

ELEVEN SKILLS FOR ADVISORS TO TEACH

As an advisor you are a role model, mentor, and teacher for the group. In your role as a teacher you can help the students develop certain skills that will help make the organization more effective and that they can use in the future.

Kathleen Allen, in the December, 1979 issue of Programming Magazine, outlined eleven skills that she recommends be taught to students through consistent, planned advising. Divided into the categories of accomplishing tasks, improving relationships, and self-improvement, her outline provides a clear, comprehensive lesson plan for advisors to utilize in their efforts toward student skill development.

SKILLS FOR ACCOMPLISHING TASKS

1. **Problem Solving:** the ability to solve problems creatively. The process includes these components: identify the real problem, assess all components of the problem, weigh what is relevant, pursue alternatives, and identify a solution. Example: developing a policy.
2. **Planning and Organization:** the ability to set goals and coordinate a variety of human and material resources to accomplish these goals. Example: producing a specific event.
3. **Delegating:** the ability to identify or develop a task, and then share the responsibility, authority, resources, and information needed to accomplish it. Example: committee leader assigning a member a task.
4. **Decision-making:** the ability to evaluate existing information and to be willing and confident enough to make a choice of what should be done. Example: choosing a speaker for a lecture.
5. **Financial Management:** the ability to plan, develop, and implement a budget, including cost and expense estimates, budget implementation, and budget evaluation. Example: implementing a budget for each event.

SKILLS FOR IMPROVING RELATIONSHIPS

1. **Persuasion:** the ability to identify our own opinions and use logic and communication to change the opinions of others. Example: choosing between two programs.
2. **Relationship-building:** the process of creating, developing, and maintaining connections between groups or individuals. Example: scheduling frequent casual meetings with organization members.
3. **Adaptability:** the ability to cope with a variety of situations and kinds of people. Example: working with people with different cultural backgrounds or values.

SKILLS FOR SELF-IMPROVEMENT

1. **Stress Tolerance:** the ability to cope with taxing situations, while getting the job done and having a satisfying life. Example: performing leadership responsibilities while anxious about a personal relationship.
2. **Initiative:** the ability to take responsibility for originating new projects, ability to think and act without being urged, the ability to develop new ideas or methods. Example: initiating a recruitment campaign for new members.
3. **Risk-taking:** the willingness to try something new or make a decision without the assurance of success or improvement. Example: planning a program that has not been attempted before.