3-Part Series on developing your metacognitive skills

#1: Succeed with your strengths: Assess and apply your unique strengths to improve your chances for success in grad school

#2: Assess your communication strengths with the Myers-Briggs types and apply them to work effectively with others

#3: Succeed through your failures: Learning to fail productively in grad school

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Succeed with your strengths:
Assess and apply your unique strengths to improve your chances for success in grad school

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The “rules for success” in grad school …

1.)
2.)
3.)

are usually too simplistic, and don’t consider your unique strengths.

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All new grad students at NU…

have been successful, and want to succeed, but not all succeed at NU.

Why not?

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Marshall Goldsmith points out …

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Key Message:
To achieve success, you must:

- assess your strengths accurately
- apply your strengths strategically
Key questions for today's workshop:

- What exactly is a strength?
- What are your strengths?
- How can you apply your strengths strategically?
- What's the current research in understanding and applying strengths for students?
- What's your definition of success?

What exactly is a strength?

For our discussion:

strength = skill + joy

Don't most people already know and use their strengths?

- In a Gallup survey: 97% said their leadership skills are at or above average (!)
  - Many don’t assess their strengths accurately
- Another survey: do you have “the opportunity to do what you do best every day” at work
  - China: 14%  India: 36%
  - France: 13%  Japan: 15%
  - Germany: 26%  USA: 32%
  - Most people aren’t using their strengths regularly

Most students aren’t aware of their strengths and weaknesses

"Unskilled and unaware of it" Kruger and Dunning

Addendum to Key Message:

Your chance for success is improved when you accurately assess and strategically apply your strengths …

which is not trivial, but can be developed by sharpening your metacognitive skills.
What metacognitive skills do I need to develop?

- **Personal Competence**
  - self-awareness
  - self-regulation
  - motivation
- **Social Competence**
  - empathy
  - social skills

To develop metacognitive skills, you need to develop...

- **foresight**
  - what issues will I encounter?
  - what have similar students encountered?
- **insight**
  - what are my strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats?
  - how can I accurately assess myself, to help me be productive?
- **hindsight**
  - what happened in the past and how did I deal with them?
  - how can I reflect on my past, to help me in my present and future?

As you assess yourself and others, plan for goals and growth.

**Goals**
- specific
- short-term
- task-oriented

**Growth**
- overall
- long-term
- process-oriented

Self-reflection exercise:

**Reflect and write:**
- a current or recent event that made you happy
- a past experience in which you thrived or loved
- a past working relationship from which you benefitted
- your goals and plans for growth for the year
- your definition of success

**Focus on:**
- actions and details
- motivations
- causes and catalysts
- significance of actions
- people’s contributions
- consequences

After writing, share in groups:

- do you or have you kept a journal?
- which topic did you write about?
- do you think you have an accurate assessment of yourself and your peers?
- what do you think about Kruger and Dunning’s research?
- who knows you the best? do most people know you quickly, or does it take them a long time?
- who do you know the best? do you think you’re a keen observer, or do you struggle understanding others?

Resources

- "Learning to Reflect through a Mid-Degree Crisis" by Kaitlin Gallagher
- Chip and Dan Heath’s “Switch”
- Daniel Goleman’s “Emotional Intelligence” and “Working with Emotional Intelligence”
- Carol Dweck’s “Mindset”
- Marshall Goldsmith’s “What Got You Here, Won’t Get You There”
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