A Developmental Perspective on Learning

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Viewing the cognitive and affective dimensions of development as related parts of one process, we advance an integrated perspective on learning and personal development. From this integrated perspective, a successful educational experience simultaneously increases cognitive understanding and sense of self, personal maturity, and interpersonal effectiveness.

The Student Learning Imperative (*SLI*) (American College Personnel Association [ACPA], 1994) was written to spark discussion of "how student affairs professionals can intentionally create the conditions that enhance student learning and personal development" (p. 1); it is a call to transform student affairs practice to promote student learning and personal development. Although the terms *student learning* and *personal development* have different historical roots and focus on different aspects of the educational process, they are described in the *SLI* as "inextricably intertwined and inseparable" (p. 1). In this paper, we elaborate on this assertion and argue for an integrated view of learning and personal development. From this integrated perspective, the cognitive and affective dimensions are seen as parts of one process; dimensions as seemingly distinct as knowledge construction, meaning making, and awareness of self are presumed to be integrated within the developing human being.

The *SLI* argued that the educational experiences offered to college students—including those sponsored by student affairs—should be intentionally grounded in the educational missions of colleges and universities. This grounding requires a clear understanding of these missions and the educational goals they embody, as these are the goals toward which educational efforts should be directed. These efforts include the creation of "educationally purposeful"

(Boyer, 1990, p. 9) experiences that should enable students to learn, practice, and develop the attributes of a college-educated person. As listed in the *SLI*, the hallmarks of a college-educated person include:

> (a) complex cognitive skills such as reflection and critical thinking; (b) an ability to apply knowledge to practical problems encountered in one's vocation, family, or other areas of life; (c) an understanding and appreciation of human differences; (d) practical competence skills (e.g., decision making, conflict resolution); and (e) a coherent integrated sense of identity, self-esteem, confidence, integrity, aesthetic sensibilities, and civic responsibility. (ACPA, 1994, p. 1)

Although it is helpful to list particular aspects of development for purposes of clarity and specificity, it is important to note that these aspects, too, are inextricably intertwined. For example, a broad understanding and deep appreciation of human differences require a developed sense of empathy and reflective thinking skills. Effective conflict resolution presupposes a degree of self-esteem and, perhaps, civic responsibility that enable the individual to rise to the challenge of a situation in which fair treatment is at issue. The qualities associated with a college-educated person include more than the cognitive ability to engage in critical thinking; they also include such affective attributes as an eagerness to continue to learn, an appreciation of the value of working with diverse others on problems of mutual interest, the will to take personal responsibility for one's views and actions, and the desire to make a positive contribution. From this integrated perspective, a successful educational experience simultaneously increases cognitive

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understanding and sense of self, personal maturity, and interpersonal effectiveness.

The interrelatedness of different aspects of development has often been observed by those who work closely with children, adolescents, or adults (parents, educators, counselors, social workers) and by those who study developmental phenomena (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Fischer, 1980; Kegan, 1994; Kitchener, 1982; Rest, 1986). Nevertheless, whether by language, organizational structure, or just habit, many in higher education continue to separate aspects of development into independent domains without considering the effects of one aspect on the others. For example, effective conflict mediation can require not only a complex understanding of the underlying issues (cognitive complexity), but also the ability to open and continue a dialogue between disputing parties (interpersonal skills) and an understanding of the limits of one's role (personal maturity). The "independent domains" approach ignores the experience of both students and educators who daily witness the overlap between students' ways of thinking about their courses, their personal lives, their career options, and their work settings, and who also witness how the relationships between and across domains change over time. This integration is evident in students' own descriptions of their experiences.

For example, as Dawn reflected on her own growth 4 years after her college graduation (Baxter Magolda, 1994, pp. 15-16), she explained:

> The more you discover about yourself, the more you can become secure with it. And that obviously leads to greater self-confidence because you become comfortable with who you really are. It's just [that] my confidence level is so much better than it ever has been. I'm more willing to express my ideas and take chances expressing my ideas. When you're not as self-confident, you're afraid that people are going to laugh at what you think or you're afraid that they're going to think you're stupid. . . . And I think self-awareness too, because you realize that it doesn't really matter if other people agree with you or not. You can think and formulate ideas for

yourself and ultimately that's what's important. You have a mind and you can use it. That's probably the most important thing, regardless of the content of what your thoughts and opinions are. It's the fact that you can form an opinion that's more important than the opinion itself. So it's kind of a self-confidence and self-awareness thing.

Dawn's integration of who she is with how she knows is clear in her comments. By contrast, talking about herself during her first year in college (Baxter Magolda, 1987), Dawn offered:

> I prefer to kind of sit back and take everything else in. And if I have questions, I'll ask them. If I have something to say, I'll usually say it, but I like to get an idea of what everybody else is thinking and what's going on. Take everything in, other than just listening to the teacher, taking down what they have to say. Taking in other students' ideas. Just taking it all in as a whole.

Dawn's development is evident in the lack of identity and voice in her first year versus their ascendance and integration 8 years later.

Another student, Ned, described the relationship of self and knowing in the context of his work four years after his college graduation (Baxter Magolda, 1994, pp. 18-19). Describing his job selling chemicals to paper mills, Ned said:

> The thing about paper mills is that they're extremely diverse and complex and unique. There's no one paper mill like the next one. So when I go into a mill I've got a basic set of textbook-type learning situations that I draw from and apply in a specific instance to each day, each application, each paper mill. In 65 or 85 percent of the cases, going into it I don't know what the end result is going to be. And I don't know how to get to the end result. I figure things out as I go along and adapt, change, redefine, until you get to the final conclusion. And you can be smart about it. I can cut down the amount of rework time by approaching it based on other past histories or other experiences that I've had that lead me or

lend me a more accurate picture or more accurate hypothesis of what's going to happen. You read a couple of lines in a book saying this class of polymers should do this, but it never happens that way and there's always some good reasons why it doesn't. If you've seen the reasons enough times in different applications or different situations, you're going to be alerted or aware of the potential problems before they occur or look for those opportunities when they're there.

It is clear here that Ned used his own experience and his own sense of authority to make work decisions. This contrasts with his view of how he could know as a sophomore in college (Baxter Magolda, 1987), when he said:

> I find discrepancy between the professor's explanation and the book's description. You have to have an open enough mind to take it in at first and believe it, and then when you get the pieces of information that come in later that you can analyze it in an analytical way without discriminating. And then weigh A, B from what you know. It might not necessarily be the overall best choice, but from what you know you're going to have to decide. Sometimes that can be really confusing, too, because especially at a freshman-sophomore level as I am, I don't know enough about these things I'm reading to really have a masterful view of the big picture. That's why you're going to have to trust the author or whatever, and the inevitable conclusion is that they're going to be close, I think. You're just going to have to live with not knowing until it can be proved one way or the other.

Ned could not see himself as a knowledge constructor here because he lacked the sense of self needed to make his own judgments.

AN INTEGRATED VIEW OF LEARNING

This section outlines 4 key elements of an integrated view of learning that we believe can help educators, especially student affairs practitioners, promote student learning and personal development. Each of these is discussed below.

1. *What individuals learn and claim to know is grounded in how they construct their knowledge.*

    Learning is defined in many different ways (King, in press), such as the accumulation of facts or the ability to recognize the underlying assumptions, to engage in scientific reasoning, or to invoke different problem-solving strategies for different problems. Each definition reflects a way of organizing what and how people come to know. In this article, we argue for a definition of learning that is broad enough to encompass many aspects of the learning process. Our argument is based on a key insight from the developmental perspective—that people not only *organize* but *reorganize* what and how they know, and that the process of reorganizing affects what and how they learn.

    From a developmental perspective, it is assumed that learners actively attempt to interpret or make sense of their experiences. The process whereby people construct their understanding of their experiences (known as "knowledge construction") is challenging and complicated. It involves sorting through some fundamental issues about the nature of knowledge (epistemology): What can I know? How can I know? How should I decide what I believe? How certain can I be about what I claim to know? Just as the dance is inseparable from the dancer, so the known is inextricably connected to the knower—through his or her process of and assumptions about knowing. This is not a new idea: it is a long-established tenet of the constructivist-developmental tradition (discussed in print as early as 1897 by Baldwin, 1902) that people actively interpret their life experiences, to make sense of them in an attempt to learn from them. In the preceding example, Ned was using his experience in different situations to determine what he could know and how he could approach a problem at the mill. Further, the way he knew at the mill was very different from the way he knew as a sophomore, reflecting a more complex way of knowing.

2. *How individuals construct knowledge and use their knowledge is closely tied to their sense of self.*

For example, a student who fails to participate in a class discussions or committee meetings may do so for a variety of reasons. She may simply dislike being in the spotlight, but she may also be struggling to define herself as a person with something to contribute. Further, she may also be trying to figure out how her peers, who appear to be no smarter than she is, think they have as much to contribute as the professor or staff member. After all, she reasons, aren't we here to learn from them? Shouldn't we listen more and discuss less? Dawn's earlier comments illustrate this relationship. As a freshman, Dawn described how she would sit back and take in other students' ideas, without a clear sense of her own ideas and her own voice. In the later quote, by contrast, she noted, "You can think and formulate ideas for yourself and ultimately that's what's important. You have a mind and you can use it." This insight represents what Kegan (1994) called an internal identity, which he defined as

> a *self-authorship* that can coordinate, integrate, act upon, or invent values, beliefs, convictions, generalizations, ideals, abstractions, interpersonal loyalties, and intrapersonal states. It is no longer *authored* by them, it *authors them* and thereby achieves a personal authority. (p. 185 [italics in original])

The achievement of self-authorship and personal authority should be heralded as a central purpose of higher education. Both aspects require an informed and refined sense of self.

Another example stems from educators' attempts to give students helpful feedback about their performance. Astute educators vary their feedback, depending not only on the student's cognitive complexity but also on his or her emotional maturity. To learn from this feedback, students need to be able to hear others' suggestions and criticisms from an open, nondefensive posture. This often takes a large measure of personal security and inner strength (and

presupposes a willingness to engage in learning). Because a student's sense of self affects all teacher-student interactions, educators must understand the role of support in the developmental process.

3. *The process by which individuals attempt to make meaning of their experiences improves in a developmentally related fashion over time.*

As individuals mature, they become more skilled at completing the various tasks that help them interpret events in their lives, moving from simpler to more complex ways of making meaning. For example, older students with more education are better able to gather information, weigh its relevance, consider competing options with an open mind, come to a personal decision about the question, explain their decision to others, and be willing to reconsider their decision in light of new evidence or means for interpreting the evidence (for a summary of research, see King & Kitchener, 1994). They also become better able to observe and assess their own behavior in different contexts, and identify the factors that led to their competencies, patterns of personal needs, and areas of weakness. The ability to use both relational and impersonal modes of knowing also develops over time. Baxter Magolda (1995) discovered that gender-related patterns evident in the college phase of her (1992) study (knowing through connection or separation of the knower and the known—relational and impersonal knowing, respectively) converged in the students' postcollege experience as they adopted more complex epistemological assumptions.

It is important to remember that the emergence of these abilities involves a series of incremental and qualitative changes that may at first be irregular, unreliable and unpredictable. Students come to understand the role of evidence in decisionmaking, modes of knowing, and the dynamics of social relations in increasingly complex and comprehensive ways, and changes in students' ways of thinking about these topics often reflect observable developmental patterns. More developmentally advanced organizations reflect an approach to constructing knowledge

that encompasses increasingly complex sets of ideas and perspectives (even those once seen as contradictory or incompatible); this approach is necessary for making appropriate decisions about complex issues. For example, members of campus judicial boards must not only consider the facts of each case but also weigh plausible (and sometimes contradictory) explanations, and in making a judgment, concurrently weigh the educational, legal, ethical, and sometimes political considerations. It is important to recognize that these skills are not typical of first-year college students; rather, they emerge incrementally during the college years, with practice, feedback, and exposure to good role models.

4. *Educators who endorse these principles will use a broad definition of learning that encompasses both cognitive and personal development and that is sensitive to the developmental issues underlying the process of education.*

Developing thinking skills is only one aspect of achieving educational success in college. Although this is a key component in attaining the skills associated with having a college education, it is nevertheless only one part of the picture. For example, effective problem solving requires such attributes as awareness of the problem, the ability to gather and interpret relevant information, a willingness to try overcoming obstacles by making the best decision, and the personal "wherewithall" to implement the desired solution. Skills such as these have been found to influence whether and how people behave morally. For example, in his Four-Component Model of Morality, Rest (1986, 1994) emphasized that the development of complexity in reasoning about moral issues was only one part of the psychology of morality. The four components (Rest, 1986; 1994) that affect moral behavior are as follows. Component I, *Moral Sensitivity*, refers to an individual's awareness of how his or her actions affect other people; without this awareness, people do not recognize the moral dimension of events. Component II, *Moral Judgment*, refers to the formulation of a plan by which an individual

applies a moral standard (e.g., fairness to all parties). Component III, *Moral Motivation,* acknowledges that moral values are often in competition with other values (such as loyalty to friends, need for employment, political sensitivity, professional aspirations, and public relations impact); to behave morally, the individual must give a priority to moral over nonmoral values, to intend to do what is morally right. Component IV, *Moral Character*, refers to factors such as ego strength, perseverance, resoluteness, strength of conviction, and ability to resist distractions and overcome frustrations; to behave morally, the individual must be able to follow through with a moral plan of action. Rest (1986) notes that the psychological processes associated with the components interact and affect each other, and that failure to act morally can result from a deficiency in any one component:

> A person who demonstrates great facility at one process is not necessarily adequate in another. We all know people who can render very sophisticated judgments but who never follow through on any course of action; we know people who have tremendous follow-through and tenacity but whose judgment is simple-minded. In short, the psychology of morality cannot be represented as a single variable or process. (p. 4)

Similarly, the psychology (and sociology) of learning should not be viewed as a single variable or process. Applying the major features of Rest's (1986) model of morality to learning, we note that just as the domain of morality includes more than how one reasons about moral issues, so the domain of learning includes more than critical thinking skills or cognitive complexity (Component II). Although development in complexity of reasoning is an important part of the process of learning, it is not the only part. A broader, more holistic definition of learning would attend to the equivalent of the other three components as well. For example, do students recognize class assignments or committee tasks as opportunities to learn new skills, to gain valuable experience, or to broaden their understanding? That is, are

students sensitive to the educational (learning) purposes inherent within these activities (Component I)? What motivates students to learn? McMillan and Forsyth (1991, p. 50) found that "students are more likely to be motivated if their needs are being met, if they see value in what they are learning, and if they believe that they are able to succeed with reasonable effort." Educators who presume that these factors are in place are disappointed when students appears "unmotivated" or when they do not "live up to their potential" due to the distraction of competing events in their lives (Component III). Do students have the self-discipline to exert the appropriate amount of "time on task," the perseverance to see a problem or project through to completion, and the personal maturity to take responsibility for completing projects in a timely fashion (Component IV)? The affective or personal development dimensions that affect student learning are painfully clear when the answer to questions like these is "no." Using this integrated view of learning in responding to the *SLI*'s call for transformed practice in student affairs involves: heightening students' awareness of the learning dimension of the cocurriculum (Component I); improving their understanding of the skills, strategies, and assumptions underlying the learning process (Component II); developing student affairs practice to match student development needs (Component III); and helping students achieve the maturity necessary for active, life-long learning (Component IV).

STUDENT AFFAIRS EDUCATIONAL AGENDA

One of student affairs' strengths is sensitivity to the developmental issues that underlie the process of education. In light of this strength, we advocate that student affairs' primary contribution to the integrated view of learning is to promote the developmental progression described here across both cognitive and affective dimensions within student affairs contexts. Just as our faculty colleagues offer an intentional curriculum, student affairs needs to intentionally identify learning goals, assess students' capabilities related to the goals, offer a developmentally oriented process through which to meet them, provide support to students to meet the goals, and evaluate students' progress on the plan.

Although educators already know a great deal about students' development and how to promote various aspects of it, the task of enhancing development remains a daunting one because students' starting points often differ so sharply from the developmental goals that educators envision . Kegan (1994) addressed this issue in his discussion of the mental demands of modern life. Viewing contemporary culture as a "school" with its own "curriculum," he suggested that the curriculum makes demands on its students that are "over their heads." That is to say, the expectations of contemporary culture require ways of making meaning that are more complex than the meaning-making structures that most young adults hold. A similar situation exists in higher education and student affairs. Educators want students to be reflective thinkers and self-authors of their beliefs, to appreciate human differences, and to act responsibly, based on their construction of their experience. Without sufficient support to meet these demands, however, students can find themselves overwhelmed, or in Kegan's terms, "in over their heads."

King and Kitchener (1994) reported that first-year college students generally were prereflective thinkers who recognized knowledge as uncertain, albeit temporarily. These students were confused about having to make decisions without absolute knowledge as Ned's comments quoted earlier convey. Similarly, Baxter Magolda (1992) noted that most of the first- and second-year students in her study assumed that knowledge is certain (absolute knowing), or realized that some knowledge is uncertain (transitional knowing). Eighty percent of those students as seniors still used transitional knowing, by relying on authorities for knowledge in certain areas and on their own opinions in uncertain areas. Comparably, King and Kitchener (1994) reported that seniors generally exhibited quasi-reflective thinking, a way of making meaning that assumes "many possible answers to every question and no absolutely certain way to adjudicate between

competing answers. Individuals with this assumption will therefore argue that knowledge claims are simply idiosyncratic to the individual" (p. 225). These students do not demonstrate reflective thinking in which they can critique their own judgments in relation to alternative judgments. These works suggest that college students are just beginning to construct knowledge for themselves and express their voices when they graduate. Kegan (1994) estimated that half of the adult population has yet to achieve an internally generated sense of self. In the comments cited earlier, Dawn and Ned indicated that as entering college students, they did not have this internal sense of self or belief in themselves as knowers.

The current challenge, then, is to help students develop ways of making meaning that enable them to meet the expectations necessary to function as effective citizens in today's complex culture and society. Kegan (1994) argued that contemporary culture is good at providing challenge but less effective at providing the necessary support for students who are in over their heads. Kitchener, Lynch, Fischer and Wood (1993) noted that students can use more complex forms of reflective judgment than they typically use when sufficient support is available to help them with the task. Perhaps this explains educators' mixed success in higher education in helping students rebuild their worlds from the initial versions to more complex ones. The challenges are clear, but the intentional support systems to meet the challenges are less clear. Support, according to Kegan, creates

> 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. As such, a holding environment is a tricky transitional culture, an evolutionary bridge, a context for crossing over. (p. 43)

This evolutionary bridge must be both *meaningful* to the students' current way of making meaning and *facilitative* of a more complex way of making meaning. As Kegan noted, "We cannot simply stand on our favored

side of the bridge and worry or fume about the many who have not yet passed over. A bridge must be well anchored on both sides, with as much respect for where it begins as for where it ends" (p. 62). Student affairs educators need to help create these bridges.

Inviting Students to Cross New Bridges

How can student affairs professionals create and sustain support systems—bridges—for students that foster their learning and development? That is, how can students be encouraged to pay closer attention to the ways they make meaning, and to do so in ways that are increasingly comprehensive in scope, depth, and understanding? Kegan (1982) suggested that meaning is made in the space between an event and the person's reaction to it, the space in which the person privately composes and makes sense of the event. This active, individual construction of meaning is affected by individual's epistemic assumptions, previous life experience, and interaction with the environment surrounding the event. Thus, the side of the student's bridge that educators wish to respect and connect to initially is a complex human entity with multiple characteristics. As educators invite students onto and across the bridge, both the invitation and the journey itself will take multiple forms. That is, the dynamic nature of students' meaning making will necessitate a constant dialogue with them so that educators can, first, better understand how students are making meaning in a particular time and context and, second, make better-informed choices about the appropriate forms of invitation. Bridge-building requires mutual reinforcements and a dynamic relationship: students' current meaning making shapes the supports that educators erect, and those supports in turn shape how students continue the process of making meaning in their lives. (For a detailed discussion of ways to foster student learning and development see Baxter Magolda [1992] and King and Kitchener [1994]).

This dynamic relationship makes *assessment and evaluation* a constant feature of the bridge-building process. Student affairs professionals enter the assessment process from an informed vantage point, based on the extensive literature

base on student development theory and on their experience working with successive cohorts of students. Educators must also build what Kuh, Whitt, and Shedd (1987, p. 47) have called "minitheories" to understand the development of particular students in particular contexts. The theoretical base offers possibilities for interpreting students' meaning making and provides insights for choosing appropriate questions during interactions with students. Continued dialogue during the bridge-building process provides educators with feedback on the progress, information on what supports are working, and insights into needed adjustments.

Developmental goals grow out of this ongoing, mutual dialogue with students. Student affairs educators enter the dialogue aware of their developmental goals, the anchor for the far side of the bridge. Their initial assessment identifies the anchor for the beginning side of the bridge, or students' current ways of making meaning. By understanding how development occurs, educators can better identify the nature of the transformations necessary for students to move across the bridge. Then the educators are in a position to talk meaningfully with students about developmental goals that they see as within range of their current perspectives. Developmental goals emerge from mutual identification of reasonable expectations for students given their current ways of making meaning.

Plans to achieve these goals also emerge from the dialogue. Educators who know what students have experienced and how they make sense of events can offer experiences that create reasonable amounts of dissonance. Many of these experiences are a natural part of the college environment, thereby requiring only that educators help students reflect on them. By understanding students' context-specific development, educators can select more effective support systems to use to help students work through the dissonance to make meaning in more complex ways.

The *mutual exchange* inherent in this ongoing dialogue is an evolutionary bridge in and of itself. Students are validated as people who have something valuable to share, thereby supporting their ability to know and express their

thoughts. Development is situated in their own experience as goals and plans for achieving them are created in contexts students view as meaningful. The mutual construction of meaning that underlies the dialogue encourages students to view themselves as knowledge constructors and people capable of creating their own values and beliefs. The increasing ability to view oneself in this manner is what eventually leads to an internally defined self that can construct knowledge reflectively.

Bridges to Appreciating Diversity

The particular learning goals of a student affairs division should reflect society's vision of the educated person and the institution's mission. Despite differences across divisions, one common learning goal is developing respect for human diversity. Using this goal, we will demonstrate how an integrated vision of learning affects students' abilities to meet this expectation and will illustrate the process of bridge-building described thus far. (In an actual case, of course, ongoing dialogue with students would be an integral part of the process; the dialogue is missing from this example.)

The educational goal in this example is to replace racism, sexism, and ethnocentrism with an appreciation for racial, gender, and cultural differences. What way of making meaning is required for this learning goal? Kegan (1994) described lack of respect for human diversity in terms of the construction of values and ideals. People construct values and beliefs within the context of their culture and use those constructions to make meaning of others' behavior. When others' behavior violates a person's values or beliefs, the individual tends initially to judge others to be wrong, rather than entertaining the notion that the others have different values and beliefs. To do the latter, Kegan argued that one needs

> a mind that can stand enough apart from its own opinions, values, rules, and definitions to avoid being completely identified with them. It is able to keep from feeling that the whole self has been violated when its opinions, values, rules, or definitions are challenged. (p. 231)

When people are captive to those values and beliefs, as is the case before an internally generated self exists and they believe that knowledge is certain, they cannot reflect such values and beliefs or see them in another way.

Two students' stories illustrate the support systems needed to move toward appreciating diversity. Candace, coming to a 16,000-student institution from her hometown of 200 people, reported being surprised at other students' values. She was surprised that most students she encountered had not even entertained the idea of marriage, whereas most of her high school classmates were already married (Baxter Magolda, 1992). Christine, also from a rural community, expressed surprise upon coming to the same school that other students were not Catholic (Schilling, Schilling, Baxter Magolda, & Morenburg, 1993). Both women noted that they had never met an African American person before coming to college. Like many students who are busy constructing a sense of self early in college (Chickering and Reisser, 1994; Josselson, 1987), Candace and Christine do not yet have the security to avoid feeling violated when their values are threatened. Although both are interested in others' perspectives, Candace and Christine cannot take internal responsibility for their respective values because they, as Kegan suggested, "construct [their] sense of self in the relationship between [their] own point of view and the other's" (p. 126). Thus, they do not have a way of making meaning to stand apart from their values. They are made up of these values, rather than being generators of their own values. Adding the dimension of young college students' tendency to believing that knowledge is certain (Baxter Magolda, 1992; King and Kitchener, 1994) yields a developmental picture that makes appreciation of diversity difficult.

Although Candace and Christine had a similar lack of exposure to diversity as well as a similar interest in learning more about it, they experienced learning about diversity differently. Candace found herself living with three roommates who had grown up in cities. She was as shocked at hearing their experiences as they were at hearing hers. Eager to learn more about each other, the roommates went home with each other early in the first semester. Candace showed her roommates her small town; her roommates showed Candace the city. In talking about their experiences, they explored how each had grown up, what the advantages and disadvantages were, and how they felt about all they had seen. Candace found support among her roommates to explore alternative ways of thinking about herself and relationships with others. Although her parents inquired about her plans for marriage at the end of her first year in college, Candace was able to share her evolving thinking with her parents and gain their support for her new perspectives.

Christine, on the other hand, found herself in a different holding environment. After meeting an African American man at a local bar and having an interesting conversation with him, she gave him her telephone number. Upon sharing the story with her roommate, the roommate said, "You wouldn't go out with him, would you?" Christine reported: "I felt I had to say no, because she would think I was stupid. Then my sister (who is an upper-class student here) said you can't; that surprised me too. I felt like I must be prejudiced because I couldn't stick up for dating a black man but I couldn't do it because my family and friends would think badly of me." Unlike Candace, Christine was not supported in exploring her interest in diversity. She reported that her father was very racist, so she just did not talk about the issue at home. Her family's and friends' disapproval reinforced her endorsement of her original cultural values, even though she felt some discomfort with them.

What would an intentional support system—a bridge—look like to help these women move toward the goal of respecting diversity? Engaging Candace and Christine in dialogue would reveal all of the information shared here (indeed, both women freely volunteered this information to an unfamiliar interviewer who simply asked them to talk about their experience upon coming to college). The dialogue would also reveal the resources each woman has in her holding environment and the dilemmas each faces in exploring values that differ from family values. One could surmise from Candace's story that she already has support for exploring diversity

regarding sex roles and the roles of young adults. Reasonable developmental goals might include helping her extend this exploration to increasing levels of intensity (e.g., race, ethnic diversity) and helping her reflect on her discoveries to determine how she might begin to define internally what she believes. Christine's story reveals a lack of support for exploring diversity, at least at the emotionally charged level of race, indicating that reasonable developmental goals that might emerge from dialogue with Christine would look different. Perhaps they would include creating opportunities for Christine to encounter less threatening levels of diversity (e.g., city lifestyle, personality differences), supporting her in developing an understanding of difference as positive, and helping her work toward relationships that could be sustained despite value differences.

The plans to achieve these respective sets of goals would develop out of the two women's interests and the student affairs educator's resources. Much as an academic advisor steers students toward courses that might further their educational agenda, the student affairs educator would intentionally steer Candace and Christine toward student groups, leadership opportunities, and activities that would promote the developmental goals established with the students. The mutual exchange occurring during this process would contribute to the goals as well. Validating their experiences would increase the probability that Candace and Christine would be willing to examine and then evaluate their perspectives. Consciously reflecting on their experiences would support their efforts at identity development. Mutual construction of meaning with the student affairs educator or others would offer these students experience in sustaining relationships despite value differences.

CONCLUSION

Students' stories recounted here and elsewhere in the literature support an integrated view of learning in which knowledge construction, meaning making, and awareness of self are intertwined. The developmental dimension of all of these learning components has been articulated in the human development research literature. Student affairs educators have traditionally concentrated their efforts on the identity dimension of students' learning. Less attention has been given to the knowledge construction dimension—or to promoting higher-order reasoning—by faculty or student affairs educators. This disjointed approach has not yielded the results educators, legislators, students and parents hope will prepare young adults for effective citizenship in today' complex culture. Student affairs educators have the expertise, both from a knowledge base on multiple dimensions of student development and interpersonal skills in maintaining productive relationships with diverse students, to approach student learning from the integrated view espoused here. Mutual dialogue with students reflecting on various dimensions of their learning will create educationally purposeful experiences for students and help educators better understand diverse students' experience. By creating intentional support systems to bridge gaps between students' current experience and the meaning making needed for effective citizenship, student affairs educators can make a substantive contribution to student learning.

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