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# Communication Training for Academic Advising Workshop

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**Communication Training for Academic Advising Workshop**

By

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A.A., Joliet Junior College, 2005

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GRADUATE PROJECT

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Degree of Master of Arts,  
With a Major in Communications and Training

Governors State University  
University Park, IL 60484

2012

## Communication Training for Academic Advising Workshop

### **Review of Literature**

The Communication Training for Academic Advising workshop is designed to blend communication skills with academic advising. Researched data will be used to create workshop curriculum that will: 1) Assist in developing participants' skills regarding mentoring and human communication (such as listening); 2) Recommend strategies for reducing anxiety, and 3) Introduce methods of interpersonal communication in order to effectively advise students. The workshop involves a strong communication foundation and participation in order to identify individual needs and concerns. Some key points to keep in mind are being considerate of students' time, explaining the process, being apologetic, and being efficient are all good habits to remember. Advisors should try to portray straightforward complements, and not show indifference, or use hostile language. In other words advisors should be cheerful, smile, and be sincere (Tschohl, Hovland, & Hillman, 2010).

This Communication Training for Academic Advising workshop serves as an educational tool promoting the use of learned skills to enhance academic advising by advocating sound communication practices. Methods used in this workshop are based on years of research by many different communication specialists. Participation in this workshop will better enable the student, as advisor, to enlist the cooperation and collaboration of the advisee.

The Communication Training for Academic Advising workshop aids students in accomplishing successful advising through the development of skilled communications. Part of the workshop goals will be the implementation of improved listening, effective messaging and cultural awareness in academic advising situations. The workshop serves to promote

participants' awareness of communication methods, which will enhance the overall quality of service that the academic advisor can provide.

The Communication Training for Academic Advising workshop was designed to identify common miscommunications and enhance mentoring. Participation and involvement in this workshop teaches participants the importance of a proper balance between academic advising online and face-to-face to enable the student's success in completing their academic goals. The goal of the literature review is to identify ways of improving academic advising in order to enable student success.

I begin now with an explanation of the importance of the type of academic advising a student receives, and its value on student success. Then I continue to the history behind academic advising and how it evolved into mentoring. Next is an explanation of the terms and modes of advising available, and a discussion on adult learners and how they differ slightly. Then we must cover the barriers of academic advising and address some challenges advisors face today. To continue, technology is discovered to play a very large role in advising with upcoming trends that can surely enhance the advising program. Delving deeper, the next section discusses how mentoring involves a great deal of interpersonal skill such as cultural, ethical, and listening. I then conclude with the future needs for academic advising and the basis of training.

### **Types of Advising**

Through this research I have determined that students' academic success is affected by the type of advising received. In the words of White and Khakpour (2006), "While brick and mortar house the libraries, provide shelter for students, make space for laboratories and lecture halls, they are simply shells without the presence of humans who are engaged in the most critical task of helping their charges succeed at their academy" (White & Khakpour, 2006, para. 20).

## **History of Advising**

The initial academic advising concepts were first established in Europe in 1876 by a board of officials (White & Khakpour, 2006). It is the advisors' responsibility to provide guidance to the student and be a go between for faculty and students. According to this board, the value and significance of academic advising is to meet the goals of the institution and its established mission. Those goals should include cultural values and interaction with students to develop real life goals through the knowledge they obtain. The Board's idea of academic advising evolved to include actual mentoring in which a rapport is established between the student and advisor that provides comfort and creates a good relationship early on. This type of full focus advising with mentoring became more prevalent way of providing student academic success (White & Khakpour, 2006). With the growth of universities, these advising systems became more complex with cross-college advising computer systems helping to provide essential information (University of Arizona, 2009).

One of the most important issues in students' education is good academic advising because often students' finds themselves desperately seeking good advice and regretting academic decisions of the past. Data on simple academic advising versus full focused mentoring can be closely correlated with student's feeling of academic success. In Young and Cates research (2005), protégé's said peer-mentor helped them to socialize and adapt to organizations. Supporting this claim is the research of Hale, Graham and Johnson (2009), are the results of a study by Hale, Graham, and Johnson (2009) in which students indicated their preferred advising style, "A majority of these students had a prescriptive [academic] advisor but held developmental advising [full focused mentoring] as their preferred style" (Hale, Graham, & Johnson, 2009, p. 313). These students with developmental advisors formed personal relationships that integrated

academic, career, and personal goals that enhanced student retention and degree completions (Hale, Graham, & Johnson, 2009).

Face-to-face academic advising has been around since 1876. With frequent visits and consistent feedback an academic advisor can become an important mentor that helps students to be successful not only in their educational goals but also in their life. According to authors Hale, Graham and Johnson's (2009) definition, 'mentoring' is a continuum of advising a student by establishing a relationship that includes the student's personal and career goals while considering academic choices. 'Academic advising' is more rigid and scripted, of a non-personal and strict business nature, not taking individual student aspects into consideration (Hale, Graham, & Johnson, 2009). For the purpose of this paper, moving forward, 'academic advising' and 'mentoring' will be used as described here by Hale, Graham, and Johnson (2009) with the terms 'mentoring' and 'full focused advising' interchangeable.

### **Advising and Mentoring**

There are specific elements to communicating for academic advising that this research has shown. One is that making time for the mentoring process is important (Loureiro-Koechlen & Allan, 2010; Riedinger, 2009), and the term mentor is someone who looks over the life goals and progress of someone else (Bierema & Merriam, 2002). This mentoring can be done either by an academic professional advisor or with the pairing of students for peer support and assistance in all levels of education; research found this type of mentoring is especially helpful for students that are minority groups or introverts by nature (Bierema & Merriam, 2002). Peer mentoring is commonly used for new students at undergraduate level. The University of Vermont (UVM) has been using peer mentoring since 2001. UVM feels their program helps students to adjust socially, personally, and academically during their first year. Students can develop a relationship

with the experienced students and have them as a 'go to' for a personal support of academic resource for many questions they may have regarding classes, programs, and social clubs. Peer Mentor application links are provided on the University's website and through online profiles and interviews mentors are matched with new student mentees (University of Vermont, 2012). Universities find that as a result, endless possibilities exist for effective mentoring benefits which include creating diversity in social interaction, as well as learning more about global and human development (Bierema & Merriam 2002).

### **Modes of Advising**

Student and instructors seem to agree that some type of advising is necessary in order to be a successful student (Pedagogy, 2004). This advising does not necessarily need to come from another person. The evolution of computer software, paired with the availability of online student information, makes developments in new online technology very exciting. There is even the possibility of greater use of these tools in the future for self-service academic advising. There is a growing need to be off campus bringing attention to self-monitored approaches. For example, the self-maintenance of students' portfolios is important to students' personal and professional growth (Pedagogy, 2004). Sometimes simple online academic advising can be a successful student monitored program (Pedagogy, 2004). No mentor may be necessary if a student takes classes in regular order and the student knows what courses they need and those courses are available. In this scenario a student only needs a computer to tell them what to take. Advanced technology provides auto-advising through software but requires that all information is given correctly in order to work. Although it is important to remember that without human contact things can often go wrong by glitches in the system or by entering incorrect or incomplete information (Technology, 2004).

Many universities see the trend toward online student needs. Human contact is available with personal online advising such as email, instant messaging and video chat programs which are becoming the popular choice among students and advisors. This type of full-focused advising provides the personal touch students prefer but at the convenience of distance. Because it is done electronically, advisors need to use all the tools available to ensure a message is received correctly. This affords students with many services a campus offers including registration, academic advising, financial aid information and forms, 24- hour library service, and tutoring services for students with disabilities (Kassop, 2003). Some colleges have adopted an online program for academic planning and advising to assist students. These progressive advising systems are shared responsibilities between student and advisors. Updated resources are most important to the success of such an online program as this and although the overall success is inconclusive, it is expected that the programs will reduce student academic withdrawal and improve retention (Sloan, Jefferson, Search, & Cox, 2005).

Steele and Thurmond's (2009) research shows a combining of the old in-person and new self-service-software-based advising styles would be best, by integrating all university services at a distance, using e-mail, telephone, and web conferencing for advising. When advising levels are high it is best to use more than one type of communication tool to enable a higher-level of understanding (Steele & Thurmond, 2009). As mentioned, academic advising can be both automated and personal. Staff can identify at-risk learners so they receive just in time communication on counseling advising and retention; the student can then meet with an advisor through virtual appointments weekly (Runyun, 2009).

Self-advising is an option that many students may choose when they are confident about their academic needs and are squeezed for time. This self-advising method became more



prevalent in the 1990's as computers reached advanced levels of technology. The student will seek the information they need to enroll in an academic program by searching the institutional website and asking peers in similar programs what courses to register for, when to register, and how to register. Academic websites provide information on program requirements, tuition, fees, financial aid, student activities, room numbers, courses, etc.... Even with the current trend of software-based, self-service advising, we still see a need for in-person and face-to-face in most cases. Therefore a workshop that trains people to interact with these advising systems in a mixed methods model, would serve to improve the success of this outcome. Hence I am proposing a two-day workshop on academic advising based on this research. Important topics that would be discussed are mentoring, online advising, active listening, social cues, and interpersonal skills as well as follow up (Runyun, 2010; Steele & Thurmond, 2009).

Other options for academically advising students to receive personal mentoring are from their peers. Peer-to-peer mentoring can be a friendly guide to aid in students in academic success. For example Young and Cates suggest that there is a real need for actual mentoring when it comes to freshmen orientation at a state university (Young & Cates, 2005). The interaction between upper-class peer mentors will help their protégés to relieve tension and socialize. Face-to-face interaction and humor helps protégés adapt to the organization and fostered learning. Although peer mentors should have weekly office hours, most students will only need to visit every few weeks. Also good to keep in mind is that there will be positive communication when students perceive some light humor or playfulness from their mentor (Young & Cates, 2005). When interviewed, peer mentors however did not have the confidence of advisors, although many students who had received mentoring from a peer felt the peers had done a strong job (Storrs, Putsche & Taylor, 2008). Research showed 35% of the mentors felt

they had done a strong job mentoring, and that more than half of those being mentored liked the process. Metaphors used in a study cited by Storrs, Putsche, & Taylor (2008), helped cross cultural students relay their experiences. For example one mentor described the mentoring process as a baby bird leaving the nest, another said it was like a child attending their first fair with a parent, another said it was like gardening plants and nurturing with rich soil. Interestingly even though only a third of the mentors felt this power of a 'master passing on knowledge', more than half of protégés saw their mentor as custodian of academic expertise, describing mentors as saviors and rescuers. One protégé's metaphor was of a canoe that was guided by the mentor in the stern but fueled by the mentee in the bow (Storrs, Putsche, & Taylor 2008). Others also support this claim of transmission of knowledge and power. In all these metaphors the protégés viewed their mentors as a guide that enabled them to move forward but the protégé is unknowing and relying heavily on the mentor for direction.

### **Adult Learners**

Mentoring is a process that seems to work well with most students but for the adult learner it is even more important because the adult student needs non-traditional advising. Storrs and colleagues indicated that mentoring is even more important to the success of non-traditional adult students than traditional students; because mentoring is what adult students expect from advisors. The non-traditional student, more than the traditional student, seeks peer relationships with their professional advisor and has high expectations regarding to their personal academic issues (Storrs et al., 2008). Supporting this claim is Stacey Patton (2012), who indicates through her research that "...many students relied on faculty to provide information about viable careers during their time in Graduate school" (p. 8). Other researchers (Loureiro-Koechlen & Allan,

2010; Marques & Luna, 2005) support this claim that non-traditional students expect peers advisors of equal relationship.

Marques and Luna, (2005) state the non-traditional student expects a relationship with their professional advisor to be one based on equality where both are seen as peers despite the difference in their institutional statuses. This type of student mentoring may also be due to the fact that many adult learners are often not up to speed in technology and need a more personal interface to advance forward academically.

As Loureiro-Koechlen and Allan (2010) suggest, today's technology plays a big role in varied social structure such as old, young, global cultures, varied economic status. Although time is compressed, and at increased-speed, it allows for flexibility so students can create their own schedule. As a result many professionals in this study never met face-to-face with a mentor but adapted. Their activities carried on without meeting a mentor and most felt that the mentors were always available. Some students were slow online at first but as time advances students learn to keep pace and prioritize and as an end result indicated a high satisfaction. Because human behavior is ever changing and a result of evolving constant day-to-day activity, those participants that were able to adapt to the time and structure elements of online environment experienced successful mentoring but those that could not did not. In both Loureiro-Koechlen and Allan (2010) and An and Lipscomb (2010), research showed if a routine can be established between the mentor and protégé, e-mentoring will be successful.

### **Barriers**

Academic advising barriers can hinder student-advisor relationships and prevent students from moving forward with their academic goals. A few of the mentoring cases in the study by Storrs et al., (2008) indicated the mentoring process had failed the student. For example Storrs, et

al., found that barriers to effective mentoring by academic advisors in this study were first of all dismissed concerns of racism, and second, student's underestimating the challenge of academic planning and that decisions would be theirs to make.

This first mentioned failed case showed that the mentor had admittedly dismissed too quickly a student's concerns of racism in the community. The student, on the other hand, had idealized the whole relationship as if it were going to be a vacation, which affected their relationship.

The other failed mentor case in the research (Storrs et al., 2008) was when the student had expected the mentor would help her make all her sound decisions but when all was said and done felt only a cold generic connection and did not contact the mentor again. Based on this case it was later suggested by the mentor in the study, that additional mentor training and initial protégé warm up questions, would help in both cases to move students from mentor dependent to a more equitable situation. Besides warm up questions, student surveys could be used and workshops on cultural diversity would be helpful. In most cases protégé's felt the mentoring was a good experience and were able to rise above challenges of feeling alone or as an outsider.

Online communicating can have its own barriers. When communicating online articulate carefully and remember discretion is important. Besides the need to show consideration and respect, there is privacy to consider. "E-mail can be printed, circulated and archived for many months, even years. E-mail should not include objectionable statements or derogatory remarks" (Tschohl, Hovland, & Hillman, 2010, p. 83).

### **Technology Trends**

Constant changes in education and technology dictate the need for distance advising but this comes with many challenges. For example the US Department of Education enforced

restrictions on 'e-learning' that Dahl challenges because they are overly restrictive. Still she maintains institutions should have accountability (Dahl, 2004). With a greater need for online academic advising that is self-service a need for more advanced technology will come. This will then dictate future challenges beyond the technology glitches and communication gaps we face today. Optimally would be to keep the system simple but effective and have available technology training for advisors and students. The convenience factor is bound to play a huge role in students' lives but the human touch is still needed. "Success is built on human values and interaction. The better we interact with students and co-workers, the better we will serve and work with them" (Tschohl, Hovland, & Hillman, 2010, p. 101). Face-to-face advising provides that personal effect that helps the student feels a real connection (Tschohl, et al., 2010). All in all a blended online and face-to-face advising is best because it allows for the diverse needs of students to be met in multiple modalities.

Riedinger (2009) found that another way to keep e-mentoring successful is by advising students to keep electronic portfolios online. Students' benefited when a showcase of their work was easily accessible to faculty and advisors as well as the student themselves. Some common uses of 'e-portfolios' besides to showcase their accomplishments is to access their work and to be able to reflect on their achievements and learning (LaGuardia, 2012). As a result of using electronic portfolios the faculty and advisor were able to maintain an ongoing relationship with the student. It also saved the university about a million dollars by maintaining records and files in a shared environment and it had long term benefits to the student's development of reflective thinking (Riedinger, 2009). Examples of student's e-portfolios are available at <http://www.stolaf.edu/depts/cis/wp/lepore/index2.html>. In this particular example student Jamie Lepore of St. Olaf College, Minnesota, shows a description of her major and how she completed

her project with a final paper, a PowerPoint, applicable links, her own background, and other papers. Another example given is Rochelle Marin of Washington, <http://porfolio.washington.edu/shell32/rochelle-martin--soprano/>. Rochelle uses her student portfolio to include photos and audio files of her performance as an opera singer student (Lorenzo & Ittelson, 2005). These are only some examples of how students can reflect on and learn from what they have accomplished. Although not yet mainstream, e-portfolios are becoming a viable tool amongst many institutions. Some advisors feel student results are better with the use of portfolios. Because portfolios are not graded; academic advisors are able to freely offer support and development and will then give students their file on a CD as a graduation gift.

### **Mentoring**

True mentoring is of higher value than just advising, so again I look at the possibility of electronic full-focused online advising or e-mentoring. Researchers Loureiro-Koechlen and Allan (2010) suggest that e-mentoring is a good thing. In a professional mentoring context there were conclusions in their study that are applicable to an academic mentoring program. The results showed that two factors played in the success of this e-mentoring process of academic advising students online. First was the amount of time that was spent in the online environment and the time of day frame, second was there surrounding or structural space changes for the users, such as a quiet room or uninterrupted space? The professionals that spent more time online interacting in a quiet physical surrounding had more success. Once again these ideas are transferrable to an academic context.

Counselors felt that as distance education grew and face-to-face counseling withdrew, online tutors became human mentors from a distance through electronic communication, because

human companionship is so crucial (Hawkridge, 2003). 'E-mentoring' as it is called, provides struggling students support from a distance, it is a way to connect with and guide students.

Unlike academic advising or self-advising that just dictates courses you need to register for, e-mentoring shares insight and practical advice and develops into a robust relationship that enables students to achieve their highest potential. Interactive tools such as discussion boards and chat rooms had positive feedback and were described by mentors in the e-mentoring process as learning from more experienced students. Discussion boards help students learn from other student's comments, questions and answers, just like in a classroom discussion. Chat rooms are much the same but shorter and quicker than discussion boards. This project served to confirm Glidden's 'Social Structure Theory' which acknowledges the social structure emergence in relationships by making sense of routines patterns (Loureiro-Koechlen & Allan, 2010). The 'social structure' is that of virtual reality relationships such as classroom discussion online.

Thompson, Jeffries, and Topping (2010) have relayed that online mentoring is more beneficial to users with sufficient skills and experience. Because a large majority of students will participate in e-mentoring, it seems the process would serve to be more effective for all if blended with face-to-face (Thompson, Jeffries, & Topping, 2010).

As Boatright-Horowitz, Langley, and Gunnip (2009) suggests, academic advising should not be done on web sites in the beginning of a student's learning process. The student's web usage needs to increase before they can use it as a tool for advising, meaning the more experienced e-learning students will have success with this type of online advising (Boatright-Horowitz, Langley, & Gunnip, 2009). Even though experienced graduate students rate the face-to-face advising higher in friendliness and helpfulness they are more likely to go to a website for

academic information when continuing their education. This indicates that in this type of situation students will sacrifice quality for time.

Interpersonal skills whether at a distance or in person are important and can make a difference in how advisors affect students. Professional communication is vital to quality academic advising in every method of communication the advisor is using: telephone, online and face-to-face. Remember body language is a lot of anyone's first impression so an advisor should not be slouching or cross arms when talking with a student (Tschohl, Hovland, & Hillman, 2010).

Be mindful of culture but do not appraise students solely on culture. Be aware of any bias that could exist, foster relationships through listening empathetically, focus on meaning, and explore competencies (Carlstrom, 2005). All students, regardless of economical class, race or gender, deserve quality education. Free and open-minded discussion will help to avoid biases that can marginalize groups. It is important for individual student's needs to be met and an advisor understanding student's cultural values and influences is central to quality communication. "Language is an important constraint on individuals expression, for the language of the dominant class makes it difficult for working-class groups to understand their situation and to get out of it" (Littlejohn & Foss, 2008, p. 330).

Listening is an important interpersonal skill, "Attentive listening is positive communication" (Tschohl, et al., 2010, p. 80). Advisors should ask questions and listen thoughtfully in order to provide quality communication. By taking the time to listen to student's likes and dislikes shows consideration. Learning what students find more engrossing gives insight into further study initiatives. Advisors should ask students to self-reflect early rather than later, in order to assess their program and strategize toward their goals. For example,



advisor Holly Martin of University of Notre Dame suggests using an online questionnaire that is short, plainly worded, and reflects students learning objectives will help students brainstorm in order to meet the challenges of reaching their goals (Martin, 2011).

### **Conclusion**

Future needs for acquiring disciplined mentors that will provide excellent student guidance and support will come from continued research. This research is to help in developing and refining the academic advising process. More defined technology and advance technological and educational programs will be a result of such research and prove to benefit student's academic progress.

The primary basis of this training is to provide a proactive mental work model that will remove barriers and ensure student access to quality academic advising services. With the academic advisor's practiced use of mentoring, e-portfolios, and inter-personal communication skills, students will be much more likely to achieve success throughout their academic careers. Once these effective training skills are learned, the advisor will be able to provide students with the tools necessary for reaching their goals. "A student's decision to attend or to remain at a school can be based solely on positive or negative contact with staff members" (Tschohl, Hovland, & Hillman, 2010, p. 6).

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# COMS 881-Grad Project: Communication Training for Academic Advising Workshop

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## Lesson Plan

Laura A. Owens

7/27/2012

### Abstract:

Background Academic Advising can be defined for this research purpose as both clinical technical guidance for students in reference to which courses are needed to complete their desired program and mentoring, which is a more personally customized direct approach to fit the student's needs globally. (Hale, Graham, & Johnson, 2009).

Qualitative results are shown from researched literature of Academic journals and scholarly articles.

Conclusion: A theoretical analysis, backed by research of students and school administration, indicates that advising in general plays a critical role in student's success but that mentoring students with face-to-face interactions is a stronger method and an important role in enabling students to feel they have kept up with studies and completed their academic goals successfully (Magna, 2004). See Literature review for more detail.

# Communication Training for Academic Advising Workshop

## Class Lesson Plan

Owens Lesson Plan 2

COMS 5050  
Laura Owens  
Fall 2012

### Topic: Communication

**Objective: Students should be able to implement a variety of learned communication skills to effectively enhance academic advising.**

### DAY 1

Materials Needed: Syllabus; Handouts; Internet connection/Overhead Projector

Introduction – Syllabus Review (8:30am-9:00am discussion)

Telephone Game Start with first person relaying a variety of facts whispered to the next and that person whispers what they heard to the next person etc...

(9:00am-9:45am: Ice-Breaker Activity 1; [see appendix A](#))

Effective Communication:

a. Basic Communication Model: [PPT 2](#) (9:45am-10:15am discussion)

Communication is successful when you practice quality points such as being genuine, timely, specific and sincere. Smile; give time line as to when you will respond. Things to avoid are no communication, crooked communication (backwards compliment), plastic insincere comments or crisp, aggressive style of communication. (Connections, Noel-Levitz)

Ask for Examples. (10:15am-11:15 am: Listening Activity 2; [see appendix B](#))

b. Listening: [PPT 3](#) (11:15am-11:45am discussion)

PROPOSAL Acronym (Active Training, Silberman):

Some practice skills to help with listen are taking notes, repeat back explaining reasoning. Evaluating situations through listening and thoughtful communication provides a sense of community; (Littlejohn and Foss).

11:45-12:45 LUNCH BREAK

Methods to enabling Academic Success

a. Interpersonal:

Definition, verbal and non-verbal: [PPT 4](#)(12:45pm-1:00pm discussion).

# Communication Training for Academic Advising Workshop

## Class Lesson Plan

Owens Lesson Plan 3

b. Positive Communications: **PPT 5**, and what types of non-positive communications should be avoided. **PPT 6** (1:00pm-1:15pm discussion).

c. Recognizing signs of stress: (1:15pm-2:00pm: Kognito clip Activity 3; **see appendix C**).

d. Mentoring:

Define Academic Advising versus mentoring: **PPT 7** (2:00pm-2:45pm discussion). Academic Advising has shown to work best with seasoned students in their final part of program. Impersonal and authority based on answering only specific questions and not taking individual development into consideration. What is mentoring? Mentoring which is shown to be best for first year student, is developmental advising based on a personal relationship between the student and advisor and integrates academic career and personal goals into advisement. (Hale, 2009). Discuss effective methods. Small group role play activity. (2:45pm-3:45pm: Group Activity 4; **see appendix D**).

*Homework Journal Assignment: **Handout #1***

Scholarly Academic Advising Article Summary: **PPT 8** (3:45pm-4:00pm discussion).

## **DAY 2**

Ice Breaker: Names and hobby go around (8:00am-8:15am)

a. Journal Report Oral Summary (60 min)

Effective Messaging: Professional Communicating

# Communication Training for Academic Advising Workshop

## Class Lesson Plan

Owens Lesson Plan 4

Cultural: Socio-culture summary (Littlejohn and Foss). **PPT 9** (9:15am-10:45am discussion).

Appraise students as an individual. Ignoring or defining them solely by culture is wrong. Step to challenge and foster cultural awareness by:

1. Listening empathically 2. Focusing on meaning 3. Exploring comprehension (10:00am-10:30am;

*Ethnocentrism Activity 5; see appendix E).*

Ethics, Sensitivity, & Professionalism: What is ethical or unethical practice? Describe possible bias, sexist, or racist terminology. Sensitivity: (10:30a.m.-11:30a.m. discussion).

What is FERPA *Definition: Handout 2/PPT 10* (11:30am-12:00pm discussion). What are the rules regarding academic reporting of information?

### **12:00-1:00pm LUNCH BREAK**

Effective Messaging: Technology Communication:

Online/emailing: How much technology should be used? Balancing online with face-to-face.

What is good for internet i.e. making initial appointment; confirmation appointment; switching time's dates sharing calendar. Proper emailing: *Slide 11/Handout 3 (1:00pm-1:45p.m. discussion).*

What is good/bad email i.e. Too much back and forth; too personal, first time meeting; continuation without ever face-to-face. Telephone conversations, introduction; complicated issues, complex conversation, important graduating forms and preparation. (1:45p.m.-2:30p.m. *Email example exercise. 45 min Activity 6; see appendix F*)

Internet Use: What are some good academic advising software programs available such as E-Portfolio; academic fact sheets; student self-registration? <http://eportfolio.psu.edu> / <http://www.govst.edu> *E-Portfolio description. Slide 12/Handout 4 (2:30p.m.-3:15p.m. discussion).*

Discussion. Reflection paper. Slide 13/**Handout 5** (3:15p.m.-3:45p.m discussion).

Assignment is due by email due 9/11/12).

Wrap-up review/Feedback comments-suggestions:

**Closing Statements. (3:45p.m.-4:00p.m.)**



# Communication Training for Academic Advising Workshop

## Class Lesson Plan

Owens Lesson Plan 5

### Appendix A

(Activity 1- Ice Breaker allow 45 min)

**Goal: Immediate learning involvement:**

**Assess basic Communication method so to develop effective listening skills.**

**Rational: The student participants will be able to identify with the important role of active listen and clear messaging to understand speaker so to establish the difference it can make in advising situations**

### **Telephone Game.**

Hand student at one end the following statement to whisper to the person next to them, they are not allowed to repeat it, then that person repeats it to then next in a whisper, etc... Person on the end stands up and says it out load to see how close he was to the original message.

*“My name is Morgan Finley and this is part of an educational experiment that is the figment of the instructor’s imagination. I drive a minibus on the weekends, I shop on Wednesdays at the local market to buy peanut butter, cauliflower, yellow provolone and I don’t like to cook or garden because I am busy and like to go to the park with my kid sister Samantha and my dog Rainy.”*

*(Out of these 12 facts communicated how many are relayed successfully)*

# Communication Training for Academic Advising Workshop

## Class Lesson Plan

Owens Lesson Plan 6

### Appendix B

(Activity 2- Listening: allow 60 min. )

**Goal: Game to stimulate energy and involvement**

**Rational: Student participants will become better active listeners.**

Ask for 6 Volunteers. Send 5 out of the classroom, keep one in. Read story to class and participant #1.

***Mel thought a lot about what he wanted to do after college and he finally decided that he would go to Graduate school to become a Physical Therapist. Last term Mel sent 6 applications in to different schools, 1 was rejected but he was accepted to 3 and the others haven't contacted him yet. The problem Mel faces now is that the 2 schools require he commits to them within a month. One of the schools he hasn't heard from he preferred more than those that accepted him. He's not sure whether to take one of the sure things or hold out for the school he feels is better.***

Ask one student from outside to now come back in and ask student #1 to repeat the story to student #2.

Student #1 can sit down and student #2 now repeats the story to another student from outside etc...

# Communication Training for Academic Advising Workshop

## Class Lesson Plan

Owens Lesson Plan 7

### Appendix C

#### Activity 3- Kagnito's At-Risk training:

Goal: To enable participants to identify potential student advisees in jeopardy of academic failure.

Rational: If participant is able to identify then they can take steps to enable better success of the student advisee.

Kagnito's At-Risk viewing: launch at  
<http://learn.kognito.com/007/> – GSU enrollment Key: govst51

(Allow 45 min. GSU CTAT training for academic advisors and mentors)

Observing behaviors that are potentially threatening while respecting the rights of individual member through campus safety initiatives so to recognizing common stress indicators and learning how to approach and refer students

### Appendix D

#### (Activity 4- Small Group Role Play)

# Communication Training for Academic Advising Workshop

## Class Lesson Plan

Owens Lesson Plan 8

Goal: Identify the role of mentor and mentee

Rational: Develop interpersonal skills in order to effectively serve students in advising role.

### **Small Group Role Play Exercise: (allow 60 min.)**

Ask students to break into groups of 5 or 6, then discuss within your group both positive and negative advising experiences, things they liked or didn't in their experience.

After about 20 minutes each group will be asked to have 2 members role play one of the scenarios they discussed good or bad, they will have another 10 minutes to discuss who and how they will enact this.

Then bring the group reps up front to perform their chosen advising scenario's and explain not to say whether they are doing a 'good' or 'bad' experience....when they are finished with the scenario a panel made of the remaining 4 or 5 students will ask the class to critique the scenario regarding good and bad advising elements and answering any questions the audience may have in regards to the portrayal. Full group participation required. Allow 30 min.

# Communication Training for Academic Advising Workshop

## Class Lesson Plan

### Appendix E (Activity 5 –Ethnocentrism)

Goal: Identify role culture plays in communication issues.

Rational: To recognize ethical and professional practices will enhance student-advisor communication.

Grade each number statement from 1 -5: 1 is the least desirable & 5 is the most desirable

#### AN EXERCISE IN UNDERSTANDING ETHNOCENTRISM (allow 30 min)

Based on your own opinions, decide if you believe the following behaviors are desirable or undesirable for ALL CULTURES. Circle the number on the scale that best reflects your personal opinion.

1. Being late for an appointment
2. Belching in public
3. Planning ahead to avoid problems
4. Solving problems by sitting down and reasonably talking out
5. Calling a person before unexpectedly dropping by
6. Staring at someone
7. Establishing eye contact with the person you are speaking
8. Eating horses and dogs
9. Living together before marriage
10. Requiring women to wear a veil
11. A male wearing a lip ring
12. A female wearing a nose ring
13. Having more than one spouse at the same time
14. Smelling a person as a part of a greeting
15. Becoming independent of one's parents
16. Noisily chewing food
17. Living in a cow dung house
18. Not showing emotions when sad
19. Bragging about one's accomplishments
20. Believing cows are sacred and not eating them even in a famine
21. Believing in 20 different Gods
22. Believing hard work is more important than having fun.
23. Believing that social status in society is determined by birth
24. Desiring to own one's own home
25. Having arranged marriages
26. Believing one should always obey those in authority
27. Believing what is good for society more important than individual

When you are finished circling, meet with your group and note any areas where there are significant differences of opinion of at least 2 points. Now your group should try to reach consensus on the desirability of these identified items. Last, decide on what values group member are basing their opinions

# Communication Training for Academic Advising Workshop

## Class Lesson Plan

### Appendix F (Activity 6-Emailing )

**Goal:** To apply effective use of technology and recognize best practices.

**Rationale:** To develop strong communication skills to improve Academic Advising.

#### Writing Effective Emails

Making Sure Your Messages Get Read and Acted Upon

#### Make One Point per Email

One of the advantages of email compared with traditional letters is that it doesn't cost any more to send several emails than it does to send one. So, if you need to communicate with someone about a number of different things, consider writing a separate email on each subject.

That way, your correspondent can reply to each one individually and in the appropriate time frame. One topic might only require a short reply, that he or she can send straight away. Another topic might require more research. By writing separate messages, you should get clearer answers, while helping other people manage their inboxes better.

If you do want to put several points in an email - perhaps because they relate to the same project - consider presenting each point in a separate, numbered paragraph. This makes each point stand out, significantly increasing the likelihood that each point will be addressed.

As with traditional business letters, each individual email should be clear and concise, with the purpose of the message detailed in the very first paragraph. Sentences should be kept short and to the point. The body of the email should contain all pertinent information (see our articles on [Writing Skills](#) and [The Rhetorical Triangle](#)), and should be direct and informative.

#### Specify the Response You Want

Make sure to include any call to action you want, such as a phone call or follow-up appointment. Then, make sure you include your contact information, including your name, title, and phone numbers. Do this even with internal messages. Remember, the easier you make it for someone else to respond, the more likely they are to do so!

COMS 5050 Communication Training for Academic Advising  
Governors State University College of Arts and Science  
Division of Communication, Visual and Performing Arts  
Communication  
COURSE SYLLABUS  
Friday and Saturday 8:30am-4:00pm

<b>Course Prefix and Number</b>	COMS 5050
<b>Course Title</b>	Communication Training for Academic Advising
<b>Curriculum</b>	Humanities
<b>Semester Hours</b>	1
<b>Lecture</b>	3
<b>Lab</b>	0

**Contact Information:**

**Instructor:** Laura Owens

**E-mail:** [lowens@govst.edu](mailto:lowens@govst.edu) (preferred method of contact, expect response within 2 days)

**Office Hours:** Tuesday and Thursdays 4-6pm Office Location : G133

**Optional Texts:**

Littlejohn, S. & Foss K. (2008). *Theories of Human Communication*, (9<sup>th</sup> ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson Higher Education.

Tschohl, J., Hovland, M. & Hillman J. (2010). *Connections: Practice for excellence, path to success*, (4th ed.). Iowa City, IA: Noel-Levitz.

**Prerequisites:** Satisfactory placement test score or grade of "C" in English 098

**Catalog Description:** Designed to apply concepts of human communication to a specific social and professional setting. Topics of this workshop vary according to the specific content areas being covered. Focuses on developing participants' practical knowledge and skills of communication that are crucial to a given social/professional context. .

**Course Description:** A training seminar discussing basic concepts while exploring current perspectives in developing communication skills for academic advising  
This course includes the study and practice of interpersonal, listening, cultural and communication. Participants will be trained in developing skills to enhance communication that helps them academically advise students more effectively.

**Course Outcomes:** Upon completing the workshop, participants will be able to assess various basic communication methods in advising situations. Identify the role of mentor and mentee.

## COMS 5050 Communication Training for Academic Advising

Develop aspects of effective listening to distinguish the differences it makes in advising. Use interpersonal skills in order to effectively produce desired outcomes.

Identify the role culture plays in affecting mentoring relationships.

Discuss ethical and professional communication issues.

Apply effective use of technology to develop an advising relationship.

Recognize best practices for Internet communication.

### **Course Rationale:**

This course will help future advisors demonstrate a dynamic set of communication skills both at a distance and face to face, that will serve as a foundation in providing future graduates the ability to obtain the academic goals they have set out to achieve.

### **Student Evaluation:**

Based on class activities, mandatory attendance and required participation. For discussions student should be able to reasonably convey an understanding of the subject.

*Small Group Project:* Divide into groups of 6 or less. Take turns acting out 'type' of discussion without saying what type discussion it is so the rest can guess.

*Journal Article:* Student will choose an academic article regarding advising and summarize in oral report suggesting the role communication plays.

*Reflection Paper:* Student will write a 750-1000 word (about 2-4 pages) paper analyzing the material covered in the course that will show how the function of communication skills might be used in enhancing a foreseen advising role.

This course point values usually fall within the following ranges but there may be occasions for exception or extra credit.

### **Grading:**

Class Activities            10 points

Class Discussion           10 points

Journal Article Analysis 40 points (Undergrads 1 article 1 page/Grads 2 articles 2 page each)

Small Group Project      20 points

Reflection Paper           20 points (Undergrads 2 page/Grads 4 pages)

Total Possible            100 points

90-100% of total possible points =A

80-89% of total possible points =B

70-79% of total possible points =C



## COMS 5050 Communication Training for Academic Advising

60-69% of total possible points =D

0-59% of total possible points =F

**Course Readings:** There will be handouts to be given regarding activities, assignments and various excerpts from texts. Novel-Levitz Connections: Positive Communication pp. 57-62, Littlejohn, S. & Foss K. pp. 214-215.

**Attendance Policy:** Attendance is important. A great deal of material (outside of text book) will be brought into the classroom setting to be shared, analyzed and discussed. Attendance will therefore be mandatory as a factor in assigning the final course grade.

**Late Assignments:** Late submission of class assignments may be considered for credit but will be assessed substantial penalties as circumstances warrant. Therefore please make every effort to insure that work is ready to be turned in on time.

**Good writing skills are essential.** Policy within the program area requires that a percent of a student's grade be based upon written assignments. In this course approximately 40 -50 percent of graded work is in the written assignment area. If you have not completed English 098 you may not be prepared to tackle the writing assignments expected for completion of this course.

**Group Work:** There will be student participation in structured group activity inside of class. Group assignments receive group grade and all students are expected to contribute equally. Each student's participation level is evaluated by the group members and instructor.

A student's grade will be adjusted down in that instance where the student has not contributed 100% to the group activity.

**Classroom Environment:** Your instructor has the responsibility to insure that the classroom environments conducive to the learning experience for all students. The advancement of various viewpoints and positions on issues is part of the leaning processes and all students are encouraged to engage in this exchange. However, students are reminded that the communications process is also one of being a good listener as well as speaker.

Cell phones, PDAs and pagers must be turned off or set to "no-ring" while in the class room.

**PLAGIARISM:** Plagiarism is using another's ideas and/or words without clearly acknowledging the source of the information. It is also a violation of GSU and Communication Program policy. Plagiarism is a serious matter; students who plagiarize will be subject to disciplinary action.

**Sexual Harassment:** The University has a clear and firm policy prohibiting sexual harassment. Such conduct will not be tolerated in this class, and victims are encouraged to report any

unwelcome sexual advances to appropriate school authorities. (See University Catalog and/or Student Handbook.)

**Disability Statement:** GSU is committed to providing a student's equal access to all university programs and facilities. Students, who have a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability and need academic accommodations, must register with Access Services for Students with Disabilities (ADDs). Please contact the Coordinator of ASSD in Room B1201 in person; by e-mail, [assd@govst.edu](mailto:assd@govst.edu); or by calling 708.235.3968. If you are already registered, please contact me privately as soon as possible regarding your academic accommodations.

**Student Agreement:** The student is responsible for carefully reading, knowing and understanding all information contained in this syllabus. Course Schedule (limited revisions may occur as necessary for this class)

### **Fri. 9/8**

Course Overview: Why study Communication Training for Academic Advising?

Review Syllabus

#### Lesson 1: Effective Communications (Outcome 1 and 3)

Part 1. Basic Comm. Model -handout. Discussion.  
Ice Breaker – Telephone game.

Part 2. Listening: Proposal Acronym-handout. Discussion  
Repeated Story class activity

#### Lesson 2: Enabling Academic Success (Outcome 1, 2 and 4)

Part 1. Interpersonal –Definition handout. Discussion.  
Kognito video clip

Part 2. Mentoring: Definition handout. Discussion.  
Role Play small group activity

Discuss Journal Homework Assignment due next day 9/9.

### **Sat. 9/9**

Journal oral summary of report and turn in paper assignment.

#### Lesson 3: Professional Communicating (Outcome 5, 6 and 8)

## COMS 5050 Communication Training for Academic Advising

Part 1. Cultural – Littlejohn Foss Socio-Culture etc. summary handout.  
Discussion.

Ethnocentrism class activity

Part 2. Ethics. Sensitivity.

FERPA-Definition handout. Discussion.

### Lesson 4: Effective Messaging (Outcome 7 and 8)

Part 1. Online vs. Face to Face – Do's and Don'ts Discussion.

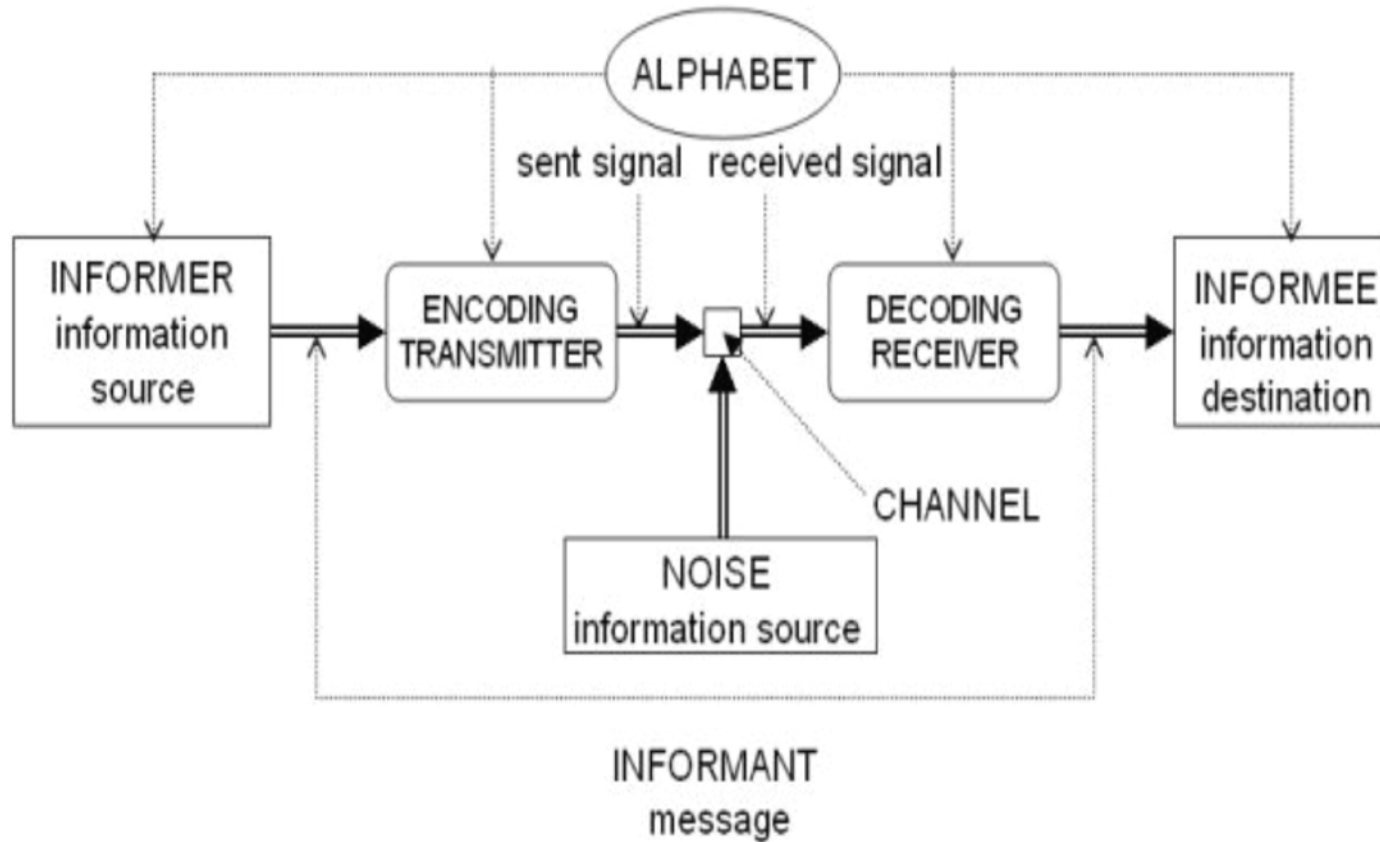
Email example class exercise.

Part 2. Internet Technology- Portfolio's handout etc...

Review discussion. Discuss Reflection assignment due 9/11

# Communication Training for Academic Advising

# Basic Communications Model



Retrieved from: <http://advanced computertips.com/category/computer-tips-and-tricks>

# An Active Listening Acronym

**P** Probe for \_\_\_\_\_.

**R** Reflect.

**O** One Thing at a time.

**P** Pause.

**O** Observe \_\_\_\_\_ behavior.

**S** Summarize.

**A** Acknowledge.

**L** Let the speaker \_\_\_\_\_.

Source: Silberman, 2006, p. 79

# **Types of Communication**

Verbal Communication

Non-Verbal Communication

Hargie 2007

# Positive Communication:

Positive voice

Use person's name

Remember faces

Be Prompt

Offer students to be of service

Say "Thank You!":

Body Language



ClipartOf.com/1106468

Source: Noel-Levitz, 2010,pp  
57-62



# Positive Communication-

## Bad communication habits to avoid:

**Interrupting**

**Assumptions**

**Finishing Sentences**

**Being right**

**Making it about self**



ClipartOf.com/1106468

Source Noel-Levitz, 2010, pp 57-62

Communication Training for Academic Advising

**Academic Advising:** Rigid and scripted  
non-personal, strictly business nature.

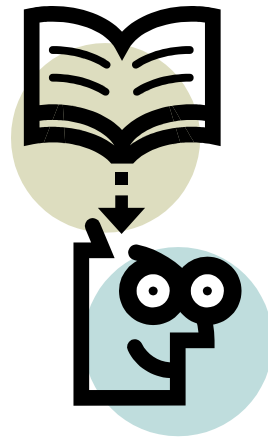
**Mentor:** A continuum of advising  
a student by establishing a relationship.

Source: Hale, Graham, & Johnson, 2009

Communication Training for Academic Advising

## \* Journal Article:

Search Academic journals to find a scholarly article on academic advising



## Socio-culture Influence:

It is through interaction we develop meaning.

**Network Theory** studies the effects our interaction has through back and forth responses

**Socio-cultural theories** are more focused on the shared meanings and interpretations



Source: Littlejohn & Foss, 2008, p. 262

**\* Know FERPA:**

# Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act



\* Handout-2

Retrieved from: E.D.gov U.S.Dept. of Government <http://www.ed.gov/>  
Communication Training for Academic Advising

# \* Important email tips:

There are many etiquette guides and many different etiquette rules.



Source: Emailreplies.com <http://www.emailreplies.com/>

# \* Student E-Portfolios



Source: Penn State Learning Portfolios <http://eportfolio.psu.edu/>

# \*Final Class Assignment:

**Reflection Paper :**  
**Due Monday**

**<http://bb9.govst.edu>**



\*Handout 1-

## **Journal Article:**

**Search Academic journals to find a scholarly article that interests you with regard to Academic Advising from the library database using EPSCO resource (must be referenced and fully cited APA style in paper).**

**Write a 1-2 page summary in relation to what we are learning and be prepared to hand in and discuss in class.**

*\*Handout 2:*

***A few important points regarding uses of Internet for communications:***

**Know FERPA:**

The following guidance provides eligible students with general information about the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Once a student reaches 18 years of age or attends a postsecondary institution, he or she becomes an "eligible student," and all rights formerly given to parents under FERPA transfer to the student.

The eligible student has the right to have access to his or her education records, the right to seek to have the records amended, the right to have control over the disclosure of personally identifiable information from the records (except in certain *circumstances specified in the FERPA regulations, some of which are discussed below*), and the right to file a complaint with the Department.

FERPA generally prohibits the improper disclosure of personally identifiable information derived from education records.

The term "education records" is defined as those records that contain information directly related to a student and which are maintained by an educational agency or institution or by a party acting for the agency or institution.

*Source: ED.gov U.S. Dept. of Government <http://www.ed.gov/>*

*\*Handout 3a:*

## Important email tips:

**There are many etiquette guides and many different etiquette rules. Below is a list of 25 important email rules of etiquette:**

1. Be concise and to the point
2. Answer all questions, and pre-empt further questions
3. Use proper spelling, grammar & punctuation
4. Make it personal
5. Use templates for frequently used responses
6. Answer swiftly
7. Do not attach unnecessary files
8. Use proper structure & layout
9. Do not overuse the high priority option
10. Do not write in CAPITALS
11. Don't leave out the message thread
12. Add disclaimers to your emails
13. Read the email before you send it
14. Take care with abbreviations and emoticons
15. Be careful with formatting
16. Take care with rich text and HTML messages
17. Do not use email to discuss confidential information
18. Use a meaningful subject
19. Use active instead of passive
20. Avoid using URGENT and IMPORTANT
21. Avoid long sentences
22. Don't send or forward emails containing libelous, defamatory, offensive, racist or obscene remarks
23. Keep your language gender neutral
24. As a general rule of thumb if an email goes back and forth more than twice it should be ceased and a phone call or in person appointment should be arranged.
25. If the correspondence is of great importance email should be backed up by another mode of communication such as a phone call, a face to face or a postal letter.

Source: Emailreplies.com <http://www.emailreplies.com/>

\*Handout 3b -

## **EMAIL EXAMPLES:**

### **Bad Example**

*Subject: Meeting*

*Hi Jim,*

*I just wanted to remind you about the meeting we have scheduled next week. Do let me know if you have any questions!*

*Best wishes,*

*Mark*

This email is an example of poor communication for several reasons. Let's focus on the headline. As you can see, it's titled "Meeting".

Why is this a bad headline?

Well, there's no information about the meeting. If your calendar is full of meetings, you might even wonder which one Mark is talking about. And there's certainly no clarity about the subject, or when and where the meeting's being held.

What's more, the lack of specific information makes it look like a spam email. This email risks being deleted without being read!

Also, the tone of the message is that of a friendly reminder. There's nothing wrong with that, but essential details are missing. If Jim hasn't heard anything about the meeting, or has completely forgotten about it, he'll have to write back for more information.

Source: Emailreplies.com <http://www.emailreplies.com/>

\*Handout 3c -

### **Good Example**

*Subject: Reminder of 10am Meeting Sched. 10/05 on PASS Process.*

*Hi Jim,*

*I just wanted to remind you about the meeting we have scheduled for Monday, October 5, at 10:00am. It's being held in conference room A, and we'll be discussing the new PASS Process.*

*If you have any questions, feel free to get in touch (x3024).*

*Best Wishes,*

*Mark*

See how specific this new headline is?

The great thing about this headline is that the reader doesn't even have to open the email to get most of the relevant information.

And the precise nature of the headline serves as a useful prompt. Every time the reader glances at his saved emails, he'll be reminded about that specific meeting.

Source: Emailreplies.com <http://www.emailreplies.com/>

\*Handout-4

**Student E-Portfolio's**

The Learning Portfolio is an analysis of the student's experiences in their 'program' through suggested presentation of:

- (1) reflective papers, and
- (2) artifacts.

Artifacts represent the student's work in a variety of settings:

- <the *classroom*
- *assistantships*
- *internships,*
- *professional organizations*
- *local leadership*

Learning Portfolios should be created in consultation with the student's academic advisor, and the final portfolio will be shared with the student's academic advisor and Capstone course instructor.

The portfolio will be organized with reference to the 'student's program learning outcome'. Materials should be displayed using e-portfolio capabilities. The artifacts should be organized in a logical fashion and in a manner that emphasizes attractive display and easy location of individual artifacts.

Source: Penn State Learning Portfolios <http://eportfolio.psu.edu/>

## **Reflection Paper:**

**2-4 pages analysis and application of what you learned about academic advising.**

Due Monday, must turn in by email to [lowens@govst.edu](mailto:lowens@govst.edu) or through GSU Blackboard portal <http://bb9.govst.edu> . You will receive an electronic confirmation when it is received, if you do not receive a confirmation you may not receive full credit... 10 pt. off for each day late.