Utilizing Student Development Theory to Guide Advising Conversations

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What is Student Development Theory?

• What do you think?
• Theories provide possible explanations for how students make meaning in their lives
• One of many tools for working with students
Holistic Development

Focuses on entire person:

- Intellectual and Ethical Growth- Perry, William G.
- Education and Identity- Chickering, A.W.
- Self Authorship- Robert Kegan
- Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity- Abes, Jones and McEwen
Identity Development

Focuses on one aspect of Identity
• Development of ESOL Students
• Generational Theory
• Mixed-Race Students
• Queer Theory
• High-Risk Student
What do we expect of our students when they graduate?

What do we want them to know?
Be capable of?
Believe about themselves?
Believe about the world around them?
What skills do they need to be successful?

Do students have these skills when they come to College?
Are our graduates leaving able to function in today’s world?

“Survival of the 21st century requires flexibility, adaptability, the capacity to negotiate between one’s own and others’ needs, and the ability to cope with rapid change, ambiguity, diversity and complexity”

– Marcia Baxter Magolda, 2001, p. xvi-xvii
What does it take to get them from where they are to where we want them to be?

Transformational Change
Self Authorship
Robert Kegan (1994)

- Development is not automatic
- Can be facilitated or supported
- Important to be able function in a way that matches environmental needs
Developmental Trajectory is Unique to Each Individual

Moments where formulas no longer work = dissonance

Mental Complexity

Time

External

Crossroads

Internal
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<th></th>
<th>Cognitive- How I know</th>
<th>Interpersonal- Relationships with others</th>
<th>Intrapersonal- Personal Identity</th>
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<td>Externally Defined</td>
<td>“Facts are facts that professors tell us”</td>
<td>“I want to go out drinking because it’s what my friends like to do”</td>
<td>“I am (insert political belief) because that’s how I grew up”</td>
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<td>Crossroads</td>
<td>“I don’t always think my professor is right, but I’m not sure what I believe or how to share my opinion”</td>
<td>“Going out to parties isn’t really my thing, but I am worried what my friends would say if I didn’t want to go”</td>
<td>“It seems like some things that I believe are important don’t match with what my political party believes. I don’t know who is right”</td>
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<td>Internally Defined</td>
<td>“I love our lecture because I have the ability to present my own opinion and have dialogue with the professor in class”</td>
<td>“I decided that partying isn’t really for me. It means that I lost a few friends, but they weren’t my real friends anyway if they can’t respect my decision”</td>
<td>“I decided to change my political affiliation. My parents aren’t really happy with that, but it makes the most sense based on what I know and my personal values”</td>
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“It is not necessarily a bad thing that adolescents are in over their heads. In fact, it may be just what is called for provided they also experience effective support. Such supports constitute a holding environment that provides both welcoming acknowledgment to exactly who the person is right now as he or she is, and fosters the person’s psychological evolution.”

-Robert Kegan, 1994, p. 43
Student Scenarios: Changing Majors

What do you notice about these statements?
Have you met with students who say similar things?
How would you respond?
Student Scenarios: Struggling Academically

On your own: Underline the language that identifies their level of development

Discuss with a partner the cues you notice and how you would address the conversation developmentally as the advisor.
Subject- Object Interviewing Techniques

- Context and content are determined by student- **Let the student take the lead**
- Interviewer/Advisor - **listen actively and ask questions** to determine developmental needs
- New meaning derived through conversation in partnership- **provide appropriate challenge or support**
To advise a student developmentally, Kramer (1999) suggests the following:

1. know/apply student development theory.
2. focus on students; their on-going needs over an extended period of time. One advising session builds upon another.
3. challenge students to achieve their learning potential and to take academic risks.
4. view students as active partners actively engaged in intellectual and personal growth.
5. help students think about and articulate what is important to them in their academic as well as their personal lives.
6. set short-term as well as long-term goals, discuss ways to achieve those goals, and help the student monitor progress in fulfilling those goals.
References


Thank you for your time, any questions?