



Dean Lazar's  
Golden Guide

Pragmatic Career Advice for Smart Young People  
Counselor/Teacher Planning Outline

Lydia Lazar

# Dean Lazar's Golden Guide: Pragmatic Career Advice for Smart Young People Counselor/Teacher Planning Outline

Welcome, and thanks for considering the use of *Dean Lazar's Golden Guide: Pragmatic Career Advice for Smart Young People* with your students. This Counselor/Teacher Planning Outline is designed to help you get the most out of the Golden Guide in career counseling and class sessions with students.

## Golden Tip #2

### Use the Resources Available to You.

If you are already out of school, go to the library or a local bookstore. Look around for mentors and advisors in your workplace and community. There is wisdom and experience all around you.

The Golden Guide provides clear advice and guidance for developing the habits of mind and effective behaviors that are likely to lead to career success—no matter what profession or field of inquiry. However, it is not designed as a “career exploration tool” and I make several pointed references in the Guide to the importance of working early and often with Career Services teams on campus.

I wrote the Guide after working for more than a decade overseeing graduate law (LL.M) and policy (M.P.P.) admissions at two Chicago area universities, including the University of Chicago's Harris School of Public Policy. The advice I offer reflects the lessons of my own career journey as well as my experience offering career counseling to hundreds of talented young people. I am confident that the Guide will be useful to career counselors and teachers working with students from diverse backgrounds and with a wide range of professional objectives. The Guide includes 31 Golden Tips, a few of which I have included in this Outline.

What follows in this Planning Outline are some of my suggestions for ways to either use the Guide in one-on-one counseling sessions with students, or to use it in a classroom setting with student cohorts. As a dean I was—and I remain—in awe of the dedication and commitment that individual faculty and career counselors bring to their work, and I hope that these ideas will be helpful to you as you seek to help your students discover and start to realize their career ambitions.

## Invite Dean Lazar to Campus

If you would like a dynamic speaker who can engage and activate your students around career exploration strategies, invite me to your campus!

- I can work with Career Services staff on strategies to energize students,
- I can help create exciting and attractive events, and
- I can lead interactive sessions with your students using materials from the Golden Guide (as well as other resources.)

Please don't hesitate to email me at [deanlydialazar@gmail.com](mailto:deanlydialazar@gmail.com) to set up a time to talk about how I can help you help your students!

# Using the Golden Guide in Counseling and Class Sessions

As all teachers know, most students will read a short reading assignment, some will read a long one, and a few won't read anything you assign no matter what you do to encourage engagement. It's not about you or the material: it's about their short attention spans, it's about the myriad enticing distractions they face as they go about their lives and, finally, it's about how pressured and busy they are as they juggle school, work, and extracurricular activities.

## Use the TOC and the Index

The Guide has a detailed Table of Contents (TOC) as well as an Index so that you and your students can quickly and easily find helpful advice no matter what the topic. When you first assign the book, I urge you to encourage students to *spend time reviewing the TOC as well as the Index*, so that they can identify the subject areas of most interest to them.

The structure of the Guide encourages students to read it one section at a time, but not necessarily in the order that it is presented. For most initial class sessions or conversations with students, the TOC, Preface, Welcome and Chapter One is plenty to start with; they can discover the later material at their own pace and/or review it with you at subsequent meetings.

## Chapter One

Use the materials in Chapter One to encourage students to be pro-active, thoughtful and consistent in their career exploration.

- The **Step One section** and the **Resource File: Key Skill Sets** will enable you to help your students begin to verbalize and explore ideas about how they want to spend their time and use their talents. This section encourages students to work with Career Services teams on career exploration and this chapter and this Resource File will complement any work that you do with assessment tools such as Strengthsfinders, Myers-Briggs, etc.
- **Step Two** introduces search strategies as a way to discover actual job responsibilities and encourages career exploration through the use of the **Resource File: Internet Sites**. Work with your students to develop lists of job titles they can research to discover the skills and competencies that employers are looking for in recent college graduates.
- **Step Three** broadens out to encourage students to reflect on their values, identify their self-presentation strengths and challenges, and start to practice their communication skills. You can use ice-breaker exercises alongside this section to teach and practice basic social introduction skills.
- **Step Four** looks at the world of opportunity and identifies *networking* as the key skill to cultivate so that students' careers can progress from one interesting challenge to another. Game plans for outreach are presented, along with sample outreach emails and thank you notes. Help your students visualize their own "inner" and "outer" circles to jumpstart outreach efforts.

### Golden Tip #9

#### Practice Small Talk with Strangers

Use any opportunities that present themselves to you to hone your small talk skills. Practice chatting people up on the line at the grocery store, on the bus, or in a waiting room. Smile, try to engage and be prepared to be rebuffed a few times — the times when you do get a positive response will more than make up for the times when people are not interested in talking with you.

## Chapter Two

The material in Chapter Two is focused on best practices for social media and digital branding. Both defensive and pro-active strategies are outlined, and links are provided to specific support sites that students may need.

- Offer students examples of inappropriate language, images or other offensive materials that can sabotage job search strategies.
- Demonstrate how to complete LinkedIn profiles and take advantage of LinkedIn credibility signifiers such as school, group and organizational affiliations.
- In coordination with the material in Chapter Three, you can offer students advanced LinkedIn tutorials to maximize their search results.

### Golden Tip #21

#### Cultivate Your Curiosity

Everyone always says you need to pursue your passion, but what if you aren't sure what your passion is? Don't worry about your passion and instead, cultivate your curiosity! Always be learning and engaging the world on your own terms, and you will make yourself into an interesting and successful person.

## Chapter Three

This Chapter is filled with specific, action oriented tips and advice to help your students present their best selves to the market.

- The advice here should dovetail with presentations you are already offering on writing resumes, cover letters and thank you notes, and interviewing strategies, so you may wish to assign this Chapter to coincide with those workshops.
- The Chapter begins with targeted advice on how to use the Internet to learn about opportunities and organizations, and emphasizes how important it is to allocate the majority of time to researching and networking as opposed to applying for jobs.
- Sample resumes, sample cover letters and sample thank you letters are included.
- The Chapter concludes with a discussion about additional training and credentials and how to begin to think about applying for graduate programs, referencing the **Resource File: Applying to Graduate School** and, for international students, the **Resource File: Advice for International Students**.

## Chapter Four

This Chapter goes into detail about diverse professional roles and the many different industries and organizations that offer employment to college graduates. It covers when and why to consider working for large organizations, strategies for overcoming obstacles to getting hired, and advice on succeeding in multicultural work places.

- Use the **Resource File: Internet Sites** to
  - Help your students dig into the Bureau of Labor Statistics website
  - Explore diverse organizations and job board sites

## Chapter Five

In this Chapter, I offer life lessons to help students enhance their personal resilience. With a focus on developing self-awareness and self-nurturing, Chapter Five offers **9 Key Habits of Mind and Body to Build Resilience** that will help students compete in the work world at their peak physical and mental capacity.

- Offer your students guidance on how to develop a more mindful approach to the challenges of their days.

- Teach self-organizing strategies and breathing techniques, and encourage regular exercise.
- Encourage students to use campus resources like individual counseling and to join affinity groups where they can meet like-minded students.

## Chapter Six

In the concluding Chapter of the Guide, readers are encouraged to think about how they will stay relevant as the world of work changes, how they can be authentic and avoid careerism, and how they can drive their careers forward. The Chapter and the Guide then concludes with a look beyond careers to think about strategies for building satisfying lives and making a difference in our world.

- Bring in alumni to talk about their careers and their lives—try to present a range of speakers who can share their career journeys and answer student questions about life/work integration.

## Resource Files

The Guide includes six appendices, which are titled Resource Files. **They are presented in the order in which they are referenced in the Guide.**

- Internet Sites
- Key Skill Sets
- Advice for International Students
- Selecting and Applying to Graduate School
- Writing Style Guide
- Dean Lazar's Golden Tips

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Please don't hesitate to email me at deanlydialazar@gmail.com to set up a time to talk about how I can help you help your students!

## About Lydia Lazar



As an admissions and career services dean at the University of Chicago's Harris School for Public Policy, and, earlier, as the dean for international law and policy development at IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law, Lydia Lazar helped hundreds of students prepare to win in the career marketplace. A graduate of Dartmouth College and Columbia University, Lydia was initially trained as an urban geographer and worked on water, waste and energy issues in both the public and private sectors. She later earned a J.D. degree and worked briefly as a corporate lawyer before pivoting to academia in 2001. Learn more about her consulting activities, previous publications and outreach activities at [www.lydialazar.com](http://www.lydialazar.com).

### Golden Tip #24

#### Life is Random, Your Response is Not

Life may be a series of random occurrences of incalculable odds, but how you marshal your intelligence and your energy to respond to life's challenges is totally up to you.