

Dyads and friends: Perceived communication competencies in academic advising

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That time a guy tried to fight me about Math 1324

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Introduction

- Advisors play a complicated role in the educational landscape
- Important to students' success, retention, major choice, and other measured outcomes



Introduction

- Often limited time and resources
- Faculty advisor v. staff advisor
- ‘Other duties as assigned’



Introduction

- Previous research
 - University faculty and administrators VALUE academic advising, but also recommend training for academic advising-specific skills
 - Communication and trust-building identified as central skills to advising



Statement of the problem

- So what is the status of academic advisors' communication skills?

Methods

- Purpose
 - Investigate academic advisors' Self-Perceived Communication Competencies (SPCC)
 - Purposively sampled advisors attending an advising research conference
 - N=180
 - 140 advisors from 12 institutions responded (77% response rate)



SPCC

- Self Perceived Communication Competency Scale
- Not a measure of actual competency
- 12-item questionnaire

SPCC

- Four contexts
 - Public, meeting, group, and dyad
- Three audiences
 - stranger, acquaintance, and friend

SPCC

- “Self-Perceived communication competence is substantially associated with an individual’s willingness to communicate and, hence, is suspected to be a significant causal factor in individual’s behavioral choices with regards to communication.” (Richmond, McCroskey, & McCroskey, 1989)

Findings

	National database Mean	Academic Advisors' Mean	Academic Advisors SD
Public	68.8	82.1	15.4
Meeting	68.8	79.4	18.1
Group	76.1	83.9	15.0
Dyad	81.1	85.6	13.1
Stranger	55.5	75.2	17.9
Acquaintance	77.4	83.1	15.7
Friend	88.2	89.9	10.6
Total	73.7	82.7	13.2



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SPCC

Public	> 86 High SPCC	< 51 Low SPCC
Meeting	> 85 High SPCC	< 51 Low SPCC
Group	> 90 High SPCC	< 61 Low SPCC
Dyad	> 93 High SPCC	< 68 Low SPCC
Stranger	> 79 High SPCC	< 31 Low SPCC
Acquaintance	> 92 High SPCC	< 62 Low SPCC
Friend	> 99 High SPCC	< 76 Low SPCC
Total	> 87 High SPCC	< 59 Low SPCC

SPCC Predictors

- What might predict low or high SPCC?
 - Introversion (low)
 - Alienation (low)
 - Self-esteem (low and high)
 - Sociability (high)
 - Anomia (low), particularly with the public

SPCC Predictors

- So what?
 - Which came first, the anomia or the low SPCC?
 - The students that exhibit the low predictive characteristics are the ones that need advisors the most
 - The students that need you the most might be the least equipped to have meaningful communication with you



Conclusions

- Academic advisors are most comfortable in dyads and with friends
- Academic advisors' comfort with the public context is non-conforming to national trends
 - Why?
 - So what?

Conclusions

- Academic advisors feel least confident in their communications in meetings and with strangers
 - Problematic?
 - How can we address these situations with PD?



Thanks and Gig ‘em!

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