Student Development in the First College Year

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Overview

• Foundation
• Cognitive Theories
• Psychosocial Theories
• Millennial Students
• Transition Theory
Foundation of Student Development Work

- Student Personnel Point of View (1937, 1949)
Cognitive Theories

- Perry’s Theory of Intellectual and Ethical Development
- King and Kitchener’s Reflective Judgment Model
Perry’s Theory

- Students move from a Dualism -> Multiplicity -> Relativism
- Dualist see learning as black-white, right-wrong
- Multiplicity is honoring diverse view points but believing the right answer is yet to be known.
Perry’s Theory

- Relativism is a commitment to knowledge is contextually defined based on evidence with supporting arguments
Perry’s Theory applied to First-Year Students

• Most college freshman enter as dualists.
• Most college faculty want their students to be relativist.
• How do we ease this dissonance between the two groups?
King and Kitchener’s Reflective Judgment Model

• Learners are in one of three clusters:
  – Prereflective Thinking
  – Quasi-Reflective Thinking
  – Reflective Thinking
Reflective Judgment Model on First-Year Students

• Similar to Perry, it is important to remember first-year students view all knowledge as finite and attainable.

• Challenging students with ill-structured problems and examine problems through multiple POV
Psychosocial Theories

• Chickering’s Theory of Identity Development
• Scholossberg’s Transition Theory
Chickering

• Seven Vectors
  – Developing Competence
  – Managing Emotions
  – Moving Through Autonomy
  – Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships
  – Establishing identity
  – Developing purpose
  – Developing integrity
Chickering Cont.

• Important Vectors for 1st Year Students
  – Developing Competence
  – Moving Through Autonomy to Interdependence
  – Establishing Identity
  – Developing Purpose
Schlossberg

- Types of Transition
  - Anticipated Events
  - Unanticipated Events
  - Nonevents

- Coping Factors
  - Situation
  - Self
  - Support
  - Strategies
Schlossberg Cont.

• Impact on First-Year Students
  – Many preconceived notions of what happens at college, most don’t include academics.
  – Creating Clear Expectations (anticipated events)
  – Providing support and strategies for students struggling with unanticipated transition
Millennial Generation

• Common Characteristics
  – Special
  – Sheltered
  – Confident
  – Conventional
  – Team-Oriented
  – Achieving
  – Pressured
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Views Toward</th>
<th>Boomers</th>
<th>Gen Xers</th>
<th>Millennials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level of trust</td>
<td>Confident of self, not authority</td>
<td>Low toward authority</td>
<td>High toward authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loyalty to institutions</td>
<td>Cynical</td>
<td>Considered naïve</td>
<td>Committed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Most admire</td>
<td>Taking charge</td>
<td>Creating enterprise</td>
<td>Following a hero of integrity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Career goals</td>
<td>Build a stellar career</td>
<td>Build a portable career</td>
<td>Build parallel careers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rewards</td>
<td>Title and the corner office</td>
<td>Freedom not to do</td>
<td>Meaningful work</td>
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<td>Parent-child involvement</td>
<td>Receding</td>
<td>Distant</td>
<td>Intruding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Having children</td>
<td>Controlled</td>
<td>Doubtful</td>
<td>Definite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family life</td>
<td>Indulged as children</td>
<td>Alienated as children</td>
<td>Protected as children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Freedom of expression</td>
<td>Pragmatic</td>
<td>Structure of accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Once a year with documentation</td>
<td>“Sorry, but how am I doing?”</td>
<td>Feedback whenever I want it</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political orientation</td>
<td>Attack oppression</td>
<td>Apathetic, individual</td>
<td>Crave community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The big question</td>
<td>What does it mean?</td>
<td>Does it work?</td>
<td>How do we build it?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DeBard, 2004, p. 40

Silents – 1925 to 1942 (not on chart)
Boomers – 1943 to 1960
Thirteeners (Gen X) – 1961 to 1981
Millennials – 1983 to --
Working with Millennial the Generation

• Understanding generational trends is important to understanding where to meet students.
Transition Research

Diagram:
- Honeymoon
- Initial Adjustment
- Cultural Shock
- Mental Isolation
- Acceptance & Integration
Impact on First-Year Students

• It is important to cognizant of where students are at in their transition to college.
• Provide clear expectation and examples of evaluation early in the first semester to help lessen cultural shock.
References

