In a 2001 NACADA Journal article, "It's What I have Always Wanted To Do." Advising the Foreclosure Student, Shaffer & Zalewski noted that current literature in education and psychology uses the term foreclosure to refer to students “with unexplored yet confident and committed future plans” (p.62). In their 2015 contribution to the NACADA Clearinghouse of Academic Advising Resources, Courageous Conversations: Advising the Foreclosed Student, Kyle Ross and Olga Salinas explained that “foreclosed students are identified as such because they have bound themselves to a single choice with very limited research into their interests, strengths, and abilities or of program and career options.” At the 2015 NACADA Annual Conference in Las Vegas, Kyle Ross and Anna Brown drew a large audience and received outstanding evaluations for their presentation, I Just Want to Help People: Advising the Foreclosed Student, and were encouraged by participants to continue the conversation on this topic.

Kyle, Olga, and Anna, joined by colleague Jose Ramos, will now bring the conversation to the Webinar venue. As they will explain, a student’s major is a significant part of their identity. When students are not succeeding in their major, advisors often have the responsibility of talking with them about changing. Foreclosed students, who are deeply invested in their program of study but chose that major without exploring other options, will likely be resistant and defensive when told they are not succeeding. How do advisors have this conversation without killing the dream?

Kyle, Olga, Anna, and Jose will address how to recognize the “foreclosed” student and how to have the difficult conversation of redefining their academic path so that they can still achieve “dream” career goals, such as “helping others” and “saving the world.” They will focus on two different points in a student’s academic career: (1) in the first year, when there are signs of initial academic difficulty and (2) in the third year or beyond, when they are not accepted into their desired program. They will discuss how to recognize when a student is foreclosed on a major and/or career choice based on subtle cues or statements behind why they are pursuing that major/career. They will share practical tools and techniques that are grounded in student identity theory, motivational interviewing, and career development theory.

Pre-Webinar Activity Suggestions

Read Courageous Conversations: Advising the Foreclosed Student (https://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Courageous-Conversations-Advising-the-Foreclosed-Student.aspx), and discuss the following questions as a group:

1. Describe characteristics you see of students you have worked with that you think are “foreclosed” on a major/career. What kinds of questions do you ask to assess if they are indeed “foreclosed”? 
2. At what point in a student’s career do you have the conversation of alternate majors/career paths? Do you have that conversation once they are denied admission into a program, or do you facilitate it as soon as a student demonstrates signs of struggle on that path? Why?

Reflect on the following prompt and, if possible, discuss in pairs or share as a group:
Have you ever been told “No” about a path you wanted to pursue? What was that experience like? How did you feel? What was your immediate reaction? What would have happened if that person told you “No” and then immediately referred you to someone else to help you?

Post-Webinar Activity Suggestions

In pairs, role-play through the following scenario using the practices shared in the webinar. Share what went well and not so well as a group.

You are the student.
Anna Beth is a first-year student in her third quarter majoring in Elementary Education because she wants to become a first-grade teacher, as she absolutely loves little kids. She is an only child and has no prior experience babysitting or a job working with kids. She is also working part-time as an administrative assistant on campus and spends most of her 20 hours filing paperwork, compiling reports, answering a lot of e-mails, and attending staff meetings. She thinks her job is incredibly boring, and the worst part is when she has to speak to angry parents over the phone. She does love her experience in college so far, but is struggling a little bit with her required Math and Science courses for her major. However, she feels confident that her other classes will bring her GPA high enough to get into the program. She and her faculty advisor Professor I. M. Awesome (Dr. Awesome) have a meeting to discuss course scheduling for next year.

You are the advisor.
Professor I. M. Awesome is a faculty advisor for Elementary Education majors. The major is very competitive, generally admitting students with a minimum 3.2 GPA and with strong interviewing skills. The faculty members especially assess in the interview how interested students are in the job aspects that are not always including teaching little kids directly (working with parents, lesson planning, etc.). Dr. Awesome is meeting with Anna Beth to discuss course scheduling next year, but, when preparing for the meeting, notices that Anna Beth has a 2.7 GPA due to her low grades in Math and Science. However, she does have A’s in her Psychology, Child Development, and Sociology of the Family courses. Dr. Awesome plans to talk to Anna Beth about her grades, but also to see what originally made her decide on this major, and maybe other programs that might be a better fit.

Discuss the following questions as a group:
1. What are two things you can take away from this webinar and adapt immediately into your practice?
2. Share with each other tools and techniques you utilize in your practice to work with “foreclosed” students that we did not discuss in the webinar.

Additional Information

Examples of Probing Questions
• “Can you imagine any circumstance where you would change your mind if another, better career came along?”
• “How did you decide that you want to be a ________?”
• “What other careers have you considered?”
• “How did you discover what being a __________ is like?”
• “How do you know that you will like being a ___________?”
Marcia Scale Questionnaire

Response legend:
1 = Diffusion
2 = Moratorium
3 = Foreclosure
4 = Identify Achievement

MARCIA SCALE

Name: ____________________________ Date: _____________
Advisor: __________________________

Please check the one description below that you feel best represents your Career plans at this time.

1. _____ I have not made a career choice at this time and do not feel particularly concerned or worried about it.

2. _____ I have not made a career decision and I am concerned about it. I would like to make a decision soon and I need (check all that apply):
   a. _____ a better understanding of how to go about making career decisions.
   b. _____ more information about myself (values, interests, aptitudes) and how this might relate to my choice of work.
   c. _____ to learn how to find and use information about careers in general.
   d. _____ information about the following occupation ____________________.

3. _____ I have chosen a career and although I have not investigated it or other career alternatives thoroughly I think I would like it.
   a. Would you be willing to change your career goal if something better (in your estimation) came along? _____ YES _____ NO

4. _____ I have investigated a number of careers and have selected one. I know quite a lot about this career including the kinds of training or education required and the outlook for jobs in the future.
   a. Would you be willing to change your career goal if something better (in your estimation) came along? _____ YES _____ NO
References and Recommended Resources


Helping Students Clarify their Dreams: Advising the Foreclosed Students

Kyle Ross, Washington State University
Jose Ramos, Old Dominion University
Anna Brown, Washington State University
Olga Salinas, Boise State University

Objectives

1. Overview of Marcia’s Identity Status Theory
2. Recognizing the “foreclosed” student
3. Advising “foreclosed” students
   – Early: Motivational Interviewing
   – Junior/Senior Year: REACH Model

Defining Foreclosure

Marcia’s Identity Status Theory

Each status of identity development involves two processes:

• Exploration—Level of understanding the different options available within that identity factor
• Commitment—Selection and assumption of an identity factor into the self

Defining Foreclosure

Identity Statuses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Exploration</th>
<th>Low Exploration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Commitment</td>
<td>Identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploration</td>
<td>Achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>Moratorium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Why do we commit without exploring options?

- Pressure from family and society.
- Go for the job that pays well.
- A few options are more visible than others.
  - When we hear “health field,” we hear nurses, doctors, and dentists.
  - But what about healthcare administrators and medical technologists?

Understanding Foreclosure

How to recognize foreclosed students and identify them through the Marcia Scale


[Graphic courtesy of Shannon Barry (http://socioemotional.weebly.com/james-marcia.html)]
Where do advisors usually find Foreclosed Students?


Big 5 Personality Traits

- Extraversion
- Agreeableness
- Conscientiousness
- Emotional stability
- Openness to Experience


Personality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERSONALITY</th>
<th>WHAT IT MEANS</th>
<th>WHAT IT AFFECTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>More outgoing and assertive</td>
<td>Higher job satisfaction, better social skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>More cooperative and kind</td>
<td>Better social relationships, lower stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>More organized and diligent</td>
<td>Better job performance, higher earnings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional stability</td>
<td>More emotionally stable</td>
<td>Fewer stress-related illnesses, better job performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness</td>
<td>More creative and open-minded</td>
<td>More leadership opportunities, more social connections</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Who spares, you ask?
Behavioral Cues

• Defensive
• “I’ll be fine” or “I’m not worried” attitude
• Unwilling to recognize externally they are not succeeding
  – Picture perfect relationships with their parents
• Closed-minded when a new path is suggested
• Tend to follow family, groups, trends, and societal standards

Probes

“Because the signature of identity foreclosure is commitment without crisis advisors should be prepared to examine the depth of students’ commitment by probing for student’s conscious memories of crisis and of deliberate exploration of possible alternatives”

Probing Questions

• “Can you imagine any circumstance where you would change your mind if another, better career came along?”
• “How did you decide that you want to be a __________?”
• “What other careers have you considered?”
• “How did you discover what being a __________ is like?”
• “How do you know that you will like being a __________?”
Motivational Interviewing & the Foreclosed Student

A Technique for Initiating Change and Supporting the Journey

Motivational Interviewing

**Definition** – *collaborative conversation style*

**Characteristics**
- Goal-oriented
- Focus on language of change
- Atmosphere of acceptance and compassion

**Historically**

- **Discrepancy** – What are the consequences of staying the same? What are the benefits of exploring new avenues?
- **Empathy** – I understand the pressure to be a nurse is tremendous; I respect how difficult it must be to explore other avenues.

Guiding Principles

- **Amplify Ambivalence**
  - I know you are unsure about your future career, and you are worried. This is normal.

- **Rolling with Resistance**
  - Don’t forget about all the benefits that come with this change, the benefits you identified earlier.

- **Support Self-Efficacy**
  - I decide my success. I am ready for this change, and I have the resources I need for such change.

MI & The Foreclosed Student

**Why does it work?**

...the advisor [is] leading the session in a way that is subtle, gentle, responsive, and imaginative, as opposed to prescribing a solution to solve a problem.

Entering into Change Conversations

- Open-Ended Questions
- Affirm
- Reflection
- Summarize
**OARS**

- Open-Ended Questions
  
  Student: I would be less stressed if I could feel smart in one of my classes.
  Advisor: Tell me about a time when you felt smart.
  
  In what ways do you think you will be less stressed?

- Affirm
  
  – Student: I enrolled into the Intro to Public Health Course.
  – Advisor: Great job. I can tell you are serious about this change.

---

**OARS**

- Reflection
  
  – Advisor: What kind of problems has constant stress caused you?
  – Student: I can't eat or sleep, so I am sick. But it is only 2 more years of study.
  – Advisor: That sounds hard. What do you think about that?
  – Student: I guess that is not so healthy for me.

- Summarize

---

**Stages of Behavioral Change**

1. Pre-Contemplation
2. Contemplation
3. Preparation
4. Action
5. Maintenance

*Adapted from Prochaska, J., DiClemente, C., and Norcross (1992): Transtheoretical Model of Change.*
**Stages of Change in Academic Advising**

1. **Pre-Contemplation**
   - “If only my Organic Chem instructor would tell me what to study!”
   - “I will be a Public Health graduate as soon as I finish my summer internship in Puerto Rico.”
   - “I love my Intro to Public Health course. Time to talk to the Career Center about job possibilities.”
   - “I can re-take psychology for the 3rd time.”
   - “I need to consider another major so that I can be successful.”

2. **Preparation**
   - “I will be a Public Health graduate as soon as I finish my summer internship in Puerto Rico.”
   - “I love my Intro to Public Health course. Time to talk to the Career Center about job possibilities.”
   - “I can re-take psychology for the 3rd time.”
   - “I need to consider another major so that I can be successful.”

3. **Action**
   - “I will be a Public Health graduate as soon as I finish my summer internship in Puerto Rico.”
   - “I love my Intro to Public Health course. Time to talk to the Career Center about job possibilities.”
   - “I can re-take psychology for the 3rd time.”
   - “I need to consider another major so that I can be successful.”

4. **Maintenance**
   - “I will be a Public Health graduate as soon as I finish my summer internship in Puerto Rico.”
   - “I love my Intro to Public Health course. Time to talk to the Career Center about job possibilities.”
   - “I can re-take psychology for the 3rd time.”
   - “I need to consider another major so that I can be successful.”

5. **Contemplation**
   - “I will be a Public Health graduate as soon as I finish my summer internship in Puerto Rico.”
   - “I love my Intro to Public Health course. Time to talk to the Career Center about job possibilities.”
   - “I can re-take psychology for the 3rd time.”
   - “I need to consider another major so that I can be successful.”

**Courageous Conversations and the REACH Model**

- A High Stakes Exchange

**The Student Experience**

- Likely to feel blind-sided
- Frustrated
- Betrayed
- Bewildered
- Frightened
- Angry
- Concerned about their future
- Embarrassed
- And more…
The Advisor Experience

Frontline Focus Divided
• Student Needs and Vision
• University Objective
• Tinto: 3 Contributors to Attrition
• Economic Loss: Ed Pol. Inst 2013

Immediate Answers
• Face of the “No” and “Yes”
• Excellent setting to introduce transitions

“When life gets harder, you must have just leveled up.” - Unknown

Courageous Conversations

Challenges
• High stakes
• Opinions differ
• Emotional

Response
• Respectful environment
• Mutual purpose
• Contrasting statements

“The most courageous act is still to think for yourself. Aloud.” - Coco Chanel

REACH Model: An Approach

• Recognize and Reflect
• Eliminate the false constructs
• Ability to adapt
• Creativity and commitment
• Holistic help
Recognize and Reflect

Recognition
• Realization of the situation
• Story provides a map

Reflection
• Reflect back some “need to knows” (flip the transcript)

For me, in songwriting, I have a route I can take. Maybe there’s some forks, I can go this way, this way. But I know those roads. I still have the experience behind me. –Dave Matthews

Eliminate False Constructs

Continue to work with their stories to shine light on:
• Beliefs
• Motivations
• Inaccurate perceptions
• Access tools (O*NET, Occupational Handbook, other web sites) as inspiration

Ability to Adapt: Already proven

• Identify previous successes
• Identify support network
• Identify Courageous Conversations to come
  – Practice
  – Flip roles
Modified Motivations:

- Existing Reasons
- Incentives
- Options

- Identify exploration
- Breadth and Depth
- Homework

Creativity and Commitment

“There is a vitality, a life force, an energy, a quickening that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all time, this expression is unique. And if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and will be lost.”
— Martha Graham

Holistic Help: Moving Forward

A plan of next steps
In-office resources
University resources
Follow-up

Advising: A Synergistic Experience

- Cooperative
- Collaborative
- Concerted effort (arranged in parts for several voices or instruments)
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