College Student Development Theory: What It is & How to Use It

Student Affairs Academy
Weber State University
May 11, 2021

"Student Development Theory":
> What comes to mind?

> A Formal Definition of Student Development:

> Agree or disagree: "There's nothing more practical than a good theory" --K. Lewin

The Value of Theory

Responsible Use of Theory

Tentative	→	Space for Individual Variation	→	Related to Practical Situations in Real-life Settings

Chickering's Seven Vectors

Managing Emotions

Developing
Competence

Moving through Autonomy
toward Interdependence

Developing
Integrity

Developing Mature
Interpersonal Relationships

Developing Purpose

Establishing Identity
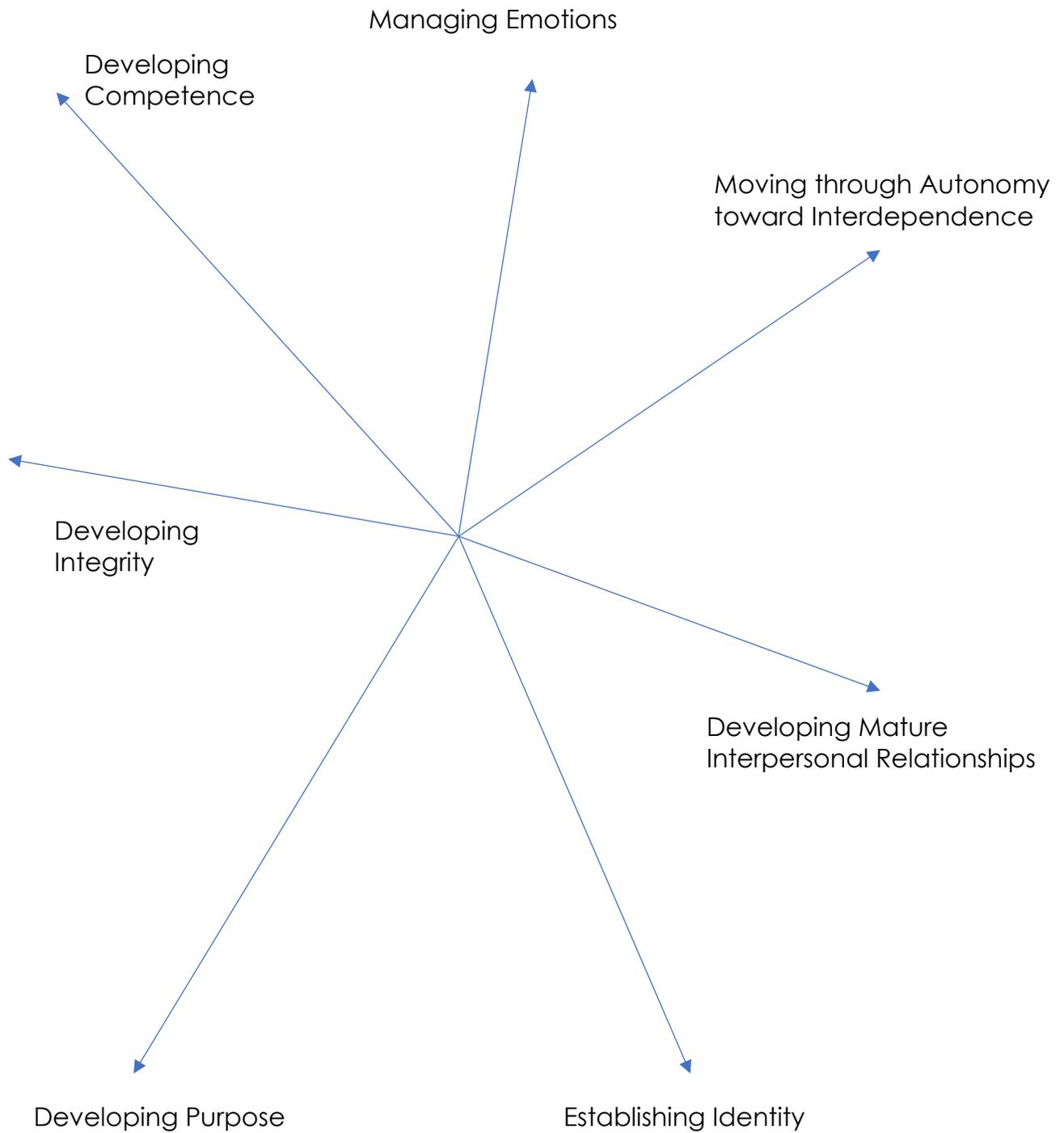
Think of a student you know.   How "developed" is that student in each vector area?
For further thought: what might you do to encourage and support that student's further
development along each vector?

Functional Areas of Student Affairs

(Student Development Theory can be applied in all these areas!)

Academic Advising
Admissions
Alumni Programs
Campus Activities
Campus Safety
Career Services
Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement
Clinical Health Programs
College Unions
Community Service/Service Learning
Commuter Student Services
Counseling Services
Disability Support Services
Enrollment Management
Financial Aid
GLBT Student Services
Graduate and Professional Student Services
Greek Affairs
Intercollegiate Athletics
International Student Services
Learning Assistance/Academic Support Services
Multicultural Services
Nontraditional Student Services
On-Campus Dining
On-Campus Housing
Orientation
Recreational Sports
Registrar
Spiritual Life/Campus Ministry
Student Affairs Assessment
Student Affairs Fundraising and Development
Student Affairs Research
Student Conduct (Academic Integrity)
Student Conduct (Behavioral Case Management)
Student Media
TRIO/Education Opportunity
Veterans' Services
Wellness Programs
Women's Center

Source: http://census.naspa.org/functional-areas

Functional Area:_____

How does/can this functional area contribute to student learning and growth along Chickering's vectors? Choose a Vector from the list below and write it in the top box. Then design a program that could be offered by the functional area you chose above that would facilitate growth in that vector. Describe your program idea in the bottom box below. Be sure you can describe the relationship between the program and how it would encourage growth in that vector.

Vectors: Developing Competence, Managing Emotions, Moving Through Autonomy Toward Interdependence, Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships, Establishing Identity, Developing Purpose, Developing Integrity

VECTOR

PROGRAM IDEA

#1. Validation (Rendon)

The Student Development in College textbook (Patton, Renn, Guido & Quaye, 2016) describes Rendon's work as follows:

Rendon (1994) conducted a study on college student experiences and found that students from diverse racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds often expressed concerns about their academic ability. She emphasized the need for active interventions for these students to promote their success. She called this intervention *"validation"* and defined this as "an enabling, confirming and supportive process initiated by in- and out-of-class agents that foster academic and interpersonal development." (p. 46). Validation can occur in a variety of settings and is most powerful in the early stages of a student's academic experience.

Reference:
Patton, L.D., Renn, K.A., Guido, F.M. & Quaye, S.J. (2016). *Student development in college: Theory, research and practice* (3rd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

In your breakout room, discuss the following:
- What is "validation?"

- Can you think of a time when you were "validated" during your college experience? When? By whom? What effect did it have on you?

- Why do you think validation is especially important to non-traditional or minoritized students?

- Think of a student you know right now. What can you say or do in the coming week that would provide validation for this student? Share with another group member and remember to follow up next week to see if they followed up on their plans.

- How can you make validation a common practice in your work with students?

#2. Involvement Theory (Astin)

STEP 1: READ
Read the following excerpt from *Student Development in College: Theory, Research, and Practice: 3rd edition* (Patton, Renn, Guido & Quaye, 2016):

> "Student involvement theory (Astin, 1984) has overwhelming support in the literature as a key underlying concept in college student development. This theory proposes that meaningful educational engagement in college stimulates increasing cognitive complexity, leading to learning and development (Renn & Reason, 2013) Defining involvement as "the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience" (Astin, 1984, p. 297), the theory refers to behavior—what the student actually does—rather than the student's feelings or thoughts."

Astin's Involvement Theory had a major impact on the way that student affairs educators do their work.   One application of his theory was to find ways to measure involvement and assess institutional efforts to increase involvement among students. This led to the development of an instrument called the National Survey of Student Engagement (affectionately called "Nessie" for its acronym, NSSE).   The NSSE is used widely in higher education (you may have taken it yourself at some point in your college career or used the data obtained from it in your department). The items on the NSSE reflect research into the ways that involvement in--or **expenditure of energy on**--certain activities lead to positive developmental outcomes for students. Good theories are *heuristic*, leading to research ideas. Astin's Involvement Theory led to the development of a valuable research and assessment tool for those interested in the development of college students.

STEP 2: ANSWER the following questions on your own
1) List the ways you were "involved" in college? Are any of these listed on Kuh's list of High Impact Educational Practices on the following pages?

2) How did these involvements lead to your growth and development?

STEP 3: REVIEW the link showing the questions asked on the NSSE.

STEP 4: DISCUSS the following in your breakout room pair:
1) Are any of the involvements you listed above included on the NSSE? If so, which ones? If not, why might that be?

2) Identify one item on the NSSE that is a surprise to you. Why?

3) What prompted you to get involved in the ways you did in college? **How can you prompt students to greater involvement?**

High-Impact Educational Practices

First-Year Seminars and Experiences

Many schools now build into the curriculum first-year seminars or other programs that bring small groups of students together with faculty or staff on a regular basis. The highest-quality first-year experiences place a strong emphasis on critical inquiry, frequent writing, information literacy, collaborative learning, and other skills that develop students' intellectual and practical competencies. First-year seminars can also involve students with cutting-edge questions in scholarship and with faculty members' own research.

Common Intellectual Experiences

The older idea of a "core" curriculum has evolved into a variety of modern forms, such as a set of required common courses or a vertically organized general education program that includes advanced integrative studies and/or required participation in a learning community (see below). These programs often combine broad themes—e.g., technology and society, global interdependence—with a variety of curricular and cocurricular options for students.

Learning Communities

The key goals for learning communities are to encourage integration of learning across courses and to involve students with "big questions" that matter beyond the classroom. Students take two or more linked courses as a group and work closely with one another and with their professors. Many learning communities explore a common topic and/ or common readings through the lenses of different disciplines. Some deliberately link "liberal arts" and "professional courses"; others feature service learning.

Writing-Intensive Courses

These courses emphasize writing at all levels of instruction and across the curriculum, including final-year projects. Students are encouraged to produce and revise various forms of writing for different audiences in different disciplines. The effectiveness of this repeated practice "across the curriculum" has led to parallel efforts in such areas as quantitative reasoning, oral communication, information literacy, and, on some campuses, ethical inquiry.

Collaborative Assignments and Projects

Collaborative learning combines two key goals: learning to work and solve problems in the company of others, and sharpening one's own understanding by listening seriously to the insights of others, especially those with different backgrounds and life experiences. Approaches range from study groups within a course, to team-based assignments and writing, to cooperative projects and research.

Undergraduate Research

Many colleges and universities are now providing research experiences for students in all disciplines. Undergraduate research, however, has been most prominently used in science disciplines. With strong support from the National Science Foundation and the research community, scientists are reshaping their courses to connect key concepts and questions with students' early and active involvement in systematic investigation and research. The goal is to involve students with actively contested questions, empirical observation, cutting-edge technologies, and the sense of excitement that comes from working to answer important questions.

Diversity/Global Learning

Many colleges and universities now emphasize courses and programs that help students explore cultures, life experiences, and worldviews different from their own. These studies—which may address U.S. diversity, world

cultures, or both—often explore "difficult differences" such as racial, ethnic, and gender inequality, or continuing struggles around the globe for human rights, freedom, and power. Frequently, intercultural studies are augmented by experiential learning in the community and/or by study abroad.

Service Learning, Community-Based Learning

In these programs, field-based "experiential learning" with community partners is an instructional strategy—and often a required part of the course. The idea is to give students direct experience with issues they are studying in the curriculum and with ongoing efforts to analyze and solve problems in the community. A key element in these programs is the opportunity students have to both *apply* what they are learning in real-world settings and *reflect* in a classroom setting on their service experiences. These programs model the idea that giving something back to the community is an important college outcome, and that working with community partners is good preparation for citizenship, work, and life.

Internships

Internships are another increasingly common form of experiential learning. The idea is to provide students with direct experience in a work setting—usually related to their career interests—and to give them the benefit of supervision and coaching from professionals in the field. If the internship is taken for course credit, students complete a project or paper that is approved by a faculty member.

Capstone Courses and Projects

Whether they're called "senior capstones" or some other name, these culminating experiences require students nearing the end of their college years to create a project of some sort that integrates and applies what they've learned. The project might be a research paper, a performance, a portfolio of "best work," or an exhibit of artwork. Capstones are offered both in departmental programs and, increasingly, in general education as well.

Relationships between Selected High-Impact Activities, Deep Learning, and Self-Reported Gains

	Deep Learning	Gains General	Gains Personal	Gains Practical
First-Year				
Learning Communities	+++	++	++	++
Service Learning	+++	++	+++	++
Senior				
Study Abroad	++	+	++	
Student-Faculty Research	+++	++	++	++
Service Learning	++	+++	+++	++
Senior Culminating Experience	++	++	+++	++

+ p < .001, ++ p < .001 & Unstd B > .10, +++ p < .001 & Unstd B > .30

#3. Challenge & Support (Sanford)
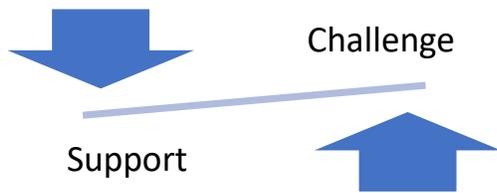
Challenge

Support

A brief overview: Sanford's theory posits that students are most likely to develop and grow when they are ready to do so and when the amount of challenge they are facing equals the amount of support they are receiving.   In the grid below, list ways you might provide challenge or support to the student in their situation to bring their challenge-support ratio into balance.

Student	Challenge Factors	Support Factors
Jana	Jana just got a call from home, two time zones away, telling her that her grandmother (who raised her) has passed away. It is midterm week.	
Sven		Sven is off to a great start with his sophomore year. Last year he decided on his major (Exercise & Sport Science) and classes are interesting and motivating this year. He pledged a fraternity and developed great relationships with his brothers. He ended the year with a 3.8 GPA which enabled him to receive a scholarship so he only has to work half the hours he did last year.
Arumi	Arumi feels alone on campus. She is an English-language learner and struggles with her writing. She just got back a paper with a C- grade when she thought it was an example of her best work.	
Mauricio	Mauricio just discovered that he was denied acceptance into the Mechanical Engineering program because of his poor performance in his math classes. He's told his family for years that he is going to be an engineer.	
Tamika		Tamika was just elected President of the Leaders of Tomorrow club and received news that she has been hired for a second year as an RA in her first choice hall in the coming year.

#4. Mattering & Marginality (Schlossberg)

Work on your own or with your group to do the following (consult *Student Development in College: Theory, Research, and Practice: 3rd edition,* pp. 36-37 for help):

- Define Mattering

- Define Marginality

- In the chart below, list Schlossberg's four aspects of mattering, a definition of each, and an example of each.

Aspect of mattering	Definition	Example

Discuss: What practical actions can you take in your current context to give students a sense that they matter?   Be specific.

#5. Intellectual & Ethical Development (Perry)

Perry's Theory of Intellectual and Ethical Development

Commitment
in Relativism

Contextual
Relativism

Multiplicity

Dualism
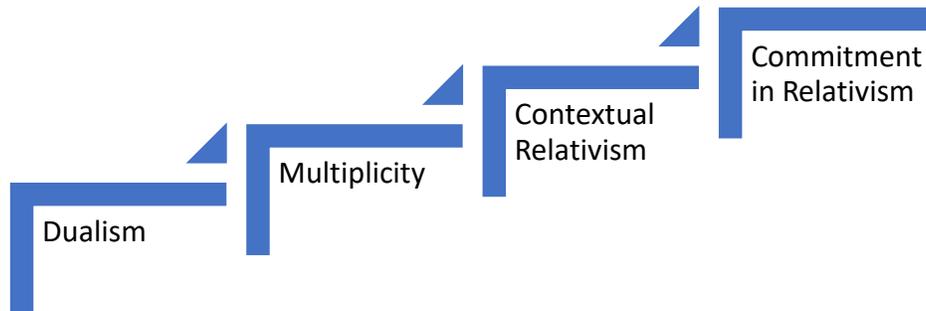
Video Activity | Grab some popcorn 🎬
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sk0-ZXCmlB4

Sorting Activity | Perry's Theory of Intellectual and Ethical Development:

Scan the QR or go to bit.ly/PerrySortingActivity (URL is case sensitive)

You will be presented with four unique statements from four different students. Each Student is in a different stage of Perry's Theory of Intellectual and Ethical Development.

Your goal is to sort each statement into the stage of Perry's theory that you think best represents their current level of intellectual and ethical development, based upon their statement

Reflection | Think about yourself as a college student. Can you identify a time when you transitioned from one position to the next?

Strayhorn's *Sense of Belonging*

Sense of Belonging Defined

"In terms of college, Sense of Belonging refers to students' perceived social support on campus, a feeling or sensation of connectedness, and the experience of mattering or feeling cared about, accepted, valued by, and important to the campus community or others on campus such as faculty, staff, and peers.**"**

Source: Strayhorn, T. (2019). *College students' sense of belonging* (2nd ed.). Routledge Publishing.

Whiteboard Activity | What leads to an enhanced sense of belonging?

- Think about your own college experience or the experiences of students that you work with. What things help students to feel a sense of belonging at their institution?

- After a moment, place your thoughts on the whiteboard to share with the group.

- How do we know if a student feels a sense of belonging on campus?

Activity | Does this help or hinder creating a sense of belonging?

- The presenter will share a series of statements that might help or hinder a students' ability to feel like they belong on campus.

- Oftentimes, small words can make a big impact. Looking at each statement, think about what unintended messages a student might be receiving, and how this might impact their sense of belonging at the institution.

Concluding Thoughts | Why does sense of belonging matter?

Why Does it Matter if Students Feel a Sense of Belonging?		
When students feel a sense of belonging, what happens? **The Institution Benefits**	When students feel a sense of belonging, what happens? **Student Groups Thrive**	When students feel a sense of belonging, what happens? **Individual Students Succeed**

The Literature Shows that Student's Sense of Belonging is Enhanced by the Following Things:

- Faculty - Student Relationships
- Staff - Student Relationships
- Student - Student Relationships
- Students feel they matter to people on campus
- Students feel 'seen' on campus
- Students have a social support network
- Students have an academic support network
- Students have a financial support network
- Students feel alignment with institutional values and mission
- Students know they have people to advocate for them
- Engaging Classes & Coursework
- The Campus works to meet students' basic needs
- Social Integration into Campus Environment
- Clubs & Campus Organizations
- Identity Groups for under-represented and minoritized populations
- Housing and Residence Life
- Fraternity and Sorority Life
- Academic Support
- Orientation Programs
- Accessible Campus Resources
- Tutoring Centers
- Study Groups
- Warm, inviting campus climate
- Positive Messaging (eg. 'You Belong Here')
- Opportunities to work collaboratively with other students
- Large-Scale Campus Social Events
- Student Leadership and Government
- Campus Traditions (eg. Commencement)
- Feeling that college will help students meet personal life goals

This list highlights just a few things. What else might positively contribute to a students' sense of belonging at an institution? What can you do to help students feel that they belong?

Source: Strayhorn, T. (2019). *College students' sense of belonging* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge Publishing.

Evaluation

Thank you for your participation in our presentation today!

Please take a moment to give us some feedback to help us continually improve this presentation and guage our effectiveness in meeting our learning outcomes.

Your responses will remain anonymous. To give us your thoughts, please fill out a brief form that can be accessed at bit.ly/SDTpresentationFeedback (URL is Case-Sensitive) or by scanning the QR-Code below.

Thank you!!