



Missouri State
U N I V E R S I T Y

Student Development Theory

Dr. Denise Baumann
August 18, 2010

What is student development theory?

- “Theoretical models... [that] effectively describe college students and provide...a coherent picture of individual development” (Knefelkamp, Widick, & Parker, 1978, p. viii)
- Theories “upon which we could base our practice and which might provide constancy amid the changing conditions to which higher education is subjected” (p. viii)

Why study theory?

- Learning inside and outside the classroom
- Missing piece
- Understand how students develop
- Understand how to help them develop

Why use theory?

- Serve as a guide, framework
- Common language
- Process information and respond
- Be proactive
- Evaluate work

Types of Theories

- Psychosocial – how individuals relate to themselves and others
- Cognitive-Structural – how individuals view the world or make sense of their experiences
- Typological – examine individual differences in how people view and relate to the world
- Person-Environment – how the environment influences behavior

Psychosocial Theories

- Chickering's Theory of Identity Development (1969, 1993)
- Josselson's Theory of Identity Development in Women (1987)
- Schlossberg's Transition Theory (1995)
- Cross's Model of Psychological Nigrescence (1971, 1991, 1995)
- Helms's White Identity Development Model (1995)
- Cass's Model of Homosexual Identity Formation (1979)
- D'Augelli's Model of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Development (1994)

Cognitive-Structural Theories

- Perry's Theory of Intellectual and Ethical Development (1970)
- Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule's Women's Ways of Knowing (1986)
- Baxter Magolda's Model of Epistemological Reflection (1992)
- King and Kitchener's Reflective Judgment Model (1981)
- Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development (1969)
- Gilligan's Theory of Women's Moral Development (1982)
- Fowler's Stages of Spiritual Development (1981)

Typology Theories

- Kolb's Theory of Experiential Learning (1976)
- Holland's Theory of Vocational Personalities and Environments (1985, 1992)
- Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (1980)

Person-Environment Theories

- Holland's Theory of Vocational Personalities and Environments (1985, 1992)
- Campus Ecology Theories - Banning and Kaiser (1974), Barker (1986)
- Perceptual Models - Moos (1976), Stern (1970), Pervin (1967)

Chickering's Seven Vectors

- Original in 1969
- Research conducted between 1959 and 1965
- White, male students at private college
- Targeted faculty in his writings – by chance contributed to student affairs
- Vectors – direction and magnitude
- Students move at different rates, re-examine issues later
- Vectors build on each other, can interact
- Revised in 1993 with Reisser

Vector 1 – Developing Competence

- Three-tined pitchfork
 - Intellectual competence – knowledge and skills related to particular subject matter
 - Physical/manual skills – athletic, recreational, wellness, artistic, and manual skills
 - Interpersonal skills – communication, leadership, working effectively with others
- Handle is sense of competence

Vector 2 – Managing Emotions

- Recognize and accept emotions
- Learn to act on them in a responsible manner
- Appropriately express and control them

Vector 3 – Moving Through Autonomy Toward Interdependence

- Emotional independence – “freedom from continual and pressing needs for assurance, affection, or approval from others” (Chickering and Reisser, 1993, p. 117)
- Instrumental independence – self-direction, problem-solving ability, and mobility

Vector 4 – Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships

- Development of intercultural and interpersonal tolerance of difference
- Capacity for healthy and lasting intimate relationships with partners and close friends
- Chickering moved this vector up in sequence – relationships contribute to sense of self

Vector 5 – Establishing Identity

- Builds on previous vectors
- Added complexity – difference in identity development based on gender, ethnic background, and sexual orientation
- Includes comfort with body and appearance, gender and sexual orientation, social and cultural heritage, self-acceptance, self-esteem, and personal stability and integration

Vector 6 – Developing Purpose

- Developing clear vocational interests
- Making commitments to specific personal interests and activities
- Establishing strong interpersonal commitments

Vector 7 – Developing Integrity

- Humanizing values – progress from rigid, moralistic thinking to value system where interests of others are balanced with one's own interests
- Personalizing values – core values confirmed, beliefs of others are acknowledged and respected
- Developing congruence – values/actions become congruent as self-interest is balanced by sense of social responsibility

Environmental Influences

- Institutional objectives – clear objectives used to guide development of programs/services
- Institutional size – balance of students and opportunities
- Student-faculty relationships – see faculty in a variety of situations – perceive faculty as real people
- Curriculum – relevant curriculum that is sensitive to individual differences, offers diverse perspectives, helps student make sense of what is being studied

Environmental Influences cont.

- Teaching – involve active learning, student-faculty interaction, timely feedback, high expectations, respect for learning differences
- Friendships and student communities – shared interests exist, significant interactions for development along all vectors
- Student development programs and services – collaboration between academic affairs and student affairs

Environmental Influences cont.

- Integration of work and learning – collaboration with businesses, community, and universities for developmental opportunities
- Recognition and respect for individual differences – recognize differences, adjust interactions/interventions to address differences
- Acknowledgment of cyclical nature of learning and development – learning involves periods of differentiation and integration, equilibrium and disequilibrium – opportunities for new perspectives and complex understanding

References

- Chickering, A. W., & Reisser, L. (1993). *Education and identity* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Evans, N. J., Forney, D. S., & Guido-DeBrito, F. (1998). *Student development in college: Theory, research, and practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Knefelkamp L., Widick, C., & Parker, C. A. (1978). Applying new developmental findings. *New Directions for Student Services*, 4. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Komives, S. R., Woodard, D. B., Jr., & Associates (2003). *Student services: A handbook for the profession* (4th ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Skipper, T. L. (2005). *Student development in the first college year: A primer for college educators*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition.