>> Welcome to “Going Online” with Oregon State University Ecampus. A podcast series highlighting resources and tools for online learners across the globe. I'm Eddie Rodriguez, the Student Engagement Program Manager at Oregon State University Ecampus, which serves more than 13,000 online learners annually through the delivery of 100-plus online degrees and programs.

In this series, I'm joined by my colleague Rachael Guenthner, Entry and Transition Advisor at South Seattle College, and former OSU Ecampus Student Success Coach. We're glad you're here. In this episode, we'll chat with Bethany Ulman, student success coach at Oregon State Ecampus. We'll break down what success coaching is, how online students can leverage coaching in their pursuit of a degree.

And the proving impact it makes for online learners, let's get into it. Hi everybody, welcome to Going Online with Oregon State University Ecampus. This is your host Eddie Rodriguez bringing you another exciting episode, I'm actually really looking forward to this particular episode because we have a wonderful guest, someone who's been here at Oregon State University for quite some time.

A wonderful friend, colleague, has done a lot of great work but yeah without further ado I'm just going to let her introduce herself. So Bethany, would you mind just kicking us off and just sharing a little bit about who you are and what you do?

>> Yeah, thanks Eddie.

So yeah, as Eddie mentioned, my name is Bethany Ulman and I have been a student success coach here for almost seven years. February will be my seven year anniversary, and I have been here from the beginning. When I first started, we didn't do coaching really. It was sort of a different form to where we are now, the program has grown and we serve a lot of students.

I am an OSU alum. I'm actually from Corvallis. I grew up here and I am from a long line of Oregon State graduates. I think my great-grandfather attended but never graduated, but then my grandparents, my parents, it's a fun thing. What else do you want to know?

>> No, I mean, I think that's a great start.

>> Kind of give folks like a sense of, yeah, where are you coming from? You obviously have lots of years of experience as a success coach. So surprise, we're going to be talking about success coaching today and what that is, what kind of service that is for our Ecampus students.

And also for any other listeners who are just interested to know about some of the services that we offer for online students and just as a resource. But yeah, even, I guess, prior to Ecampus and Success Coaching, I mean, again, it sounds like obviously, you're from Corvallis, you've been in the area for a really long time, but did you do anything else beforehand or any stops somewhere else along the way?

>> Yeah, so, even though I'm from Corvallis, I spent my years in college working in academics for student athletes. So from when I was a sophomore until I actually graduated with my graduate degree, so something like seven or eight years working there and I also at the same time worked in athletics as an event management intern, which was interesting.

I spent a lot of years working with student athletes really thinking that was going to be my calling. I moved to Texas and worked at Texas State University for a couple of years. If anyone knows anything about Oregon and Texas they are very different in a lot of ways and my whole family lives in Oregon.

And so I decided to move back and the job at Ecampus opened and it was surprisingly similar. Ecampus students, while obviously may or may not have been student athletes earlier in their lives, face a lot of the similar challenges that student athletes face just around time and energy and having enough resources just in general to be able to do well.

So, the transition went fairly well I would like to think. And now I really can't imagine working with any other population. So I'm excited to get to support the students we do.

>> Yeah, I mean, it sounds like yeah, it obviously has been working out. I mean, seven years later, you're still here.

And I think speaking, I guess, for myself and the interactions I've had with you, I think we're definitely grateful to have you on the Ecampus and specifically this success team and coaching staff. But yeah, I mean, it sounds like from the beginning, you've been in roles where you're working with students directly, having conversations about different things.

So I guess to kind of narrow in on coaching and success coaching specifically, can you talk to me a little bit about what it is? And if it's even common in higher ed, because I feel like we often hear other kinds of roles like academic advising. I feel like that's a very familiar service for a lot of students, even academic counselors.

Coaching, what is it, and how does it fit in sort of the higher ed scope?

>> Yeah, no, that's a great question. And I was thinking about that because when I first started, coaching in higher education was not something I had ever heard of and I spent a lot of time in higher education before I came here.

And so the fact that I really didn't know what coaching was, it sounded interesting, I had been what I would consider a traditional coach in terms of coaching sports but didn't really know what it was. And so when I got here, like I said kind of in the beginning, we were doing something different so we really created this program from scratch in relying on sort of doing some research.

So there were some universities that had coaching programs but they were pretty much focused on traditional students. And so what we were really aiming to do is figure out how we support students outside of the roles of advising and counseling, right? Because in my mind, and this isn't true, I want to put out a caveat, it isn't true, all advisors don't do these things, and some advisors do coaching, some counselors do coaching, some counselors do advising, but an advisor in a true capacity is really helping someone navigate their degree.

Here are the classes you take, here's when you take them, here are the prerequisites, what are maybe some challenges you're facing but especially those who in certain departments they don't have a lot of time. So coaching really fills the void of saying, what else do students need outside of academic planning to be successful?

And coaching really comes out of a place that says, students know what's best for them, especially adult online learners. They are not people who need hand holding because they have a lot of life experience. So coaching, I think, is really about holding time and space for people who are busy, who don't have a lot of energy, to show up to a conversation with no expectations and just say, tell me what's going on, what has been happening?

What has been going really well in your life? What kind of challenges have you faced? And I think one of the biggest misnomers is that students have to come to us with this big heart-wrenching challenge. And sometimes that's the case, but it's also just to say, we're here to support you so that you've got time held.

And someone who is here to provide a connection to the university help you navigate policies but also just be there for you and understand the school side of your life because it is often a big part and a small part at the same time. Because if you're working, if you're a parent, if you're in a relationship, if you're a good friend, you don't have a lot of time for other things and it's hard to have that time held from other people.

Really talk about what's going well academically or what is going on in your life that is impacting your ability to be successful. So I really define coaching as holding time and space for students to figure out what they need, when they need it, why they need it. And guiding a conversation that helps them determine the best solutions, outcomes for themselves so that they can take ownership.

And it's an amazing thing to be a part of to watch people sort of go from, I have this thing, I don't know what to do. And in a 20-minute conversation, someone can say, man, I don't know why I didn't think of that, but that's so simple and I'm going to do that.

>> And it can really change their life and I didn't do anything, I didn't come up with anything, but having the time and space is really the key.

>> Yeah, wow, I mean, sounds like an incredible service for our students for our online learners because it sounds like this is a kind of in some ways, a pretty tailored resource for a particular type of student.

So I guess I'm curious kind of digging a little deeper in terms of the student population that you're working with. Yeah, what kind of student is coming to coaching? Who are they? Again, you've shared some tidbits. But yeah, could you just elaborate a little bit more?

>> Yeah, I mean, the good news and the hard part is everybody.

So I seem to be the person who works with moms and that is funny now because I have kids or a daughter when I first started I didn't, but I think it's just for people who really want to have support and want someone who is solely dedicated to listening.

Potentially empathizing and really understanding how demanding academics can be. And so sometimes it is as simple as just showing up and saying you've got this, you can do it and I'm here to support you and I believe in you and there are students that need that. There are students who need resources.

And so I would say Ecampus students are resourceful and they're insightful, and they're determined to get their degree. They're just people who want better support systems. And so we serve all sorts of students, undergrads, postbacks, sometimes non-degree students sometimes graduate students because we don't want to limit ourselves.

There are so many students online could benefit and use our help. And so we just want to be open to as many of those students as possible.

>> Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, I definitely want to be able to reach a lot of folks. And I know looking specifically at Oregon State University Ecampus, I know it's a very large student population as well.

But one thing as you were kind of talking about the type of student that's coming and who they are and what maybe they're looking for is there, I guess when should a student maybe reach out to coaching? Or what is that process like in terms of pursuing to kind of key connected with success coach, how does that work?

>> Yeah, so there's a lot of different ways. A few years ago, we actually rebuilt our Ecampus orientation. And so it's their introduction to OSU Ecampus. And within there, they are encouraged to schedule an orientation appointment. And it's really just a conversation to say, hey, you're new to OSU, how can I support you?

And then at that point in time, right, there's a lot of students who are like, I don't know what I don't know yet. I haven't taken any classes, but one of the common things I hear is in my previous educational experiences, I did not take advantage of the resources that were available to me.

So I am here to do that now, which I think is fantastic. They've grown, they've matured and they've realized that having additional resources and support can be really helpful. So that's one of the ways and I would say there are students who come in that are nervous that say, it's been 20 years.

I haven't been in school in a long time. I took a break from working and this seems really overwhelming to me and I say, that's totally fine. That's totally normal and let's talk about supporting you sort of ongoing or long-term. And so in some cases, those orientation conversations turn into ongoing coaching where students meet with me every week for a term.

I have students that I've met with every week for, I mean, I have some students coming on four years that are getting really close to graduating. They can sort of progress that way. We also have really good relationships with our app academic advisors. So as a student is meeting with an advisor, if something comes up where an advisor says there's a lot going on, I unfortunately can't provide maybe the support that you need.

I would recommend you reach out to a success coach. So they do actual handoffs. They'll reach out to us and say, hey, can you connect with this student? But we also just have a website where we sort of try and share what we do, and why it's helpful, and we get plenty of students that have found that resource one way or another that end up scheduling with us.

And so there's a lot of different ways students can connect with us and really develop a relationship, and a connection to OSU.

>> Yeah, that's wonderful. I mean, it sounds there are a multitude of avenues students can take should they be interested in success coaching or even it sounds maybe there's kind of referrals that also happen on behalf of maybe like an academic advisor.

One thing you were kind of mentioning is kind of this orientation. I'm curious, so what is that? And when does that happen? It sounds like kind of as the name might suggest, kind at an earlier point for a student, what happens in that kind of appointment? Are they getting introduced to success coaching?

>> Yeah, absolutely, so we encourage folks to schedule, again, if they have a point of connection, even though they'll meet with their adviser, they will maybe get connected to other things, but it is. So before students would register for classes, it's part of a introduction to a OSU, so that they have someone that they can reach out to in case their onboarding process.

Maybe it isn't as smooth as we would want, if they're having trouble deciding on a major, perhaps. And so in those conversations, we can talk a lot about resources and next steps, but I also do just like to say tell me about why you're here? Why is this major important to you?

What are you hoping to do with this degree after you graduate? I think that's the more inspiring part of those conversations is really helping students refine what they want out of this experience, why they're here. And I find that really helpful, especially for students who choose to do ongoing coaching, but even students who come back around later.

It's hard if you're two or three years into a degree, you take maybe one or two classes a term. COVID hit, so we had a lot of people who had to just pause going to school cause their kids were home with them. It's a way to sort of continue to help support students help them sort of move forward in their degree plan.

But also have a way to come back and say, Bethany, I've been at this for four years. I'm getting close to being done, but I'm really struggling to find the motivation. And it's really nice to be able to go back to say, remember that first conversation that we had when you told me You're pursuing this degree because you want to help people who have gone through traumatic events like you did in your life and you're really here to serve as an advocate?

How to finishing out these classes help you achieve that goal and it's amazing to watch that transition to where they showed up and said, I'm really unmotivated. I don't know how to finish to, I've got this. I know why I'm here and I'm excited to be able to take this, and make a change.

>> No, that's great. I mean, that early contact really sounds like it has some sort of impact for students because then they come back like they remember you or you brought up these things for me. And I think that's great that you all are serving students in that capacity, especially so early on when maybe there's like tons of things already kind of running through their head.

On the flip side to that, do you encounter students who maybe come to that orientation appointment or that first appointment and just like quote, unquote, put together where they feel like they have everything and then they end up coming back. Does that also happen?

>> Yeah, well, as I think we all know and we learn from the pandemic, life is unpredictable.

So if you showed up in, we'll say the fall of 2019, you were ready to crush life and you had taken online classes and you were working part-time, but you had been doing school. You feel like you've got your sort of strategies and skills in place, and then COVID comes along.

And you might have kids at home. I'm with you now that you're having to try and figure out how they go to school, how you go to school, how your significant other works from home, potentially. And how you do all of that where all of the systems and routines you had in place were completely disrupted.

And knowing that they've had an appointment with us, they'll reach back out to a coach and say, this thing in my life has changed. How do I come up with new routines? How do I do this differently? And so we definitely have students that will come back around, and hopefully, we don't have another large scale pandemic.

But even just family members passing away, or a family member getting sick, or a job change, I mean, it can even be positive things that are happening in their life that are just sort of disrupting the things that they've been doing, the systems that they have. And so it's a way for folks to come back around and just have additional support.

I also have students who show up at the end that say, hey, I just wanted to tell you, we only met once, maybe twice. But the fact that you took the time to meet with me in the beginning really made me feel welcome at OSU and I felt like I had the resources, I knew how to find the resources that I needed to take advantage of things.

And here I am about to graduate and I just want to say thank you. And those are, I don't want to say the best conversations, but that's what makes it all worth it, it is those comments from students. That's why we do what we do.

>> Yeah, wow, we're just kind of blown away by how impactful it sounds like coaching can be for students in the fact that even again maybe as you were saying, talk once or maybe twice, and they still remember that.

Which I guess leads me to my next question of, what exactly happens during a coaching conversation? Or I guess, can you describe what the components are? Or does it look differently? Yeah, just walk us through, how is a coaching appointment structured?

>> Yeah, so in general, if we use the coaching structure that we were trained in, is it really is sort of saying, what are you wanting to focus on today?

What are you wanting to be at the end of our conversation? Let's talk about what's happening. So, I would say a good example is, I want to improve my study habits. Okay, so the outcome for this conversation is to really try and get you to a place where you've identified a study habit, or you're going to look into a study habit, great.

Then we'll start by saying, so, what are your current study habits? What does that look like? What are you doing? And usually folks will share, I'm setting aside time, I have blocks of time, I have a desk that I'm sitting at. And we'll just sort of dig into, what is getting in the way of you having the study habits that you want?

And I think the one thing I want to make clear is that our coaching, even in this example, it's talking about study habits, but often what's getting in the way has nothing to do with academics. So I would say from my experience, someone who says, I need to refine my study habits, it's really about, how do I let go of ideas of perfectionism?

How do I let go of the different roles that I play and be able to transition between the two without feeling guilty that I may be not be at a soccer game of my children's, or I'm not able to show up for my spouse, or my significant other in a way that I want to?

And so, for adults, at least I have found study habits is really about study habits, especially if they've been in the workforce. You know how to organize your time, you know how to get projects done, you know how to create a to-do list. Those are all things you are familiar with.

It's the underlying reason of what's getting in the way that we really need to address. And so, often when someone says my outcome is to have better study habits, they could leave, potentially, with a new strategy that we've talked about, but often what they'll lead with is, how do I work on overcoming my perfectionist tendencies?

What do I need to think about in order to let that go, to get to a place where the study habits that I want are what I'm actually doing? How was that?

>> No, I think that really kind of helped paint a picture, at least in my head.

And I hope for the listeners out there, you're processing it and it's making sense. But, I mean, it definitely sounds like your students are coming potentially to you with a question, or maybe even if they don't, just the way it sounds like you're articulating questions. It just opens up all these different things, and kind of provide a framework of a thought process, as you kind of were talking about, reach maybe a potential outcome for maybe change or action, which, yeah, it's very unique.

I'm curious, you were mentioning a little bit, there's maybe kind of trainings that happen. So, just for somebody who would be coming into maybe a coaching session like this, what's sort of the school of thought that the coaches are coming from? What's their training? Just out of curiosity.

>> Yeah, so we're actually trained right now in a couple of different, sort of schools of thought, if you will, or just sort of techniques.

So, the main one is called Presence-Based Coaching, and it was developed by a man named Doug Silsbee. And it really is about asking questions and helping people get outside of their head, and understanding what's going on in their body, which is telling them something about a reaction they're having, an emotion they're having, and really digging into, why is that coming up?

Why does that matter? And so that model has, I won't get too deep into it, but seven sort of voices, where you're sort of saying, if I'm a reflector, how can I share back what you've shared with me, to kind of hold up a mirror to say, this is what I'm hearing, is that accurate?

And having people hear that back is often very powerful. Helping guide people to an outcome and sort of saying, this is what you need, holding them accountable to those outcomes. It is very much about, how do you structure a conversation? And how do you leave the space there?

So as a coach, I often don't talk a whole lot, which was a big shift for me. I also come from a teaching background, so I had to really rein in my wanting of, I know what your answer is. I know what the solution to the problem is, that you're bringing me.

Because they're adults, and let's be honest, no one wants to just be told, just go study more, you'd be fine. That's not a solution. And so, how do we help provide that framework, ask questions that get people to think deeper, so that they're really addressing what the actual issue is.

So that's Presence-Based Coaching. What goes along nicely with that, is something called motivational interviewing. And motivational interviewing was developed by two psychologists, I want to say, who were really dealing with folks who had addiction. How do we help create cognitive dissonance between what someone wants to have happen, and what someone's actions or behaviors are currently doing?

And so, motivational interviewing is very much about open-ended questions, reflecting behavior back to people to sort of show them that there is an incongruence between what they think is happening, and what their behavior is, and what their desired outcome is. And so, those two things pair really nicely together to sort of say, how do we ask questions holds you accountable, but also helps you dig deeper into, what is the thing you actually want?

You want this desired behavior outcome, what are you currently doing or not to get there? And then, how do we help hold you accountable?

>> Wow, yeah, so, I mean, really for students who are coming into maybe a coaching session. Yeah, they can really expect a very deep conversation with a lot of work, which at the same time, I mean, it sounds kind of scary, but would you say most students are pretty receptive when entering that?

Or are students a little hesitant at first? What is that like?

>> Yeah, I mean, it can definitely be challenging, because there are students who want you to solve their problem, Bethany, you just tell me what I need to do. And I could do that, and I'm not going to lie, sometimes I do that.

Because sometimes in a university, it's, Bethany, I need to withdraw, these things are happening, and I can't move forward with the term, I'm just not going to have the energy, the capability, the capacity to finish. Okay, so I'm going to tell you exactly what you need to do, you need to withdraw?

Here's the process, here's potentially, what am I trying to say? A petition, for reimbursement to sort of say you've had extenuating circumstances, so how do we help address that? So, sometimes it is giving advice or giving information, but I do really try and stay away from that. And the people who are resistant to that will sort of just wrap up the conversation quickly and move on.

And that's okay, because if in that moment what they needed was a link to a website to withdraw, that's fine. At the end of the day, the question we always ask is, are we serving the student? If the answer is yes, then that's a successful conversation. Is it always coaching?

Maybe not. I would say though, in general, the students who may become a little apprehensive, find a coach, at least in me, I can't speak for everybody, who is nonjudgmental. So we might get deep, but I'm not judging you. I'm not trying to fix you, or change you, or tell you that you're wrong.

I'm simply here to listen. And in many cases what people bring is really hard life happenings. And so showing up, being non judgmental, empathetic, even if students are hesitant in the beginning, when you have someone on the other end of a phone call, or in a Zoom, who is listening, who is demonstrating that they hear you, they really hear you.

They're not just listening, they hear you, and they can sense what you're going through. You'd be surprised how many people open up, because at the end of the day, isn't that what we all want is to just feel heard and valued? And if that's the case, and you feel like you're in a safe place to share those things, people have a tendency to open up.

>> Yeah, wow.

>> And it's just for students? Can others do it?

>> No, but that's wonderful. That's a lot of incredible work that the coaching team is doing to be able to offer such a, I hate to use the term, but high touch service. Where we're really kind of building a relationship with the student.

And again, holding that space to process whatever it is that they need to process, which I think is just incredible because, again, pretty unique service, I would say, right?

>> Yeah, yeah.

>> And another thing, I guess, that was coming to mind is, again, you're holding a lot of space, you're offering students time to process maybe a life circumstance or something like that, or a particular challenge.

But as a Ecampus or as an institution, from that coaching kind of perspective and even through those conversations you've had with students, is there something as a university could be doing better to support our Ecampus students who are maybe coming to coaching frequently about a particular issue? Are there barriers or something that are-

>> Yeah.

>> Impacting?

>> Yeah, I mean, I think the biggest one, which is a hot topic in higher education in general, is just finances. The fact that you can have someone leave a public university 50, 60, 70 $100,000 in student loan debt. Are you really setting that student up to be successful?

And so, I think one of the biggest challenges we hear from students is just the financial burden that being in school takes. And there's often a conversation around, do I work, do I go to school full-time? The way the financial aid is distributed, how you can only get a certain amount of aid depending on how many credits you take.

And so financially, being able to say, I'm willing to go into debt, or I'm going to take this at a really slow pace so that I can pay for it as I go, is definitely one of the bigger pieces. But I also think higher education like most corporations or organizations, has its own culture, and policies, and things that students don't understand.

And especially if we're talking about students who are potentially first-generation. I mean, we have a list of acronyms in the Ecampus orientation that's 8,000 pages long, because we have so many acronyms in higher education. And there are a lot of policies that are sometimes archaic or don't make sense.

And I know we talk about OSU, I think, does a fairly decent job, but there are policies that OSU has that don't make sense. I think a good example is a win that we got a few years ago was changing the withdraw policy, because it used to be you could only withdraw from the term, I think four times, or something like that.

But for Ecampus students, if you're taking one class a term and life is happening, you reach that really quickly. And so, being able to go back to folks and say, hey, this policy doesn't make sense for Ecampus students, why is it here? Can we figure out a better way to do this?

So I think some of it is those policies and things. I think the biggest thing we hear, is people want help with time management, and study strategies. And sort of like I talked about previously, it's rarely those things, right? It's time management. But it is potentially the guilt or shame around, I don't have enough time to devote the energy and/or the time to the things that I value and are important to me.

And so how do I come to terms with what that looks like? What do I let go of? But it's really those barriers around being an adult. You're an adult who has to manage yourself, potentially other people, you have a job that you're responsible for. In some cases, you have people that rely on you to do things.

And so navigating all of the different roles people play, how they show up in those roles, who they think they're supposed to be, who they are, is really what coaching gets at, I think, more than anything.

>> Yeah, wow. Again, but lots of great information to kind of be processing.

I mean, definitely I think you're right. There are barriers at play and policies that sometimes don't make sense. But even in your role of being a coach, it sounds like you're also advocating, which I think is great. Because I don't think that maybe gets noticed enough, from just kind of also where Ecampus students kind of fit in as a population amongst the university as a whole.

Knowing that you're not only just meeting with students and kind of holding space, and helping them process, and kind of discuss challenges, but also kind of taking that back, and also trying to make change within an institution. That's awesome.

>> Yeah.

>> Another question, again, as you were talking about barriers and just kind of challenges, are there also additional either resources or tools that you often refer students as well during a coaching conversation that might be helpful for some of our listeners that might be listening?

>> Yeah, no, I think there's a lot of resources that are available out there, depending on what you're looking for. So, I think our Academic Success Center, that's sort of our counterpart for campus students, does a phenomenal job of providing resources to online students. They actually have what's called the learning corner which students can access, that's got a lot of great worksheets, it's got some videos.

It has just information on things from how to study more efficiently, how to overcome test anxiety? So that is a resource that I refer a lot of students to and sort of highlight some of the different pieces on there. I think one of the best resources that I've really been using lately, as I've had many students that I've now been working with for quite a while, who are nearing graduation, that are trying to figure out what to do next.

And so, Ecampus recently developed the Ecampus career hub. We launched that, I don't know, what is time, COVID, I wanna say about a year ago. And it has a lot of great information. It curates all of the virtual events that are happening, so career fairs, things like that.

There's also a section in there that talks about the labor market insights that I really love. So it can sort of help students break down, there's a general area you wanna work in, you can select an occupation. And then you can really drill down, even to your county, so if you live in Georgia, and you live in a specific county in Georgia, you can actually see who the top employers are.

What the skills are that they're looking for, the competencies they want you to have, what kind of education they want you to have. Along with other job titles that you might not have thought of. And so, I really suggest students start there as a way to sort of say What might you want to do?

Who might you be able to work for? And let's just start by reaching out to those people and seeing what they're looking for. Do they have positions open? And that's a really easy low stakes way to set up things like informational interviews to be able to move forward.

So that's one of the resources that I love. I think the other on, which seems counterintuitive, but is also just how are you connecting with other students? I hear that a lot from students is, I'm online, it can be isolating, and yet I've also heard a lot of students say, this is the best way for me to connect.

So being able to post in discussion at boards, create discord channels, creating their own Slack channels. They're finding a lot of different ways to communicate with each other. And so as long as you're willing to sort of put yourself out there, be vulnerable for just a little bit and say, hey, I'm interested in connecting with other students in this class.

This is a class that I find really interesting. Is anybody willing to join me on this discord or potentially meet up? I'm always impressed with the way students find each other and build relationships with students across the country. And I say that I also shouldn't be. I build relationships with students across the country and around the world.

And it shows me how powerful connecting with other people can be, and how valuable it is for our Ecampus students.

>> So, once again, that first resource you're talking about, Ecampus Career Hub.

>> Ecampus Career Hub, the Learning Corner, and then honestly, there's just the Ecampus success page that has a lot from disability access services, tutoring, there's a ton of information out there and a coach is always willing to help direct you to other things as well.

>> Yeah. Okay, great. That's awesome, there's some additional things too that, if you connect with a coach, you can potentially learn a little bit more about. I wanna go back to a little bit, not necessarily the Ecampus Career Hub, but just career in general, because I feel like this is something that does come up often for Ecampus students and maybe even just anybody who's about, as you were saying, about to graduate.

Is there any sort of career support that happens within the coaching conversation? What sort of things can potentially students expect alongside the coaching in terms of career related stuff?

>> Yeah, so I do talk a lot with folks about the Ecampus Career Hub. We kind of go through that, but we also talk a lot about how that process looks, which is fun because, like I said, we have a lot of people who are familiar with resumes and cover letters and know how to find jobs.

But I think more often than not, we're working with folks who are switching careers, who the way they interviewed or that field does things now is not the way their new career does them. So I think a good example is folks who are coming from maybe like a psychology or philosophy background, who decide to get a computer science degree.

A computer science interview is much different than potentially just like doing an interview in higher ed. So preparing students to sort of think about like, how could you learn about what that industry is like? So I talk a lot about informational interviews, which are really just reaching out to a company that you might want to work for and saying, what is your company's day to day?

What does your role look like? What is your company value? What are you looking for in people that work here, so that you have some kind of an idea of that process, what they're looking for and the more of those people that you talk to, the more you can kind of build a picture to then be able to say, okay, here's what I want to do.

I'm gonna apply. But I feel really confident going into the interview because I know what they expect. I think degree programs do a great job of giving you knowledge and sometimes skills you need, especially for like the science or technical majors. But learning how to interview is often not something that's covered, and so we can sort of help fill that gap by providing things like informational interviews, but also like some of the career resources that do exist on campus and usually do at many universities.

To be able to sort of prep and feel like you can enter that interview, I've got this, I'm ready to crush it.

>> Yeah. Wow. Is there anything success coaches can do? Because that's pretty awesome.

>> Yes, I do want to make sure folks know there is a fine line between coaching and counseling.

So I will never diagnose someone with mental health or a learning disorder that is not my realm. I am not going to serve as a therapist. That is also not my role. But I think what I said earlier, a lot of people can work through things on their own if given the time and space and someone who is willing to be empathetic and listen.

We do a lot, I will say it's very emotionally taxing, but I think about some of the students that I've worked with for a long time and the relationship we've built. The connection they have to the university, those are people who leave feeling really empowered, feeling really grateful, and having a really strong connection to a university they potentially have never stepped foot on.

So if I can be that bridge, and if I can serve that role, it's worth it every time.

>> Wow. Okay. Now I'm kind of just holding back some emotions. Gosh, thank you so much, Bethany, for taking the time and sharing all that you do, and all the various things you kind of help support students through and just giving clear examples of what students can expect during some of those coaching appointments.

My last question as we just wrap up today. What do you wish Ecampus students knew or even just maybe prospective students who might be listening as well, and why not let's throw in faculty and staff as well, what do you wish folks knew about success coaching here at Ecampus?

>> Don't ask for the moon or anything. I think I really just wish that people knew we existed. And I say that, and I laugh because, I currently don't have capacity really to take on more folks. So students have been able to find us. From when I started to now, the marketing that we've done and the ability of people to find us has definitely increased.

But I think coaching is not about coming from a deficit place, coaching is about understanding individual strengths and figuring out how to take those and improve your life. So sometimes it can be something that's going wrong, but I think if that's the one thing I want anyone to know is that you don't have to be struggling.

You don't have to have some major life event that you're trying to get over. Coaching is here to support you in your journey as you earn a degree, whatever that looks like, whatever you need. And I wish people came to us to just say, I want to improve what I'm doing because I'm already a great student, but I think I could do better.

Or I'm looking for a cheerleader. We are here to do all of those things and more. And I wish folks, yeah, could participate in that, but also see how valuable it could be for students, because it really can make a difference.

>> Great. Thanks again, Bethany for your time.

Appreciate it. And yeah, couldn't have a better conversation. I don't think so.

>> Yeah.

>> Thanks again.

>> Yeah, you're welcome