Theory Defined:

- A set of statements or principles devised to explain a group of facts or phenomena, especially one that has been repeatedly tested or is widely accepted and can be used to make predictions about natural phenomena. (http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=theory)

- Theories help to simplify and make sense of the complexities, representing “an attempt to organize and integrate knowledge to answer the question why?” (Patterson, 1986, p. xix).

Uses of Theory in Student Affairs:

- Student development theory gives us ways to examine how people grow, develop and make meaning of their experiences. As well as promote this.
- Creates a common language.
- Provide clues for designing and implementing effective educational strategies.
- Offer perspectives on how institutions function and can provide insight into how to more effectively achieve developmental outcomes.
- In regards to student behavior, it helps us:
  - Describe
  - Explain
  - Predict
  - Control
All theoretical perspectives of human development are incomplete.

“It is better to think of a student’s development as a kaleidoscope or mosaic of changing skills, attitudes, beliefs, and understandings, acknowledging that each student represents a slightly different set of shapes, colors, and textures that constitute his or her own personal kaleidoscope, each with its own specific set of developmental attributes. A more narrow or precise approach may not do justice to the richness of this...concept.”
In what ways did you change in college? (intellectually, values, behaviors, attitudes, preferences, likes & dislikes, etc.)

What caused those changes?

How did “who you are” effect those experiences, growth, and development? (class, ethnicity/race, gender/sex, religion/spirituality, sexual orientation, etc.)
Key Student Development Theories

- Chickering’s 7 Vectors (ID Development)
- Perry’s Intellectual Development
- Sanford’s Challenge & Support
- Schlossberg’s Transition Theory
- Schlossberg’s Mattering and Marginality
- Rendon’s Validation Theory
- Kohlberg’s Moral Development
- Baxter-Magolda’s Theory of Self-Authorship
- Cross’ Black American Racial Identity
Chickering’s 7 Vectors (ID Development)

- Views development as a series of tasks or stages related to thinking, feeling, believing, and relating to others.

- Students move through these vectors at different rates; vectors can interact with each other and students often find themselves re-examining issues associated with vectors they had previously worked through.

- Although not rigidly sequential, vectors do build on each other, leading to greater complexity, stability and intellectual aspects of development. The seven vectors are:
Chickering’s 7 Vectors (ID Development)

- Developing Competence
- Managing Emotions
- Moving through Autonomy toward Interdependence
- Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships
- Establishing Identity
- Developing Purpose
- Developing Integrity
Perry’s Theory of Intellectual Development

Nine-stage progression from dualist to relativist and stages are hierarchical.

**Early Stages:** *Dualism* – Truth is absolute and there are experts who know “truth”. In short, there are “right and wrong” answers, thus two or dual responses to questions. If we can learn truths from experts, we become knowledgeable.

**Middle Stages:** *Multiplistic* – While experts know “truth”, a variety of opinions exist; and to some extent all opinions appear to be equally valid. Since there are conflicting answers; students must trust their "inner voices", not external Authority.

**Late middle:** *Relativistic* – Opinions are based on values, experiences, and knowledge. The relative merit of alternative arguments can be weighed by evaluating the quality of the evidence. Knowledge is constructed through experience and reflection.

**Final Stage:** *Commitment in relativism* – There is *an integration* of knowledge learned from others with personal experience and reflection. One can be at different stages at the same time with respect to different subjects. Commitments are tentative and open to new information.
Our role in working with students is to identify the moments and opportunities where students need to be either challenged or supported.

We have to recognize when a student is ready to be challenged: do they have enough support to face challenge?

We have to recognize when a student needs our support: is the challenge they are facing too great.

Pairing Challenge and Support:
- High Challenge & Low Support = Overwhelmed
- High Challenge & High Support = Learning
- Low Challenge & High Support = Boredom
- Low Challenge & Low Support = Learning
Schlossberg’s Transition Theory

• Transitions are defined as, “any event or non-event, that results in changed relationships, routines, assumptions, and roles.”

• The “event” can be anticipated or unanticipated, personal or impersonal and have an impact or have no-impact.

• Transitions may lead to growth or regression, but no matter what, a transition only exists if it is defined by the individual.

• There are four major sets of factors that influence a person’s ability to cope with a transition:
  • Situation
  • Self
  • Support
  • Strategies
Schlossberg’s Mattering and Marginality

Feeling out of place can make a student feel like they don't matter. Mattering is a motive: a feeling that others depend on us, are interested in us, are concerned with our fate/experience. 5 aspects of mattering:

1. Attention
"'The most elementary form of mattering is the feeling that one commands the interest or notice of another person' (Rosenberg and McCullough, 1981, p.164)."

2. Importance
"'To believe that the other person cares about what we want, think, and do, or is concerned with our fate, is to matter' (Rosenberg and McCullough, 1981, p.64)."
3. Ego-extension
"...refers to the feeling that other people will be proud of our accomplishments or saddened by our failures."

4. Dependence
"'Our behaviour is influenced by our dependence on other people is easily understood. What is... more mysterious is why our actions are equally governed by their dependence on us.'"

5. Appreciation
Appreciation is the idea that you are recognized and thanked for what you do even if it is something you are expected to do.
Rendon’s Validation Theory

• Particular applicability to low-income, first-generation students and adult learners in higher education.
• Offers a new way to frame how these students might find success, especially those who find/found it difficult to get involved, had been invalidated in the past, or have/had doubts about their ability to succeed.
• Validation refers to the intentional, proactive affirmation of students by in- and out-of-class agents, (including family, peers) in order to:
  1) validate students as creators of knowledge and as valuable members of the college learning community and
  2) foster personal development and social adjustment.
# Kohlberg’s Moral Development

## Kohlberg’s Theory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level/Stage</th>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I: Obedience/Punishment</td>
<td>Infancy</td>
<td>No difference between doing the right thing and avoiding punishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I: Self-Interest</td>
<td>Pre-school</td>
<td>Interest shifts to rewards rather than punishment – effort is made to secure greatest benefit for oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II: Conformity and Interpersonal Accord</td>
<td>School-age</td>
<td>The “good boy/girl” level. Effort is made to secure approval and maintain friendly relations with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II: Authority and Social Order</td>
<td>School-age</td>
<td>Orientation toward fixed rules. The purpose of morality is maintaining the social order. Interpersonal accord is expanded to include the entire society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III: Social Contract</td>
<td>Teens</td>
<td>Mutual benefit, reciprocity. Morally right and legally right are not always the same. Utilitarian rules that make life better for everyone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III: Universal Principles</td>
<td>Adulthood</td>
<td>Morality is based on principles that transcend mutual benefit.</td>
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Intellectual development is made up of four distinct phases:

1. FOLLOWING FORMULAS - Where what you believe, how you define yourself, and what is important in the relationships you have - is determined by an "authority" (e.g. parent).
2. CROSSROADS - Point where the person might start to wonder if the things they "believe" are the things they really believe.
3. AUTHOR’S OF ONE’S LIFE - When s/he starts to choose beliefs, values, and identity that feel "real" to them. In relationships, we look to negotiate ways that both individual's needs can be met.
4. INTERNAL FOUNDATION - Where s/he feels comfortable and grounded in their identity.
Cross’ Black American Racial Identity

1. PRE-ENCOUNTER: absorbed many beliefs and values of the dominant white culture, including the notion that “white is right” and “black is wrong”; de-emphasis on one’s racial group membership; largely unaware of race or racial implications.

2. ENCOUNTER: forced by event or series of events to acknowledge the impact of racism in one’s life and the reality that one cannot truly be white; forced to focus on identity as a member of a group targeted by racism.

3. IMMERSION/EMERSION: simultaneous desire to surround oneself with visible symbols of one’s racial identity and an active avoidance of symbols of whiteness; actively seek out opportunities to explore aspects of one’s own history and culture with support of peers from one’s own racial background.

4. INTERNALIZATION: secure in one’s own sense of racial identity; pro-black attitudes become more expansive, open, and less defensive; willing to establish meaningful relationships with whites who acknowledge and are respective of one’s self-definition.

5. INTERNALIZATION-COMMITMENT: found ways to translate one’s personal sense of blackness into a plan of action or a general sense of commitment to concerns of blacks as a group, which is sustained over time; comfort with one’s own race and those around them.