally related. However, sometimes there might not be a reason to follow up but the advisor just wants to see how things are going. One participant said that "I tend to check in with no reason a lot, you know, just like, hey, how is it going? You know." If there has been an initial

reach out with no response some of the participants said they give it some time until they try again, "I haven't heard back from them, you know, within a week, two weeks reaching out to them again." For some students they are used to having their advisor reach out to them every now and then because that is just the style of the advisor, "I do it periodically, and because I have a rapport with them, they don't think it's strange."

Some participants also make notes to follow up with certain students that they know did not do well in the previous semester to see check in to see how they are doing so far in the new semester. One participant has reached out to a student before and sent them a message saying "Hey, how is your semester going so far? I know that last semester you failed math and you are retaking it this semester." Although the follow ups are important to the advisors, it can be difficult to do all the time or not as much as the advisor would like to, "I do calendar reminders, yeah, I try, but I know other people don't have the time, but I do, I think it helps." Some participants spoke about how following up with some of their students has become a project that they must complete for their department, "We have different lists like cohort lists and different lists for like students missing different requirements. So, I feel like those are really easy to follow up." These follow-ups occur through emails, phone calls and by scheduling another appointment to meet all which are initiated by the advisors.

However, on occasion the student will reach out to provide the advisor with an update. One participant discussed how they encourage their students to follow up with them and to keep them in the loop, "I always tell them please keep me updated." Often, the purpose of the follow ups is used to check in to see how the student is doing as it pertains to the action plan/tasks they had developed in the previous appointment. One

participant spoke about how common it was for them to receive an email follow up from a student, "Some of them will email back and be like, oh, I did, I attended that workshop that we discussed, and you know, they'll tell me their feedback on it." Although it may be difficult to follow up with every student as some of the participants alluded to, they do see the true value in doing so as much as they can.

Time Management

Another common issue amongst some of the participants that they found themselves assisting students with was with their time management skills. One participant said, "time management is a big deal for students." The participants reported talking to their students frequently about the importance of time management in college. Often, the participants would have a conversation with a student where they would discuss the student's course load for that term. According to a few of the participants, they had met with some students who were determined to take as many credits as they could to get ahead but what they were not taking into consideration was the demands of the courses that they were choosing.

On the topic of course load, one participant said, "You know, we're not trying to overload you so that your time management skills suffer, or you know I'm not increasing your stress levels and things of that nature." It is about having a good balance between the student's course load and other commitments that the student may have so that the student can still be successful in the classroom. One participant said on the subject, "A lot of it, it is like students who work, they have too much on their plate. Also, you know students who are going through extenuating circumstances, which like I said, happens a lot with. It is like their time management."

As one participant put it, "So just explaining to them, you know, about how you really have to manage your time." Which leads to the ways in which they can manage their time better with some suggestions that have been made by the participants. Some of the participants have suggested to their students to purchase a calendar and create a schedule that is both realistic and would work for them. A participant said that they tend to ask the following questions to get a better sense of how the student manages their time, "Time management? Are you doing that? Are you like are you following up with that? Did you buy a calendar? Do you make a schedule?" One participant even showed a copy of their calendar with one of their students as an example so that could inspire the student to see how that could work for them, "Sometimes, I show that my calendar to one of my students just recently said she bought an actual planner."

Study Skills

To students who are entering college for the first time, they may be surprised to learn that developing effective study habits is one of many factors to be successful in their classes. However, developing those study skills may not come easily to some. As one participant said, "You know, a lot of these students, they need help with, you know different things like time management, money, study skills and things like that." To assist these students who may be struggling with their study skills a few of the participants spoke about referring the students to the tutoring center where they can learn some specific study skills depending on the subject matter, "With tutoring, letting them know tutoring services are free, always."

Aside from referring them to the tutoring center, some participants spoke about how they had to have conversations with their students questioning them about the time

they spend studying all together and where their preferred study location is. One participant said when they have those conversations they usually go like the following, "Mostly just asking about their work schedules, their study habits, how they study." This at least gets the student to think about it and determine on their own how they want to go about making this a priority for themselves.

Active Listening

The final coaching skill and technique used by a few of the participants was active listening. One participant described the general coaching approach involves, "There's a lot of listening that takes place." The participants who discussed the use of active listening emphasized the importance of listening versus doing all the talking when it came to their sessions with their students. The act of listening really helps the advisor to assess the student's concerns to determine what the best course of action is to help the student, one participant elaborated on this point,

> You do not have the strategies or the tools that someone from CAPS would. And then that is when you step in, and you provide that resource. So, I think that that's part of the beginning of listening, and empathizing is very important.

Active listening involves advisors making the effort to really understand and hear what the student is saying all while reassuring the student that they are being heard. While discussing active listening one participant said,

> So, this is going to sound funny, but I tend to look at words a lot and digest them differently so I can tell you that I do not view, listen, and hear the same. I can tell someone yes, I listen to you, but then I do whatever I want. I clearly was not listening, but if I hear you, then I hear what you are saying or what you are not

saying. And I think that is a lot of what advisors really need to get into and is understanding. There is a message that students are trying to convey sometimes, and sometimes it is just not heard. And that is the reality because it is listened to, but it goes through one out the other.

Based on the few conversations on the topic of active listening, it is an important skill to demonstrate during a session with students so that they feel like they are being heard rather than just spewing words out to their advisors who will not do anything with what they have just been told. Lack of active listening could be detrimental to the student-advisor relationship by not building that rapport and trust with each other.

Remarks

Life coaching is not about always having the answers or knowing what the solution might be. According to the life coaching literature and the training these advisors were given, to be considered a good coach is about being resourceful and intuitive with one's client so that you can support them the way they want to be supported at that time. These findings show that the participants on numerous occasions were being resourceful by using a lot of the information that they already knew from working at the university while still using the recommended coaching skills and techniques.

Interestingly, the data revealed that the participants relied on using the same kinds of coaching skills and techniques as their students. The findings also reveal the commonality amongst the needs of the students by disclosing the areas in which the students needed additional help with. Aside from the advisors' ability to use these kinds of coaching skills and techniques, it may also take someone with certain personality traits to be able to effectively utilize the coaching approach. In the next section, I will be

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discussing the various kinds of characteristics that would be important for advisors to successfully use college life coaching skills and techniques with their students.

Advisor Characteristics

To be an effective college life coach takes more than just learning about the concept of coaching and the various kinds of skills and techniques to use when coaching someone. The life coach has a vital role in the coaching sessions as they serve as the guide in the conversation. However, to be able to guide an individual through a coaching session there are some interpersonal skills that may be important for one to have that makes the coaching process a smooth one for both the coach and the client. The life coaching literature does suggest that being a life coach may not be suited for everyone. The same can be said when it comes to academic advisors. Based on the experiences of the participants of this study they have concluded that to be able to utilize these coaching skills and techniques effectively they believe that there are five interpersonal characteristics that one should have to help and support their students fully: (a) empathy, (b) sensitive, (c) open mindedness, (d) non-verbal cues and (e) patient as seen in Figure 5.

Figure 5

Advisor Characteristics

Figure showing a bar chart. Y-axis labeled "Total References" ranging from 0 to 40. X-axis categories: Empathy, Sensitivity, Open Mindedness, Patience, Non-Verbal Cues. Legend: ■ Advisor Characteristics.
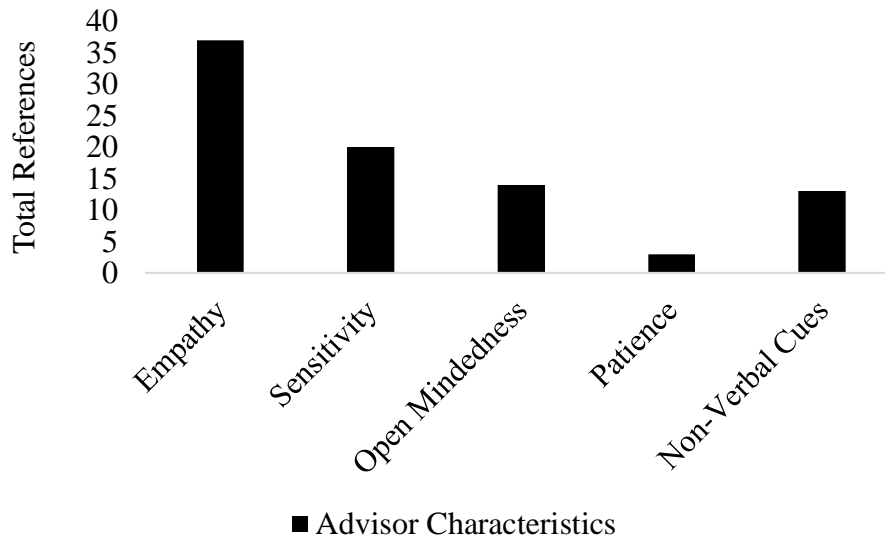
Note. These results show the total number of times the participants referenced the different interpersonal characteristics the participants deemed as being necessary to effectively utilize the coaching skills and techniques. As seen in the Figure, empathy was referenced as the most imperative characteristic whereas patience was the least referenced characteristic.

Empathy

Aside from being able to excel at the skills of coaching, there are interpersonal skills that advisors may need to possess to be able to maximize the benefits of using these skills. The findings identified five characteristics that the participants agreed that advisors would need to help and support the student while they are conducting a coaching session. The most common characteristic that was mentioned was to be able to show empathy towards the students. For one participant being empathetic was the main point when she was first introduced to coaching, as she said, "Empathetic, like that was always the biggest take away from all these trainings for me that I took away, like they show you the

visual concept and empathy is like right in the middle and then not caring was super far out and being overly sympathetic you're there drowning right in the middle." There is a difference between sympathy and empathy and there is a time and place for one and the other. Sympathy is feeling sorry for someone. Empathy is understanding a person, being able to put yourself in their shoes. As many of the participants agreed, students want to feel like they are being understood and that their advisor can relate to them. They are not seeking someone to feel sorry for them.

One participant had a strong message for other academic advisors to take into consideration when they are meeting with their students and that message was to "really try to put yourself in the students' shoes." It was commonly heard throughout the interviews that the students these participants were meeting with were dealing with a lot of challenges not just on an academic level but in their personal lives as well. One participant's response to this topic of empathy by saying, "We work with students, that come from so many different walks of life." Students are actively trying to seek help from their academic advisors because a lot of times that is the only human connection that they have at the university and quite possibly outside the university. Therefore, as the student's advisor it is important to try to find out and understand what exactly is going on with the student to try to put them, as the participants would describe, back on the path of success so that they can achieve their goals.

It is especially important that advisors show empathy for a certain population of students, for example the first-generation students. As one participant mentioned, "I have to think it, like, ok, now we have to turn our empathy hat on." For some of these students, college life can be intimidating and quite foreign, especially for those first-generation

students who come from families whose parents do not have a college degree or have never even stepped foot onto a college campus. One of the important aspects of student development for any student is to have that sense of belonging. Therefore, it is crucial that these students are made to feel like they have a place in the university and that their experiences are not just unique to them. One suggestion that was made by several of the participants to help the advisor be more empathetic so that they can help better support their students is for the advisor to share their own individual experiences.

While further supporting the idea of advisors sharing their experiences, one participant said, "Maybe you get to share your own experience to show that you are empathizing and understanding their circumstances." However, showing empathy is sometimes easier said than done. Empathy is a characteristic that must come off genuine and cannot be forced. If empathy is forced that is something that may be easily felt on the receiving end of it. According to one participant when referring to forcing empathy, "but if you're going to force people to pretend to be empathetic or feel empathized with because they can sense the fakeness." One cannot underestimate students, as they can tell the difference between someone who is really trying to be understanding of the circumstances versus someone who may be trying too hard or not trying at all.

Based on the participants responses as it relates to the advisor needing to be empathetic, the point these participants were making was that advisors overall are meeting with students where each one has a completely different background. Some students may acclimate better to university life while others may take a while to get well adjusted. Whatever the situation may be, there are moments when the advisor must put their advising duties aside and become more supportive, much more relatable towards

their students. The university is such a big place with many parts to it and it can be very overwhelming. The student may feel like a small fish in a big pond. There is this recurring theme through responses from these participant interviews and that is it is important to be there for the student to provide them with the help and support that they may need at times to get through whatever it may be that they are going through.

Sensitivity

The second most reported characteristic by the participants was for advisors to be sensitive towards their students. The participants indicated that showing sensitivity was especially necessary during instances where a student may divulge personal information. The findings allude to the fact that students are not just meeting with their advisors to go over academic information like the classes they need to take. Students may also be going to their advisors to confide in them by bringing up all kinds of personal matters with them. There may be times when students are disclosing personal information that they have not even shared with those closest to them like their own families and friends. The participants emphasized that no matter what the subject matter may be the advisor must be able to approach these kinds of topics with sensitivity. One participant spoke briefly about the struggles students go through and how it is important to be sensitive,

> Everyone is going through some sort of struggle or something, so it is important you know, to be very open-ended, especially when and it helps you be more sensitive to what a student may be going through, and you may not be aware of.

One participant referred to these skills as having emotional intelligence, "College life coaching brought up, you know, soft skills that the EQ (emotional intelligence) that we forget sometimes." While another participant said, "Those are all the soft skills we

need to use when talking with others." An advisor's job can be the same day in and day out. Frequently, the participants mentioned that the advising role can be repetitive and that they are having the same kinds of conversations with different students throughout the day. As a result of the role being mundane at times with that kind of repetitiveness, it can be easy to forget those soft skills.

One participant spoke about introducing these soft skills in their daily work life, "I already implemented some of the more humanizing, if that's even a word, side of advising." Those soft skills the participant was referring to such as the individual tone of voice and their overall mannerism. To show sensitivity is not just about the words one chooses to use but also how they carry themselves out in a physical sense. However, there are circumstances where one may display mannerisms which can come off as being too sensitive and may be deemed inappropriate.

Some advisors will go beyond to help students who may be going through a tough time. As one participant said, "I think I was more sensitive to what they went through, and I put my neck out more for them." This was especially the case if the student was trying to appeal to their classes due to those difficult circumstances. However, it is possible that one can be too sensitive towards a student. One participant discussed how it is important for advisors to be sensitive towards the student. However, she also discussed how it is possible for one to become overly sensitive and demonstrate too much emotion This response can lead the advisor to become too involved in the personal matters of the student which blurs the lines between student and advisor.

That same participant addressed both kinds of scenarios by saying the following, "We need to kick it up a notch, because as I said there's a lot of people with emotional

deficit or an overflow of emotion." It is the job of the advisor to help as much as they can as advisors have access to a lot of resources and that is something the participants made clear throughout the interviews. However, the advisors also must be able to draw the line at some point and not become too involved in the situation.

Advisors should display a level of sensitivity when it is appropriate to do so. Students may see the relationship that they have with their advisor as one where they can trust their advisor and can open and discuss personal matters. The student may be seeking guidance from their advisor, or they just need someone to listen to them. As one participant said, "Taking the time to do more of the personal aspect."

Although showing sensitivity towards a student is important, according to one participant there is a potential downfall in that being too sensitive can also present a problem. If the advisor becomes too overly sensitive with the student, it can lead the advisor to become personally involved and overstep the boundaries between the student and the advisor. It is important for the advisor to show signs of empathy but remain professional at the same time.

Open-Mindedness

The third characteristic that advisors should have before going into a coaching session according to the participants is to go into it with an open mind. Primarily, before discussing what having an open mind looks like from the advisor-student perspective the advisors need to be open minded to the idea of using these coaching skills and techniques to begin with. For these participants they recognized that this approach is different but one that is necessary to the role of an advisor. One participant said, "Because without change, we're never going to grow, so if they are open to growth and have an open mind

and we'll all become better advisors." On the same topic of advisors adopting the coaching approach, another participant said,

> If they are willing to learn and have an open mind, they will benefit from all these new ideas to enhance what we already do, and it could or maybe to even feel validated in things that they have already been doing.

> If the use of coaching skills and techniques becomes a widespread model adopted

by all the academic advising departments there would have to be some aspect of evaluation completed for advisors to ensure that the skills are being used correctly and to provide the advisor with any additional feedback. The advisor therefore would have to be receptive for constructive criticism of any kind as it relates to this subject matter. As one participant said, to be better academic advisors one must "be open to feedback, have an openness to coaching and just openness in general."

The coaching literature presents that one of coaching's ethos emphasizes on the importance of creating a safe place, free of judgment for the client. It is extremely common according to these participants, for students to want to discuss a wide range of topics that fall outside of their academics. Some of those potentially controversial topics may or may not align with the advisors' own thoughts or beliefs. As one participant said, "I definitely think an advisor with an open mind that that's necessary." Regardless of one individual opinion, the role of the advisor is to remain neutral and welcoming to all.

These participants emphasized the importance of reassuring their students that they can come to them for anything and that they wanted to make sure that they created a safe space for that student. However, that became a bit challenging for some of the participants when the Covid pandemic started, and the university moved to a remote

model. It was difficult to create that safe and neutral space as they were not meeting in the advisor's office for the time being. The participants were meeting with their students via the Zoom application and that took away a lot of the personal touches now that they had a camera between them. That was even if the student turned their camera on as that was an option. One participant spoke about the challenges of Zoom, specifically pointing out the capability of students to turn the camera off. Her opinion was if she was visible to the student than she was fine with that,

> I prefer Zoom because I can see the person at the very least, I know they can see me. I know some people are very uncomfortable with this, with the screen, so they do not want people to see them. But as long as they can see me, I hope they can see the concern in my face so they can see that I care.

One participant mentioned that they try hard to make the student feel welcomed even though they were not meeting in the office by not only turning on the Zoom camera but also by allowing the student to get glimpse of their home life such as seeing the advisors' pets, their own personal art collection.

The data shows that being open-minded means two things to the participants. First, the advisors must be open-minded to the idea of coaching. The coaching approach is different and far from the prescriptive method that most advisors are used to using in their sessions with their students. Second, advisors must be open minded when it comes to meeting with their students. It is very clear that academic advisors are in a unique position at the university. They are sometimes referred to as the "go to" person for students. One of the first people students get to meet is their academic advisor.

Some students may see their advisor as being an individual that they can trust and confide in and therefore may want to discuss something that may not necessarily be academic related. However, they will be open to their advisor because they feel like their advisor may be able to provide them with the support and guidance they may need at the time. Therefore, for advisors, it is important to create a safe and neutral space where the students do not feel like they are being judged or criticized in any way.

Non-Verbal Cues

With the number of conversations that occur between the student and the advisor, advisors can easily pick up when things are not going so well for the students by the choice of words the student uses. However, there are students who choose to be more reserved and keep matters to themselves. Even these students choose not to disclose any information they still manage to speak volumes through their non-verbal behavior. The participants spoke about how advisors must be able to notice these non-verbal cues sometimes to be able to address the potential concern that the student may have. It should also serve as an indicator to ask the right kinds of questions. Even if an advisor is having difficulty noticing these cues, the participants did say advisors have access to student information which can work towards their advantage to see how the student is really doing. Information such as the student's academic record, which includes their grades and their overall grade point averages. This kind of information can be red flags that something may be wrong therefore giving the advisor an opportunity to question the student about.

When it comes to noticing these non-verbal cues, one participant said, "They have to be able to read ones like body language and their facial expressions and their tone of

voice, so they have to have that like intuition with people." To be able to notice these cues sets the tone for the advisors' approach to the session as well as their line of questioning. However, being able to do this did become a challenge during the pandemic. A lot of the sessions took place via the Zoom application. The participants mentioned that with some of their advising appointments some of their students chose to have their cameras turned off during their advising session which made it difficult notice these non-verbal cues because obviously they were unable to see the student.

The overall feeling from some of the participants was that the sessions were simply different from having the advising sessions in person. One participant put it simply by saying, "There's a lot you can sense through body language when a student walks in your office" which can be difficult to notice through a Zoom meeting. However, if the student does turn the camera on, one participant believed that you are still capable of noticing these non-verbal cues even through zoom, as they said the following, "I think there's different ways of like how the student talks to you, the body language even on zoom. You can tell if someone is just really to the point stand offish or wants to communicate."

As pertinent it is for the advisors to notice the cues it is just as important for the student to see them as well. One participant discussed how she made it clear for the advisors she supervises to turn their cameras on as well, "I was telling them like, please have your camera on when you're with the student because it's like they need to know you're paying attention." This same participant also had to recognize that for some of the advisors it may have been difficult to turn the camera on due to circumstantial situations they were in,

I just do not think that was very inviting. But I also recognize that some advisers and I am thinking of a few of mine now where I am like, you could not have their video on, like their living situation might have been for some, I think was very embarrassing, which is sad depending on the situation they live in or the people they live with.

It is important for advisors to listen closely when a student is speaking but it is also vital for them to pay attention and look out for signs that the student may be giving off that may indicate that something might be going with the student. Some students may not say much, but their body language can say a lot. If an advisor can notice these non-verbal cues the advisor may be able to address the concerns and help that student.

Patience

Finally, when it came to the characteristics the participants reported that advisors need to possess when the advisor is trying to use the coaching skills and techniques with a student is they need patience. As it was just mentioned when discussing non-verbal cues, the participants discussed how some students are not very forthcoming with information, especially upon meeting them for the first time. In fact, some students are incredibly quiet and refuse to discuss and or divulge any kind of information. Although students who are more on the introverted side can make both advising and coaching difficult, the participants have a strong message for all advisors. That message is that advisors cannot give up on that student. One participant said, "Patience, honestly, at the end of the day. I would say that the biggest issue that I can foresee is a lack of patience." Instead of giving up, they just must give the student more time and work through it.

Some students need time to develop a rapport with their advisor, to create a trusting relationship with their advisor. Those kinds of relationships are not created overnight. Some of the participants discussed that they were able to build that trust and that rapport with their students after they had an opportunity to meet several times with the same students. The process does take time and effort some more than others, "I think having a greater sense of patience and just a student first approach really is what's going to be more beneficial to incorporate coaching skills and techniques."

Aside from building that student-advisor relationship, another thing to take into consideration is that students are not familiar with the coaching technique and have never heard of that concept or have never experienced it for themselves before. There are also some students who may not be receptive to the idea of coaching or are even open to getting help in the beginning. Advisors not willing to be patient with their students could be detrimental to their student-advisor relationship. Students may take a while to warm up to their advisor and feel comfortable talking to them, but an advisor should not give up and remind themselves and the students that they are there to help no matter what.

Remarks

Throughout these interviews it has become apparent that the college life coaching approach may not be suited for all students, but it also may not be for all academic advisors. One must consider that there are some advisors who take on the advising role for several reasons. Some may want to go the extra mile for the student by helping them and supporting them. While others are content with simply advising students about the requirements of the program and may not be open to coaching students. To help students

to get through personal matters can be a lot for some people. The truth is that not all

advisors are built the same and not all of them possess the same humanistic skills.

One of the participants that I got to interview for this study introduced to me John

Holland's Six Personality Types. A theory he developed that would explain behaviors

that occur in the workplace and provide practical ways in which people can select or

change jobs in hopes of attaining job satisfaction (Holland, 1997). Holland identified a

total of six personality traits, (a) realistic, (b) investigate, (c) artistic, (d) social, (e)

enterprising, (f) conventional (Holland, 1997). Each trait describes what kind of vocation

would best suit the individual.

One who best identifies themselves as being realistic, according to Holland would

rather work things than people (Holland, 1997). Those that are more investigative enjoy

working with ideas (Holland, 1997). An artistic individual just like investigative, likes to

work with ideas but from a creative approach (Holland, 1997). An individual who would

describe themselves as being social prefers to work with people (Holland, 1997). A

person who sees themselves as enterprising enjoys working with people but also with

ideas (Holland, 1997). Lastly, a person who is conventional is known as the numbers

person and likes working with paper (Holland, 1997). To see a visual chart of Holland's

personality types, refer to Appendix D. One participant gave their perspective as to the

kind of person who may not want to do coaching,

> So conventional is doing repetitive tasks, you know, so there are repetitive tasks
>
> that a secretary would do which would not take a college education. But then
>
> there's repetitive tasks that people with master's degree would do for credits. OK,
>
> so that is a different type of academic advising task than what we are doing with

coaching. So, I think those people who really get into those people who I would call more conventional in their career orientation might be off put because that's part of being that career orientation, not conventional career orientation is repetitive, predictable tasks.

Although it may be difficult to change one's personality to better suit the coaching role, with the proper training it may be possible to learn the skills as long as there are opportunities for to be trained. In the next section, I will be discussing the various kinds of training sessions the participants mentioned would be helpful.

Training Opportunities

At the center of it all, according to the coaching literature, successful life coaching comes down to its skills and techniques of the coach. The specific skills and techniques that go along with life coaching are constantly evolving and need to be revisited from time to time. One way to learn the latest information and reinforce these kinds of skills is to provide continuous training opportunities for the advisors. Throughout the year, the College Life Coaching program offered introductory training sessions which were made available for all new incoming advisors. These training sessions were also conducted as a refresher training to those who had previously attended the introductory trainings but were looking to attend these trainings again to remind themselves of the information as using the skills is not something that is used frequently like an actual college life coach who uses them daily.

The participants believed that these existing training sessions are important and do think that it has been helpful to attend them as much as possible because it serves as a reinforcement for the advisors to continue to use the coaching skills as much as possible.

Also, they believe that there are other ways the advisors can learn skills that are more

hands on. For example, the participants overwhelmingly suggested that the coaching

department offer more interactive trainings where they have chance to meet with advisors

from the other departments to continue to develop and enhance their coaching skills as

seen in Figure 6.

Figure 6

Training Opportunities
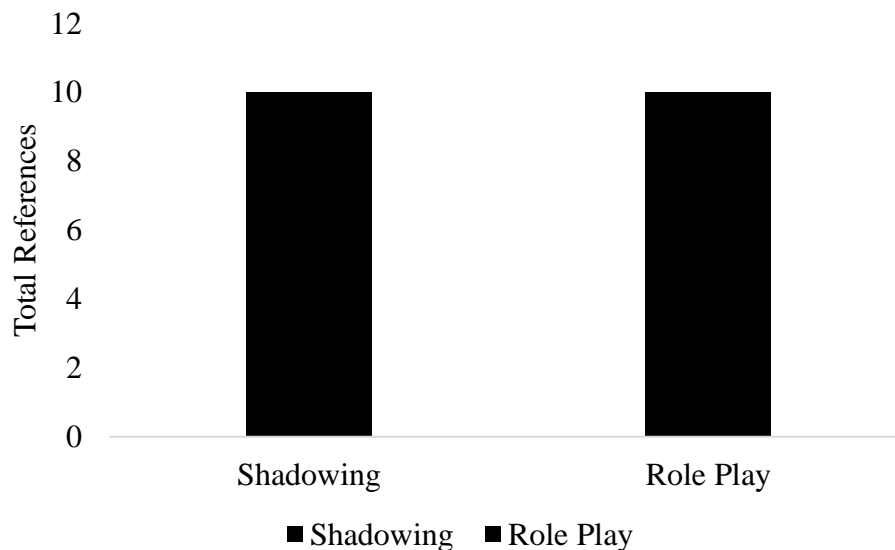
Note. These results show the total number of times the participants referenced shadowing
and role playing for further training opportunities for academic advisors. As seen in the
Figure, both were equally referenced by the participants.

Shadowing

One interactive training course that both the coaching and advising departments

could collaborate on would be to develop training sessions that would involve

shadowing. One suggestion that was made by one of the participants, "Have one of the

coaches shadow the advisors." According to this participant, this would allow an expert

in the coaching field who is used to using the skills on the daily basis to observe the sessions between the student and the advisor. The participant indicated that an opportunity to have the coach watch and listen to the advisor using the coaching skills and techniques in this way would allow the expert to provide the novice user with feedback as to what they could improve upon or point something out that they did well.

Another way of incorporating this kind of shadow training would be to have the academic advising managers involved in that process by having them sit in the sessions and observe their advisors. One participant in this study, who is also in a managerial role within the advising department, mentioned that she herself has sat in advising sessions to make sure that the advisors are "on target." She spoke about how she carefully watches the advisor to notice certain things and listens carefully to see if the advisor is asking the right questions to help support the student. She uses her observation notes later to discuss it in an upcoming advisor evaluation.

Role Playing

Another interactive training recommendation that was made by the participants was role playing. Role playing can be an effective way to learn and retain information. Although there is some role playing included in the introduction to college life coaching training, the participants indicated that they wanted more of it. The participants felt like it would be beneficial to act out real life student situations while still having someone watch you and make recommendations for areas that may need improvement. One training session the participants suggested would be to have a chance to role play with academic advisors from the other academic departments. One participant said, "Somebody plays the student; somebody plays the advisor." The participants believe that

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it would be a great learning opportunity to hear from other advisors the kinds of situations they have been presented with and how they handled it and that could be the example they can use to role-play. Much like the shadowing training sessions, this kind of training would also provide the advisors with feedback on their skills. It can expose advisors to the various kinds of student situations and introduce them to new techniques that they may want to use themselves one day if necessary.

Remarks

There is much more to college life coaching than just learning about its philosophy and its skills. One can learn all the information there is about it, but it is about the application of those skills because there is a right and a wrong way to use them. To ensure that these skills are being applied correctly, the findings suggest two things. First, the participants prefer an interactive kind of training where they are more hands on versus sitting and listening to someone talk most of the time. They want to be able to meet with their peers, to have a chance to act out real life scenarios, and to have an opportunity to hear from others what their experiences have been and what techniques have been helpful. Secondly, the participants want to be able to receive feedback whether the feedback is coming from either their manager or from the actual college life coach who is more of an expert in the field of coaching students. The participants want to be told what they are doing right so that they can continue to do it. In addition to that, they also want to know what they can be doing better so that they can work on improving themselves.

The next chapter brings the entire study to a close by first addressing the biggest takeaways I personally found interesting from conducting this study. In addition to that, I also provide my overall final thoughts.by posing several different questions. Finally, I

suggest a few research opportunities that may be worth conducting that can be considered

as an extension to this study.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

The findings of this study were very eye opening in both a positive and a not so positive way. Not only did I achieve what I set out to do which was to get an understanding of the participants' experiences with using the coaching skill and techniques on their students, but I was also able to get their perspectives on college life coaching in general and the beneficial impact they feel it has made within the advising community thus far. In addition, I became privy to the challenges that the participants faced that came with the role of being an academic advisor as well as challenges that they saw their student's experience.

The findings also brought to the realization the obstacles that could make the integration of coaching in advising difficult. Throughout this process, I was able to develop my own thoughts and conclusions as it relates to coaching within the academic advising community as well as coaching within higher education in general. The takeaways I will touch on in this chapter are the following: (a) the benefits of utilizing the coaching skills and techniques, (b) the different advising practices, (c) the impact that the Covid pandemic had on advising, (d) student advising preferences, (e) advisor preferences for advising, (f) presence of mental health issues, and (g) the support from the academic departments.

In this chapter, I will be concluding this research study by addressing the future of coaching within the advising community by bringing up some factors that higher education institutions may need to take into consideration if they are contemplating the idea of implementing this approach. For example, what are the costs and benefits of coaching? Whether or not college life coaching has a place within academic advising.

What impact does the metrics have on academic advising today? Finally, what are the implications to the university when coaching skills and techniques are not being used?

I will also be suggesting several future research opportunities about advising that I think can make recommendations to the current advising model that may propose a positive change. I also make several suggestions for research studies that focus on the concept of coaching in which I believe could potentially add to the literature that already exists as it pertains to the topic of college life coaching in higher education institutions.

A few of these potential research opportunities extend beyond from the academic advising world and would investigate whether there is an overall impact that coaching may have in terms of the students' academic performance by looking at students who receive coaching versus those who do not, and the effects coaching has on the student development. The findings of all these studies can enlighten colleges and universities by forcing them to rethink the role of the academic advisor and what approach advising should have when it comes to servicing their student population. It can really change the future discourse of higher education.

<div align="center">**Takeaways**</div>

Benefits of Utilizing Coaching Skills and Techniques

The participants overall reported that they had a positive experience when they had an opportunity to incorporate the coaching skills and techniques in their advising sessions. It was especially informative to hear the different kinds of benefits they saw in their students and personally that was one of the biggest takeaways from this study. Life coaching techniques are to not be used with the purpose of fixing someone but more so to provide guidance. The ICF defines coaching as "partnering with clients in a thought-

provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential (https://coachfederation.org/)." Furthermore, the literature on life coaching in general suggests that one of outcomes of using this kind of approach is what it can do to enhance an individual on a personal level. To know that this kind of enhancement took place with some of the students when they got to experience coaching for themselves is very enlightening. It is also very encouraging to hear that if this kind of change can happen to a few students imagine what we can do given the opportunity to reach more students.

Based on the participants' personal accounts they say they witnessed personal growth with some of their students after the student experienced a coaching session from their advisor. Some participants said they saw their students develop a sense of empowerment. The participants, as academic advisors, were very much used to having to walk their students through a certain process step by step. Sometimes, depending on the circumstances, the participants described situations where they would have to take matters into their own hands and do it themselves on behalf of the student. However, utilizing certain coaching skills and techniques allowed the advisor to put the onus back onto the student. This coaching approach allowed the student to decide for themselves as to how they wanted to resolve their own matter their own way. The participants said that by utilizing the coaching skills and techniques it helped to provide a space for the student to reflect on the issue and to talk it out so that they were able to come up with their own solutions.

In addition, the participants attested to the fact that using the coaching skills and techniques provided an environment for student exploration to take place so that they can

learn better about themselves. There are a lot of students who struggle with trying to decide what major they should choose. There are also students who must decide on a different career path than the one they initially chose because of poor academic performance. Whichever scenario the student is in, these coaching skills seemed particularly useful and effective under one of these circumstances where the student was put in a position where they needed to decide what major to declare.

The participants reported using open-ended questions, which is a coaching skill, and by asking those kinds of questions during the coaching session, some students were able to reflect on their own thoughts and feelings which in some cases led the students to discover new interests which made choosing a new major easy. These kinds of conversations were also effective for the student to come up with goals that they wanted to achieve now that they knew what their career path was going to be.

One of the findings I came across from listening to the participants responses and after analyzing the data that was surprising, was how the relationship between the student and the advisor developed into a collaborative relationship when the advisor had the opportunity to coach the student. We are very used to the advisor-student relationship where the advisor provides the student with the information that they need, and the student takes that information and moves on. However, in some cases that kind of transaction does not always take place. It seemed that on several occasions both the advisor and the student found ways in which they could work with each other. For example, one participant talked about wanting to get a better understanding of what the engineering and computing students, the population of students he was advising at the time, were learning at the time that way he could know how to better support his students.

He talked about how he decided to attempt to learn how to work with the Java program and quickly realized how difficult it really was. He was now aware and familiar with the program that he was able to empathize with his students and support them to work through it.

Another participant discussed how in one of her advising sessions her student was interested in a particular career field but knew nothing about it. The participant was also not too familiar with the job field, but she became curious herself and wanted to learn more about it. The participant volunteered to research and learned more about that career field and encouraged the student to do the same. Once they were able to gather more information the participant proposed that they meet again and discuss their findings together.

Lastly, due in part to all these benefits, the concept of coaching and using the skills and techniques that go along with it has shown that students became much more engaged in the advising process. Some students were seeing their advisors more often. Other students took it upon themselves to reach out to their advisors to provide them with certain updates or to follow up with them regarding certain matters. It seems that in certain cases, according to the participants, it was not always the advisor who was initiating a lot of the communication with their students. The coaching approach opened an opportunity for students to connect with their advisor in a way that made them feel more comfortable going to them more often for all kinds of things.

Different Advising Practices

As someone who has never been an advisor or has ever worked on the academic side of higher education, it was interesting to hear more in-depth from the participants

about certain advising practices that they did. The participants spoke a lot about the follow ups or the check ins that they did often on their students. Aside from meeting with their student for an advising session, the follow ups were a significant part of the advising role. The participants I met with spoke about how they made a conscious effort to make the time to touch base with their students following a recent advising session that they had where perhaps they spoke about something that warranted a follow up. For example, the participants discussed how they especially made sure that they checked on those students who they knew were struggling either academically they were doing poorly, or the student had disclosed that they were going through personally a difficult time. Although these follow ups are frequently initiated by the advisor, some of the participants reported that there have been in some cases where students have taken the time the follow up with them to let the advisor know how their doing but also take the opportunity to seek further guidance if necessary.

These advising practices are consistent with one of the components of the coach-client relationship. One of those components emphasizes on the coaching relationship be client-centered and individually approached. According to Whitworth et al. (2007), whose study focused on analyzing the coaching relationship to help those be successful in both in work and life, concluded that every client, or in this study every student, is different and has a unique set of needs. These students may want or need something from their advisor that provides them with additional support. That is why these kinds of advising practices are seen as beneficial for both the advisor and the student relationship.

Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Advising

According to the data, there have been more instances of these follow ups and check ins when the pandemic first began in 2020. In March of 2020, the entire world went into isolation. The university went from fully functioning on-campus to conducting classes and work operations remotely. During this time of transition, students relied heavily on their advisors for that human connection and support during a period where a lot of them may have felt lost and alone as a lot of the students were away from their friends and families. This was a time of uncertainty where students were experiencing high levels stress which became apparent for the participants. Researchers Fried and Irwin (2016) conducted a study to assess the impact of life coaching as an intervention for stress management for college students. They found significant improvements with stress levels and stress management when students consistently experienced a coaching session. There is no way to prevent stressors from happening but coaching as an intervention can be a way to help individuals manage the stress more effectively so that it does not affect them on a deeper level.

The participants noted certain behavioral changes in their students because of the university going remote due to the pandemic. In comparison to before the pandemic, some of the participants reported that they saw an increase in the number of student appointments that were made during that time. The participants were accustomed to seeing an increase in appointments during the registration period, which has always been considered their peak period. However, the increase of appointments during the pandemic occurred because students found it a lot easier to contact their advisor and more challenging to get a hold of anyone else.

Prior to the pandemic, advisors often complained about the number of appointments that resulted in "no shows" they would have. However, during the pandemic some of the participants also indicated that they noticed that there were significantly fewer students not showing up for their appointments. I think a contributing factor to the decrease of "no shows" was due to what was happening personally for the students in their lives during this time. Aside from feeling so disconnected from the university, students were faced with losing their jobs or having their parents experience a job loss. Other students lost their loved ones due to the Covid-19 pandemic while some students were diagnosed with virus themselves.

As one can imagine, all these factors had a significant impact on not only their personal lives, but it also affected them academically. It was during this unprecedented time, that the students reached out to their advisors more than ever for support and guidance on how they should proceed forward with their classes as well as discuss what options did, they have in the event they could not push onward. What I gathered from the participants was that the use of coaching skills and techniques could not have come at a better time than during the pandemic where all kinds of emotions were at their highest.

Students' Advising Preference

According to Lefdahl-Davis et al. (2018), college students tend to struggle with career indecision, life satisfaction, as well as academic and social challenges. Literature has shown that life coaching can provide an opportunity for these students to overcome these barriers and thrive**.** What this study has shown is that these coaching skills and techniques are a useful and a helpful tool that is depending on the circumstances. The most common situation where the coaching skills were found to be the most valuable was

when the participants were having conversations with their students who were being redirected towards another major due to their poor academic performance in their current program. According to the participants, those conversations were difficult to have because some of these students had grown up their entire life telling people, for example, that they wanted to be a doctor.

Some of these students found themselves failing core biology courses for pre-medical students like introduction to biology. The utilization of the coaching skills and techniques proved to be a great resource in these kinds of conversations. It was an effective intervention to try to get these students to understand the predicament that they were in. As some students were very reluctant to even consider switching to a different major. Through the process of coaching, it helped to reassure these students and reinforce the message to them that there were other options out there for them. The students were very receptive to this approach because they saw how the skills were a useful tool in guiding them to come up with their own interests which then would help them to discover a new career path.

However, what this study also brought to the surface was the idea that utilizing coaching skills and techniques may not be for every kind of student. As much as the participants saw the benefits of coaching for some students, there are other students who prefer the more traditional prescriptive style of advising. Based on the participants' responses, these kinds of students who preferred this style of advising were students that had personal commitments they had to attend to. For instance, a lot of students these participants were advising were working on a full-time basis. Some students had families of their own that they had to support. Other students were considered the care takers of a

family member who was ill. There were students who themselves were experiencing an ongoing medical situation of their own. With all the situations and responsibilities these students have going on in their personal lives, time is of the essence, and they may not have a lot of it to spare, especially to be able to devote themselves to a coaching session. Often, what these students are looking for is to be able to meet with their advisor quickly to get the information that is pertinent to them to move forward academically.

Advisors' Preference to Advising

It does appear to be that students are not the only ones who may prefer the prescriptive style of advising. The way in which the participants addressed the coaching approach as it relates to other advisors adopting the approach themselves, there seems to be this underlining sense of feeling that not all academic advisors may not want to utilize the college life coaching approach, or they feel like they may not even have the capability of using the approach effectively. The responses from the participants revealed there are two kinds of advisors. First, you have the kind of individual that gets into academic advising because they want to be able to tell students what classes they need to take and to go over the university policies with them. Some of the participants mentioned that these advisors tend to prefer to have these predictable conversations with their students. Secondly, you have the other kinds of individuals who get into the career of advising because they want to be able to help and support their students while still informing them of what classes to take and going over university policy which are still important topics to be discussed.

The "traditional" prescriptive advisors (the first type) seem to like having these predictable conversations with their students because it is what feels comfortable to them.

As one participant said, these advisors may feel uneasy if the student shifts the conversation to discuss something more on a personal level. This feeling of uneasiness may be attributed to the certain personality traits of that advisor. I did ask the participants to discuss the kinds of characteristics that would make an advisor a good coach.

The participants mentioned a few interpersonal skills that they say are crucial in determining whether someone can effectively carry out the use of coaching skills and techniques. Some of those skills include the following: (a) being able to empathize with their students, (b) being open-minded to discuss a wide range of topics that may not align with your own personal thoughts and beliefs, (c) being sensitive to students' feelings, (d) being patient with the student and be willing to work with them instead of giving up on them if they refuse to open up to you initially, and (e) lastly, being able to read the room by picking up on non-verbal cues that their students may give off that could be very telling.

According to Karacay & Brunner, who studied coaching practices among pre-medical students, emphasized in their study that although the prescriptive style is still an important aspect of academic advising, others may say that the advising role needs to evolve more and become more supportive in nature (2013). It is important that advisors start to have more intentional conversations with their students, especially with the ones they notice are struggling academically (Karacay & Brunner, 2013). This is something the academic departments need to be aware of and take note of as there are some potential implications to an advisor not wanting to have a coaching related conversation with their student. It will have to be something that the academic departments and the university will have to address should the institution decide to move forward with using

the coaching approach within the advising sessions. The participants talked about being able to sense that something may be wrong or off about their student. Or sometimes the student says bluntly something like "I am feeling stressed out." These are strong indicators that the advisor should take the time to ask the student some coaching-related questions to address those concerns. There may be advisors who do not feel comfortable with this approach and asking those kinds of questions, they may miss the opportunity to help that student and that is a real concern that the academic departments and the university may want to take seriously and look further into.

The Presence of Mental Health Issues

What was quite surprising after I analyzed the data was the number of times the participants were confronted with a student who was experiencing a mental health related issue or feelings of distress. Mental health illness amongst college students is a prevalent issue in higher education institutions. It is the reason at Florida International University they have the Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) department to help students who may be dealing with personal struggles.

The participants did find that using coaching skills and techniques helped but only to a certain point. There was a consensus among the participants that they felt they were not properly equipped with the necessary resources or tools to really help these students and frequently would just ultimately refer the students to the on-campus counseling services. However, life coaching skills have been proven to help those who may be dealing with mental distress. According to one of coaching studies I found researchers Curtis and Kelly (2013), demonstrated how the coaching skills can be used on individuals that may be suffering from a psychological, intellectual, and developmental disabilities.

Like the other coaching related studies, the study was conducted to show that using the coaching skills and techniques was not used as a mechanism to cure the individual from their disabilities but rather to show the individual how they can manage their disability all while still living a fulfilling life.

The term counseling came up a lot during my interviews with the participants. I spoke with one who said she had taken a mental health counseling skills and techniques course as a graduate student. Out of all the participants I met with, only one of them had an actual counseling degree. Therefore, because of her educational background, she felt more comfortable speaking with her students who were dealing with issues such as depression or anxiety or just going through a stressful time in their lives. She and a few of her colleagues, who also had a counseling degree, were asked by their academic department to give their other advising colleagues a training that would provide them with tips on how to handle students who may be struggling with a mental health illness.

Due to the number of times the word counseling came up in the findings, it led me to think about the credentials of an academic advisor. Therefore, I pose the following question, should academic advisors have an educational background in counseling? The data shows that there are quite the number of students that are being referred by their advisors to seek assistance from the university counseling center. As a result of that high demand of students seeking help from CAPS, students are being placed on the waiting list to speak to a counselor. The academic departments may want to take that into consideration as part of the hiring process. Or instead implement intense counseling training so that advisors can feel like they can handle the situation better and every student can be seen and heard rather than be put on a waiting list.

Support from the Academic Department

Another aspect to consider in terms of incorporating coaching in advising is the significant role that the supervisors from the academic departments have in terms of promoting the rest of their advisors to use coaching skills and techniques. From what I gathered from interviewing the participants is that there may be mixed feelings and messages across the academic departments when it comes to the concept of coaching. It is not clear how coaching fits in with advising. The participants discussed how important it is for them to feel encouraged by their supervisors to utilize coaching skills and techniques and to know what the goals and expectations are when it comes to using this approach. For instance, one participant posed the question is this approach supposed to help with overall retention and graduation rates? If so, then that could help with university buy-in and act as an incentive.

Departments can facilitate the implementation of coaching skills as well as ensure that they are being used appropriately in two ways: (a) offer continuous training for all advisors, and (b) develop a process of evaluations. One type of training the participants felt was needed was refresher training for advisors who have already completed the initial coaching training. This is a novel approach to the advising community that has its own skill set, it is important that the advisors have a chance to be reminded as well as stay informed with any further details as it pertains to coaching. The participants talked about having a space where they can practice the skills that they have learned to ensure that they are using them effectively. This also gives them a chance to meet with other advisors to hear what their experience has been like and learn from them.

Then there is the option of implementing a training program where the advisors could get something out of it formally, such as a certification. After my conversation with the participants from the coaching program, I was very intrigued by an idea that they had discussed with me when we were talking about the future of coaching and advising. The participant had the idea of developing a coaching training program where the advisors could earn badges for upon completion. Universities are strongly recommended to provide professional development opportunities for their employees. This training program would be a chance to complete those hours but also earn something for it that could be added to the advisor's resume.

Another kind of training that was mentioned a few times was mental health training. Due to the high demand of students experiencing some level of mental distress while at the university, it may be beneficial to develop training that would assist advisors on how to handle these situations. Advisors may not be able to cure a student with a mental illness but with the proper training they may be able to help with providing the student with the proper tools and resources that will help the student to cope and manage their situation better.

Aside from offering training, another way these departments can offer support is by incorporating some way in which these advisors can be evaluated. I was fortunate enough that one of my participants was also a manager who currently supervises other advisors. She spoke in greater detail about how she not only encourages her advisors to use the coaching skills but how she also includes that in her evaluations and makes it a point of discussion when she meets with her advisors. There was one instance where she did have to speak to one of her advisors to discuss the importance of being able to notice

certain cues from the student to be able to attend to that student better. For this participant it was important for her advisors to have emotional intelligence and to remind them of that. The evaluation piece is important because it gives the supervisor the chance to give feedback as well as give the advisor an opportunity to reflect on their experiences using the skills.

<div align="center">**Final Thoughts**</div>

In addition to the several takeaways I got after collecting and analyzing the data, I also had a moment to sit and reflect on all the information that I had gathered, and I was left with a few personal thoughts of my own. I would like to address these concluding thoughts and pose some interesting questions to conclude but to also give the readers who may also be working at a higher education institution something to think about themselves. These last thoughts are ones to be taken into consideration by individuals who are contemplating whether college life coaching is a solution to providing their students the support they need at their institution.

Does Coaching Have a Place Within the Advising Community?

However, the findings from the qualitative interviews show that by using these skills and techniques it can enhance the student-advisor relationship as well as the student's overall development. The skills and techniques can also be helpful during challenging times like the coronavirus pandemic we all experienced. It appears to me that there are still valid concerns when it comes to the utilization of these coaching skills and techniques and their value within the advising community. It is these concerns that lead one to ask the following two questions. First, does college life coaching have a place in academic advising? Secondly, does the current model for academic advising allow for

coaching to happen in the sessions? Based on the findings of this study there are current structural circumstances where it would be difficult and even impossible to fit in a coaching session with every student.

One contributing factor for making this a challenge is the advisors' student caseloads. According to the participants in this study, an advisor's student caseload can range anywhere between 400-700 students. The number of students in a caseload does depend on the level position of the advisor. A level one advisor has the greatest number of students in their caseload because their primary role is to solely advise students, whereas level two and three advisors do still advise a small number of students, but those advisors also do work on other projects which requires more of their time and attention. Another attributing factor to the considerable number of caseloads is when an advisor resigns. When an advisor leaves the department their student caseload gets reassigned amongst the other advisors.

The advisors' caseloads are an important discussion to have because the role of an academic advisor does not just consist of meeting with the students. There are other responsibilities that come along with taking an advisory position that we must take into consideration. For example, the advisors at Florida International University are also responding to emails and phone calls for the hundreds of students they have. Due to the demands of the role, the participants did allude to feeling like they are being stretched thin when it comes to the heavy workload they currently have.

In addition to evaluating the advisors' student caseloads, another challenges the participants reported was the timeframe they are allotted to meet with each of their students. At Florida International University, each advising session is set at thirty

minutes. That may seem like a reasonable amount of time; however, a lot of that time is spent covering specific topics that advisors are required to discuss in each of those appointments. For example, advisors are supposed to go over information as it pertains to career counseling, discuss certain universities policies such as the excess credit policy as well as to review what classes the student needs to enroll for while also making sure that the student is on the right track to graduate on time.

The amount of time it takes to go over all these topics sometimes leaves little to no time at all for coaching the student. Often these advisors find themselves having back-to-back appointments, which tends to occur the most during the peak registration period. During this peak time there is simply no chance for the advisor to be flexible with their students by allowing them the extra time they may need in that session. As a result of that limited timeframe, should the student need more time with their advisor the student is forced to schedule another advising appointment and that is if they even follow through with scheduling that appointment.

The coaching advising literature supports the idea that academic advisors still need to provide students with information as it relates to their academic progress. However, the literature also acknowledges the need for additional student support within the academic advising community. One way the academic departments can do that is to change the structure of advising that would allow for the two functions to exist. One possible solution that would allow for the student to receive the academic information they need but also have an opportunity to address any questions and concerns that they may have would be to create a new position, for instance like an academic coach, who can be available for students who need additional assistance that falls outside the realm of

traditional advising. However, that would mean creating a new position for the departments which would need to be taken into consideration as it pertains to matters related to budget.

Does the Metrics Drive the Advising Sessions?

Coincidentally, the time that is spent in these advising appointments covering these specific topics seem to highly correlate with the university metrics. Most of the topics that are being discussed have an underlining agenda and that is to inform the student of these policies so that they can graduate within the four-year period because that is a highly regarded measure in terms of the metrics. It is understood that the metrics system does weigh heavily on the university, but should the metrics drive the kinds of conversations that the advisors are having with their students? Should the purpose of advising appointments be centered around the metrics?

After meeting with the participant from the College Life Coaching department, we discussed the concept of coaching and whether it would be something that could be successfully incorporated within the advising sessions. The participants' thoughts on the matter were that it could be done, however, it would not be an easy transition into the academic advising community. The transition, from their perspective, was that they felt that it would be difficult to incorporate coaching in advising in part due to the emphasis on the meeting the numbers of the university. The participant further elaborated on the point by saying that the role of the advisor has in fact changed and now a substantial portion of an advisor's job has become not only discussing those required topics with the students but also do a student outreach with the hope that it will have an overall significant impact on the university in terms of numbers. For example, every semester

advisors are tasked to call the population of students who have not enrolled yet for the next semester to see what is going on with the student, why the students have not yet registered for classes and get them to enroll as soon as possible. Advisors are also contacting students who are at elevated risk of losing their financial aid which is a strong determinant as to whether the student will enroll for classes or not. These distinct kinds of advisory communication have a tremendous impact on the university's performance on the metrics.

However, according to the participant from the coaching department, what is happening because of these kinds of outreach initiatives which are part of the department of Academic Career and Success, is that the encounters that the advisors are having with their students have become more transactional in nature and less personal. These advisor outreach initiatives are an extension of what the advisors' sessions are, again talking to students about certain policies and finding out what their career plans post-graduation. However, the participant from the coaching department made an interesting point, that there are going to be times where the advisor is going to need to step away from being an advisor for just a moment and instead will need to be a coach. They further elaborated on this point by saying if there is an opportunity that presents itself where the student has expressed that they are feeling overwhelmed, there is a need for a human interaction to take place, not a transactional one. A student who discloses those kinds of feelings or shows signs of being upset simply cannot be overlooked and ignored because no one knows what could happen after that session.

What are the Implications to the University When Coaching Skills and Techniques are not Being Used?

If the metrics is in fact a key player in all of this, then perhaps there have been too many instances of overlooking that have already occurred. The findings of this study, based on the participants' responses, have shown that college life coaching can be another way to approach students that may be helpful to them but that it can also be used as a remedy for student success. I do understand that at the end of the day these advisors must advise their students about their program and prepare them so that they can graduate, but another way to achieve that is to also provide the student with the support that they need especially when the advisor is aware that the student may be going through a tough time in.

These participants discussed several instances where they were able to use these skills to have deep meaningful conversations with their students that in the end provided the student with some solace. If these participants had not taken a chance and used these coaching skills and techniques what would have happened to those students? What is happening now to students is that there is no real guarantee that all advisors are using these coaching skills in their sessions?

What are the Cost and Benefits?

With all that has been said, it is important to take into consideration the costs and benefits of integrating college life coaching into the advising community. Florida International University is a large, public metropolitan research institution in Miami. The university is a city within a city. It is an institution that not only serves the students that attend the university, but it also has made countless efforts to assist the community of

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Miami-Dade County that surrounds the university physically. In terms of the student population, currently, the university student population is about 60,000.

Each year, the university graduates thousands of students. Those students after earning their degrees, consequently, are going out into the workforce. The purpose of the university is to help prepare these students for that next phase of their life. The coaching skills and techniques that were used by the participants assisted these students by facilitating a conversation that helped the students come to the realization in certain aspects of their life as well as develop skills of their own that would not only help them get through their time as a student but that would hopefully carry over into the next chapter of their professional life post-graduation, but what would it cost the university to implement this model?

There are several resources that must be taken into consideration when assessing the cost of implementing a new procedure such as coaching. There would be a need for additional staffing. As I mentioned previously, one the biggest challenges these participants faced was the time constraints of their advising appointments. Currently, there is not a lot of room for flexibility in terms of extending these appointments because of the considerable number of students that makeup these caseloads, hiring more advisors is one solution to this problem and can help to reduce the student caseloads per advisor. This could give the academic departments an opportunity to evaluate and determine what the advisor-to-student ratio should be. That would allow advisors to extend their appointments for students who want it or need it. However, adding more advisors would mean more salaries that would have to be paid and that is one thing that would need to be

factored into the overall cost. Also, adding more staff would also mean adding more office space and purchasing more furniture and equipment.

Another cost factor that these departments need to consider especially if they are looking to hire new advisors, is establishing a permanent training program. It was mentioned several times about the importance of having more training opportunities and having these training sessions available to the advising community throughout the year. The participants also recommended that these training sessions cover assorted topics and be presented in several different formats. When it comes to looking at the potential costs of these courses, one must consider a few auxiliary items to which to include.

First, would be the cost associated with the location where these training sessions would take place. Second, would be the cost of the facilitator for these training courses. Thirdly, would be the training materials for all the attendees. Lastly, would be whether to have refreshments available for everyone depending on the length of time the training is going to be. These are all budgetary matters that each department would have to assess and determine if, one, that is plausible and two, if it is worth the investment.

What are the theoretical implications to the findings of this study?

As higher education administrators we know that there are students who enroll in a university is because they want to achieve academic success. The participants in this study discussed meeting with their students who wanted to figure out what kind of career field they wanted to get into others spoke about how their students were struggling and needed help to get back on track. Maslow's Theory of Motivation focuses on understanding what drives an individual to work towards a particular goal or outcome (1943). Maslow created the hierarchy of needs that he believed contributed to a person's

level of motivation which included the following: (a) one's physiological needs, (b) safety needs, (c) need for love and belonging, (d) self-esteem, and (e) self-actualization (1943). Refer to Appendix E for Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

Typically, those who seek a post-secondary degree, are those who hope to become successful in their future. However, we, as faculty and staff members of these post-secondary institutions, know very well that the path to be successful is not always a smooth one and has its obstacles. The concern is how does a student navigate through those challenging times. There are some students that feel less motivated and may require an intervention that provokes them to think about certain areas of their life and question themselves as to how they are going to overcome these obstacles. The findings reveal that students who experience a coaching session with their advisor leave feeling motivated and optimistic.

We are also aware that these obstacles our students face are not just academically related. Most students are dealing with a lot on a personal level and the university and especially the advising community needs to be prepared to assist all facets of a student's life. Carl Rogers, founder of the humanistic approach, believed that it is important to look at the many aspects of an individual. The findings revealed that the participants were not only having academic related conversations with their students, but they also found themselves meeting with their students to discuss personal matters. According to Rogers, one way to help that person become the best version of themselves was through interventions such as therapy (1963). Rogers believed that there were several benefits to those who seek therapy: (a) the client becomes open to their experiences, (b) the individual would be able to live an existential life and (c) the person would end up doing

what they felt was right, therefore becoming a fully functioning person (1963). The data reveals that using coaching skills and techniques can be a useful approach to help students, however, the findings also reveal that not all students are open to experience this approach for themselves which makes it challenging to assist these students who may need it the most.

For Rogers, the client is important, but the role of the therapist is also a vital one in terms of being able to guide the individual to reach their full potential. The role of an academic advisor is an important one too. Often the advisor is the one person the student comes in contact the most frequently during their time as a student. However, the findings reveal that not all advisors are equipped to take on the coaching role as some do not possess certain characteristics that are required to effectively carry out the skills and techniques. To Carl Rogers, for client-centered therapy to work the therapist very much like the coaching literature states about a life coach, and one must practice certain things. Rogers believed that the therapist must be able to enter an intensely personal relationship with the client with no intention of diagnosing the individual or trying to cure them but instead go into it as one human being to another human being (1963).

The therapist must see their client as having self-worth no matter the behavior, their feelings or condition (Rogers, 1963). The therapist must be able to show empathy towards their client (Rogers, 1963). Finally, the therapist is comfortable going into the relationship fully, without knowing where it will lead, but feeling content that they were able to provide a safe space that allows the client to become themselves (Rogers, 1963). The findings reveal the kinds of skills most used by the participants which coincide with Roger's description of the therapist-client relationship.

Future Research

Understanding the Coaching Experience from the Student's Perspective

After conducting this research study, I realized that there are other research opportunities one can investigate that both involves looking further into the advising community utilizing coaching skills and techniques but also just looking into certain aspects of academic advising. This study solely focused on getting a better understanding of the academic advisor's experience of utilizing the coaching skills and techniques on their students. It would, however, be interesting to conduct a qualitative interview study where the researcher can interview the students who have experienced a coaching session from their academic advisor and get their in-depth perspective on it. College life coaching is not only a novel approach for advisors, but it is also a new concept for students too.

I think the potential findings of this kind of study would contribute immensely to the advising community as well as the entire university to know what did the students like and disliked about the coaching sessions. What did the student gain out of that experience? What sort of impact did it have on the student? Would they be interested in having another coaching session with their advisor? What are the students' thoughts about academic advisors adopting this approach and using it when appropriate? The data collected from this study could be used in the program implantation process. The findings can also be used towards any future professional development and training opportunities for the academic advisors to continue to improve and enhance their coaching skills. The results of this kind of study can also prove to be insightful for the advising and the university community in general by getting a better understanding of the needs of the population in which they serve.

Supervisors' Perspective on Coaching

Aside from getting the students' perspectives on coaching and advising, another group of individuals to interview to get their thoughts and opinions on this subject matter would be the supervisors of these academic advising departments. In addition to the role of the university when it comes to the implementation of policy and procedure at the university level, the role of the advising managers is crucial in the implementation of a new policy or procedure at the academic advising community level. For these coaching skills and techniques to go into effect and be seen as important to others, the participants in this study said that message needs to come from the top for it to go into effect from the bottom.

First, it would be eye opening to hear from these supervisors to get a sense of how they feel about college life coaching as a concept in higher education. Then it would be interesting to hear more from them in terms of what their thoughts are on integrating college life coaching skills with advising. Furthermore, questions like how would the managers feel about making changes to the current advising model to better suit coaching within advising sessions? What are some of the potential challenges they can foresee with implementing this concept into the advising community? In what ways can the supervisor support and assess their advisors in terms of efficiency and effectiveness when it comes to using these skills and techniques? Finally, understand from their point of view what the potential costs and benefits would be if they were to consider incorporating coaching within the advising community and make it a mandatory procedure that all advisors would have to integrate within their advising sessions.

Impact of Coaching on Academic Performance

All these potential qualitative interview studies will give a glimpse into the perspective of other key players when it comes to the implementation of this approach. However, it is also important to conduct a study that can provide measurable results. This study really brought to light how using these coaching skills and techniques can potentially make an impact on a student personally but could using these coaching skills have an impact on the student's academic performance?

From a quantitative comparative analysis approach, a researcher can look at conducting this study from two different lenses. For the first study, a researcher can recruit low academic performing students, the target participants for this study could have a grade point average of below a 2.0 (the students can be on academic warning or probation), have a history of failed or dropped courses. These students (participants) will have to them meet with their academic advisors periodically for coaching sessions. At the end of the semester when the grades have been posted, the researcher can analyze the results by comparing the academic performance from before the semester started and after the semester ended to see whether there was an improvement on the student's overall academic performance.

This study can be done looking at a group of individual students or one can conduct this similar comparative analysis study by putting the participant students into two groups. One group of participants meets with their advisors for coaching sessions. The second group does not receive any kind of coaching. To see if coaching has any sort of impact, the academic performances of both groups can be compared to determine if there is a significant difference between the coaching and non-coaching groups

Interpersonal Effects of Coaching

In addition to looking at the academic performance, one may also be curious to see what kind of impact does coaching has on the student on a personal level. After interviewing the participants for this study, what I gathered the most from them was how often they heard that their students were dealing with a lot of personal obstacles. Often when these students disclose that they were going through a challenging time they also mentioned how they were not sure how they could overcome the tough time that they were having and move forward from it. These challenges can not only affect these students from a personal standpoint but can also be the reason the student does poorly academically. The participants also mentioned several academic related challenges students faced such as setting goals for themselves and declaring a major that they want to pursue. In some instances, having a coaching session with their advisor helped the student come to their own conclusions on those certain things.

It would be compelling to see in what ways the coaching process has helped these students to overcome these barriers. First, by revealing more about the specific kinds of coaching skills and techniques that were used in those sessions. Secondly, by also shedding light as to what specific steps the students took to overcome the challenge and what the outcome was. This study lends itself to analyzing the student's own self efficacy as the coaching approach is about talking things out but having the client, in this case the student, decide for themselves the ways in which they want to resolve their own personal matters.

Analyze the Advising Referral Process

A common advising practice is referring the students to specific resources on campus depending on the needs of that individual student. For example, the participants spoke about referring students to the tutoring center if the student needed help in particular subject matter. If students were going through a tough time personally the participants would refer the students to the counseling and psychological services center. With all these advisor referrals it is not clearly known what happens after the student has been referred. Did the student visit the on-campus resource? What was the student's experience like after visiting those student services centers? Finally, what kinds of resources are being used the most by students? These are important questions that need to be asked as the responses could determine the effectiveness of the advisor referral process and whether those referrals do in fact help the student in the end. This study could be a way for the university to re-evaluate the resources that are provided and assess whether there is a need for improvement of any kind.

Reduction of Student Caseloads

The participants described two major advising structural and operational challenges that they believed made it difficult for them to use coaching skills and techniques and those challenges were their student caseloads and the length of time they had for student appointments. It is impossible to be able to give these students the attention that they deserve given these two factors. Therefore, it is important to bring these issues to the forefront in hopes of coming up with a solution that everyone can be content with.

To come up with a solution, one must understand why this is a problem in the first place. A research study that would analyze the effects of a large student caseload on both students and academic advisors could identify what the problems are. These advisors can have anywhere between 400-700 students at any given time and the advisor finds it difficult to help them all, what then happens to these students? What percentage of them graduate? How many of them drop out?

Once this information has been gathered another idea would be to compare these results by conducting another study where the researcher is looking at advisors who have significantly less students in their caseloads. Are they able to meet with their students longer? How often does the advisor get to coach their students? How are these students doing in terms of graduating and persisting? The findings of these studies could suggest what the appropriate student-advisor ratio should be as well as propose a length of time for student appointments that would allow the advisor to tend to all their students by giving the advisor a suitable amount of time to meet with each student during their advising session without feeling overwhelmed.

Conclusion

In closing, I set out to answer two questions. One, what are the experiences of academic advisors who have used coaching skills and techniques in their advising sessions? Two, what do advisors think about the advising community integrating coaching skills and techniques within their roles? The findings of this study provide insight into the ways in which the participants were able to utilize the coaching skills and techniques and what benefits they saw in their students after using them. The participants

also discussed in great lengths the several challenges that occur within the realm of advising that are not conducive for coaching to take place.

After analyzing the data, one does get a sense of the advisor's overall experience, both the good and the challenging. When it comes to the thoughts of the participants as it relates to integrating the coaching skills and techniques within academic advising, overall, the participants agreed that it would be a great idea to for more advisors to use this approach on more students. The participants overwhelmingly see that there is a need for additional support for students who are struggling both academically and personally. The participants can see students really benefit from this approach. However, implementing these skills and techniques into advising will not be easy. It will take some buy in from some key university players who would be willing to invest both the time and the money to make this happen.

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Appendix A

Academic Advisor I Job Description

Starting Salary: $44,000

Engages in professional development opportunities to further job knowledge and skills.

Utilizes technology to manage a caseload of advisees to support students' identification of an appropriate major and their retention and on-time graduation in the identified major.

Responds to student messages, inquiries, and requests in a timely manner (within 2 business days).

Provides academic advising and guidance to prospective FIU students (both on campus and at prospective student events that occur off-campus) and current students who are considering change of major.

Educates advisees on how to access resources and technological tools (including but not limited to career and talent development, Center for academic success, PDA (Panther Degree Audit), Major Maps, EAB, Handshake).

Educates advisees on relevant policies and procedures (e.g., Excess Credit Surcharge, NC grades, Academic Salvage/ Amnesty).

Provides general career advising to students to help them plan for employment and/or future education and help facilitate career-readiness through appropriate referral to available resources.

Conducts targeted outreach campaigns to improve retention and graduation rates. Acts as a student advocate, identifying potential roadblocks to success and escalating those roadblocks for resolution.

Works with program faculty, career professionals, and Center for Student Engagement to stay up to date on engagement opportunities for students and educates advisees on potential engagement opportunities and other high impact practices available to them.

Completes appropriate Academic Coaching Training and utilizes techniques with special populations.

Adheres to all State of Florida, University, NCAA, Conference USA and department rules and policies pertaining to the position of Athletic Academic

Advisor. Reports any known NCAA violations or concerns to Chief Athletic Compliance Officer.

Serves as Academic Athletic Liaison and handles all advisement activities for student athletes. This includes processing mid -term and annual NCAA Progress Toward Degree forms (if questions arise related to Panther Degree Audit Works with at-risk student populations and additional cohort projects. Serves as a mentor for new advisors.

Assists in training of new advisors and professional development activities. Supervises practicum students. Assists administrators with college-wide projects (e.g., transient approvals, post 90 credit changes to program/plan, excess credit petitions, PTD approval, etc.).

Performs other related duties as assigned or as directed. The omission of specific duties does not preclude the supervisor from assigning duties that are logically related to the position.

Human Resources Department. (n.d.). *Academic Advisor I Job Description.* Florida International University.

Appendix B

Advisor II Job Description

Starting Salary: $47,000

Engages in professional development opportunities to further job knowledge and skills.

Utilizes technology to manage a caseload of advisees to support students' identification of an appropriate major and their retention and on-time graduation in the identified major.

Responds to student messages, inquiries, and requests in a timely manner (within 2 business days).

Provides academic advising and guidance to prospective FIU students (both on campus and at prospective student events that occur off-campus) and current students who are considering change of major.

Educates advisees on how to access resources and technological tools (including but not limited to career and talent development, Center for academic success, PDA, Major Maps, EAB, Handshake).

Educates advisees on relevant policies and procedures (e.g., Excess Credit Surcharge, NC grades, Academic Salvage/ Amnesty).

Provides general career advising to students to help them plan for employment and/or future education and help facilitate career-readiness through appropriate referral to available resources.

Conducts targeted outreach campaigns to improve retention and graduation rates. Acts as a student advocate, identifying potential roadblocks to success and escalating those roadblocks for resolution.

Works with program faculty, career professionals, and Center for Student Engagement to stay up to date on engagement opportunities for students and educates advisees on potential engagement opportunities and other high impact practices available to them.

Completes appropriate Academic Coaching Training and utilizes techniques with special populations. Adheres to all State of Florida, University, NCAA, Conference USA and department rules and policies pertaining to the position of Athletic Academic Advisor. Reports any known NCAA violations or concerns to Chief Athletic Compliance Officer.

Serves as Academic Athletic Liaison and handles all advisement activities for student athletes. This includes processing mid -term and annual NCAA Progress Toward Degree forms (if questions arise related to Panther Degree Audit.

Works with at-risk student populations and additional cohort projects. Serves as a mentor for new advisors.

Assists in training of new advisors and professional development activities.

Supervises practicum students.

Assists administrators with college-wide projects (e.g., transient approvals, post 90 credit changes to program/plan, excess credit petitions, PTD approval, etc.).

Performs other related duties as assigned or as directed. The omission of specific duties does not preclude the supervisor from assigning duties that are logically related to the position.

Human Resources Department. (n.d.). *Academic Advisor II Job Description.* Florida
    International University.

Appendix C

Advisor III/ Project Lead Job Description

Starting Salary: $50,000

Engages in professional development opportunities to further job knowledge and skills.

Utilizes technology to manage a caseload of advisees to support students' identification of an appropriate major and their retention and on-time graduation in the identified major.

Responds to student messages, inquiries, and requests in a timely manner (within 2 business days).

Provides academic advising and guidance to prospective FIU students (both on campus and at prospective student events that occur off-campus) and current students who are considering change of major.

Educates advisees on how to access resources and technological tools (including but not limited to Career and Talent Development, Center for Academic Success, PDA, Major Maps, EAB, Handshake).

Educates advisees on relevant policies and procedures (e.g., Excess Credit Surcharge, NC grades, Academic Salvage/ Amnesty).

Provides general career advising to students to help them plan for employment and/or future education and help facilitate career-readiness through appropriate referral to available resources and coordinates career development and readiness initiatives with campus partners.

Conducts targeted outreach campaigns to improve retention and graduation rates. Acts as a student advocate, identifying potential roadblocks to success and escalating those roadblocks for resolution.

Works with program faculty, career professionals, and Center for Student Engagement to develop engagement opportunities for students and educates advisees on potential engagement opportunities and other high-impact practices available to them.

Works with at-risk student populations and additional cohort projects.

Adheres to all State of Florida, University, NCAA, Conference USA and department rules and policies pertaining to the position of Athletic Academic Advisor. Reports any known NCAA violations or concerns to Chief Athletic Compliance Officer.

Serves as Academic Athletic Liaison and handles all advisement activities for student athletes. This includes processing mid -term and annual NCAA Progress Toward Degree forms (if questions arise related to Panther Degree Audit).

Serves as redirection specialist for students who are not making progress towards degree.

Serves as a mentor for new advisors.

Supervises practicum students.

With department and college administrators, coordinates curriculum/requirement updates for PDAs (Panther Degree Audit), major maps, transfer guides, etc. and assists administrators with college-wide projects (e.g., transient approvals, post 90 credit changes to program/plan, excess credit petitions, PTD approval, etc.).

Serves as a project lead for designated major, group of majors/programs, or coordinated advising team and serves as a as liaison between advisors, administrators, and program directors/faculty.

Completes Academic Coaching Training and utilizes techniques with special populations.

Coordinates university-wide special projects for the team (e.g., coordinates distribution and completion of Excess Credit Surcharge list; coordinates orientations for the team).

Coordinates/plans departmental training for advisors and assists in training of new advisors and professional development activities. Performs other related duties as assigned or as directed. The omission of specific duties does not preclude the supervisor from assigning duties that are logically related to the position.

Human Resources Department. (n.d.). *Academic Advisor III/ Project Lead Job Description.* Florida International University.

Appendix D

John Holland's Six Personality Types

REALISTIC

Realistic types generally like to work with things more than with people. They are often described as genuine, sensible, practical, natural, thrifty, modest, persistent, and honest.

INVESTIGATIVE

Investigative types typically like to work with ideas more than with people or things. They are usually described as logical, curious, exact, intellectual, cautious, independent, quiet, and modest.

CONVENTIONAL

Conventional types generally like to work with papers and numbers. They are typically described as practical, careful, thrifty, efficient, orderly, and persistent.

ARTISTIC

Artistic types usually like to work with ideas more than with things. They are usually described as open, creative, independent, emotional, impulsive, and original.

ENTERPRISING

Enterprising types generally like to work with people and ideas more than with things. They are usually described as outgoing, adventurous, energetic, optimistic, sociable, and self-confident.

SOCIAL

Social types typically like to work with people more than with things. They are often described as helpful, understanding, responsible, warm, cooperative, convincing, friendly, kind, generous, and patient.

Appendix E

Abraham Maslow Theory of Motivation

Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's hierarchy of needs

McLeod, S. A. (2020). *Maslow's hierarchy of needs*. Simply Psychology.
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Appendix F

Participant Interview Questions

1. How long have you been an academic advisor?
2. Prior to attending the College Life Coaching Training Program, have you heard of College Life Coaching?
3. What was your perception of what college life coaching was?
4. What were your thoughts after attending the College Life Coaching Training Program?
5. Have you attended more coaching training since the initial one?
6. Describe an instance where you used a coaching skill or technique in one of your advising sessions.
7. What have you found to be some of the benefits of using coaching skills in your advising sessions?
8. What are some challenges you came across when you integrated the coaching skills in your advising sessions?
9. How did you navigate through those challenges?
10. What has it been like having these skills while working remotely during the pandemic?
11. What has been the reaction from the student after they have received coaching?
12. What are your thoughts on the advising community utilizing and integrating college life coaching skills and techniques?
13. What kind of support or resources do you think advisors would need to integrate these skills and techniques?
14. What characteristics do you think the advisor needs to have to take on a coaching role?

VITA

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