Re-imagining the letter of recommendation

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Agenda

• History/Background
• Role of the letter of recommendation
• Counselor vs. Teacher recommendation
• Hybrid concept
• Discussion
History and Background

• 1\textsuperscript{st} Gen Filipino American, cis gender male/husband/father of two kids, and my pronouns are he/him/his

• 4\textsuperscript{th} season at Presentation; all-girls Catholic high school in San Jose

• 9 seasons in college admissions at two selective institutions
Role of the letter of recommendation

- School official perspective
  - Specific insight

- Context and nuance
  - Course schedule (e.g. academic context)
  - Contributions (e.g. impact and influence)
  - Character (e.g. who they are/who they will be)
What the letter of rec shouldn’t do…

• Be generic or too good to be true
  • Teenagers, not super humans
  • By far...One of the...

• Repeat the chorus
  • Grades and scores
  • Naming activities
  • Overlap and redundancy
What colleges want in the letter of rec

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNSELOR</th>
<th>TEACHER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Landscape</td>
<td>Portrait</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student within the larger context</td>
<td>Student within the classroom environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Breadth</td>
<td>Depth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perspective</td>
<td>Academic Insight</td>
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<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>Evaluations</td>
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# Counselor Rec v. Teacher Rec

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNSELOR</th>
<th>TEACHER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of character</td>
<td>Knowledge of content area</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special circumstances/student’s background</td>
<td>Work ethic in classroom setting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rigor of coursework</td>
<td>Intellectual curiosity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of mind</td>
<td>Classroom anecdotes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anecdotes</td>
<td>Academic Perseverance</td>
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Hybrid Concept

• Efficiency and organization

• Specific sections
  • Descriptors; Distinguished Qualities
  • Academic context
  • Areas of Engagement
  • Impact/Influence
  • Summary
Sample Counselor hybrid letter
Sample Teacher hybrid letter
Discussion

• Questions
• Observations
• Comments
Connect

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