

Bridging the Student Communications Gap

ABHES | San Diego | February 14, 2013



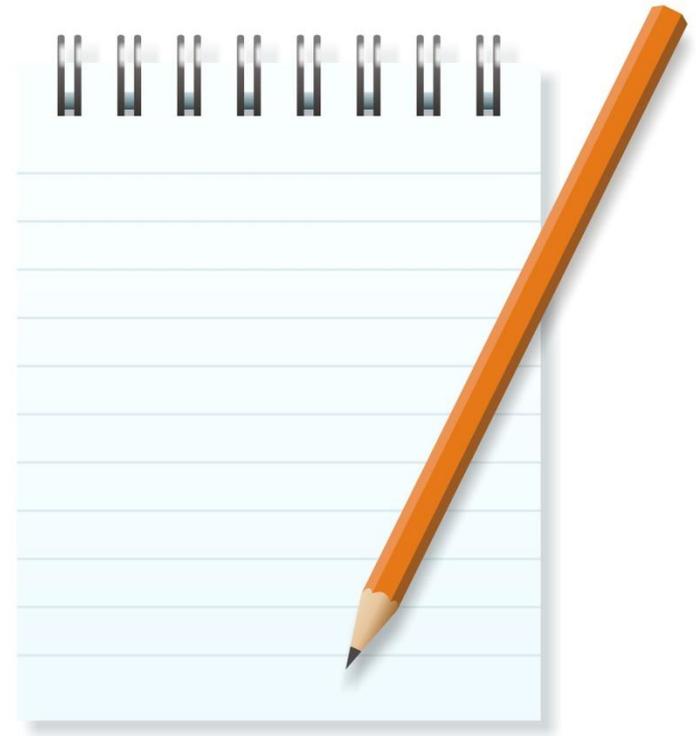
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Talking Points

- Our student profile
- Why it is hard to connect
- Building a positive image in your department
- Bridging the communication gap
 - › Voicemail
 - › Texting
 - › Email
- Questions and Discussion

Characteristics of our Typical Student

- Low self esteem
- Many have dropped out of school
- Left school because of unhappy circumstances
- Students come to us with many obstacles to overcome
- Need loads of motivation and lots of attention



Characteristics of our Typical Student

- What Psychology experts tell us
 - › Motivation to participate is the result of an individual's perception of both positive and negative forces
 - › Certain personality types are difficult to attract to education because of low self esteem
 - › There is congruence between participation and anticipated learning outcomes
 - › Higher order needs for achievement and self actualization cannot be fulfilled until lower-order needs for security and safety are met
- If we can understand dispositional barriers better and see the differences between our dispositions and the dispositions of our students more **clearly**, we can become more **effective** in our communication efforts.

Reasons We Care



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They Should Want to Connect, Right?

- Career Services
 - › The entire reason they are attending your school is to get a job. You would think students would be tripping over themselves to build a relationship with Career Services.
- Financial Aid Department
 - › Most students need the FA department's attention and help with funding their way through school. Shouldn't they be lining up?
- Registrar
 - › This department is going to get them through school in the fastest most efficient way possible. Students should be bugging the registrar weeks before the new term.
- Business Office
 - › The Business office is just working to make sure everything is taken care of and all of the paper work is in order for the students to continue their education and graduate. Why are they not bringing you cookies and thank you notes?

So why don't they make the appointments they set
or answer the phone or respond to emails sent?

They are scared, intimidated or they may
even disassociate the requests.



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Why is it Hard to Connect?

- Our average student demographic is programmed to avoid uncomfortable situations.
- Many students have spent the majority of their adult lives avoiding bill collectors, landlords and government officials.
- Simply using the word appointment can have a negative effect on your show rates.
 - › Appointments are associated with Doctors, Dentists and sometimes social workers and lawyers.
 - › Using different words will help your meeting become less threatening to the students thereby increasing your show rates
- Most students have enrolled and are attending school to change their lives. They don't consciously mean to avoid, ignore or shirk their responsibilities jeopardizing their eligibility to attend classes.

Why is it Hard to Connect?

- Career Services
 - › The Career Services Department is seen as the gatekeeper to the students new life, this is intimidating to the students and they are going to be shy about communication it makes the “dream” that they could obtain a career become more of a reality.
- Financial Aid Department
 - › FA works with the Government! You may be able to help them fund their schooling but you have scary forms and ask a lot of questions that is something most students will try to avoid at all costs.
- Registrar
 - › The Registrar represents the work it takes to get to that new life. Most of our students have a million things going on in their lives. Thinking about adding something else is difficult and easy to put out of their minds until the last minute.
- Business Office
 - › You are going to ask them for money they don't have. They are sure of it! The Business Department has to work the hardest to connect to students.

Building A Positive Image

Building a positive image in your department is not rocket science, but there is no magic bullet or special potion to make you suddenly popular. It is the little things that make a difference.

Make your office and department inviting to visit.

- Festive decorations for the seasons
- A candy dish
- A smile



Building A Positive Image

- Be available
 - › Walk the halls during breaks
 - › Visit classrooms without a reason or to call out a student
 - › Flexible office hours. If there is a class in session there should be a representative of your department in the office.

- Get involved
 - › Become the sponsor of a club or activity
 - › Write a section in the newsletter about your department
 - › Volunteer to be a guinea pig in the lab
 - › Attend orientations, graduations and any special ceremony a class has to recognize students successes.

Bridging the Communication Gap

- Voicemail
 - › Leave a short message. Don't give them your entire reason for the call, just ask them to stop by and see you when they have a break from class. Curiosity will get you a response.
- Texting
 - › Text a student a quick note and you are 80% more likely to get a response than if you call them. Source...I have teenagers!
 - › This is a comfortable non confrontational communication tool that will get your message to the student.
- Email
 - › Along with texting this is a non confrontational communication technique but it is slower.
 - › Don't write a book short and sweet is the key.

Questions?



Thank You

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