REFINING PRACTICE

Using Student Development Theory for Inclusion and Success in Education Abroad

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Recent scholarship in international education has shed light on the potential cognitive (Leung, Maddux, Galinsky, & Chiu, 2008; Maddux, Bivolaru, Hafenbrack, Tadmor, & Galinsky, 2014), intrapersonal (Zimmermann, & Neyer, 2013), and psychosocial (Movassaghi, Unsal, and Göçer, 2014) changes that globally-mobile students may experience. For the most part, these studies have not connected with developmental theory, examined the nature of development in the international context, or reported on how learning may take place differently based on student identities.

In this white paper, the authors describe key theories from the three domains of student development theory: social identity, cognitive, and psychosocial (Patton, Renn, Guido, & Quaye, 2016), and present scenarios that encourage targeted reflection to allow readers to connect these theories to international education practice. This approach is, in part, a response to the recommendations for increasing the educational power of study abroad throughout the international education cycle documented in the 2012 volume Study Abroad in a New Global Century and other publications. Readers of this white paper are encouraged to apply these theories to their own environments to analyze and improve student learning and development from initial outreach through post-program integration and application of learning.

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Current Challenges in the Field

Decades of effort to increase access to education abroad for historically underrepresented students has resulted in modest increases in participation by students of color (IIE, 2017) that have not kept pace with demographic changes in U.S. higher education as a whole as documented by the National Center for Education Statistics (https://nces.ed.gov). Current research in the field does not suggest that these changes in education abroad participant demographics have been matched by changes in the design and implementation of programs (Gathogo & Horton, 2018). As a result, programs are unlikely to be optimized for productive and significant student learning and development for all of the current learners. The authors propose that an examination of the dynamics of student learning in relationship to social identity construction and cognitive and psychosocial development has many benefits. For example, such analysis makes it possible to align interventions at each stage in the education abroad process to maximize learning for all participants and especially those from historically underrepresented backgrounds. Reflecting on these theories and refining practice to enhance engagement for historically under-represented students will increase the quality of learning for all students (Sweeny, 2013).

What is Student Development Theory?

College student learning has been both part of the student affairs profession and the subject of formal study since the 1960s (Patton, Renn, Guido, & Quaye, 2016). Specifically, college student development theories "explain how [students] grow and develop holistically" (p.6 Patton, Kristen, Renn). Theory is a tool that can be used to explain something about the social world. In the case of those who work with students, theory provides a framework to describe what and how students learn, and thus, it can guide educators on how best to support their growth.

As international educators, we have noticed that student development frameworks often provide powerful ways to make sense of how and when students are, or are not, learning. Having a better sense of how students develop and learn in general can inform the design and delivery of programs. Theory then enhances effective en-gagement and teaching of students in distinct environments, such as co-curricular activities, international mobility experiences, and cross-cultural interactions.

Reflection:

Take a moment to reflect on what you, your office, or your organization assumes about how and why learning and growth take place for globally-mobile students. Consider what assumptions are being made about diverse and historically underrepresented students' growth and learning in an international context. What differentiation exists?

As you read through this white paper, the authors present several scenarios that illustrate what some of the stages of student development might sound like from college students. The scenarios are presented as a series of student conversations with an adviser after an Intro to Study Abroad session on a university campus. The authors invite readers to use these scenarios as moments for reflection through which they can consider the applications of these ideas to their professional practice.

Social Identity Theories

Conceptualizations of the nature of self, or social identities, have been among the most dynamic areas of student development theory in recent times (Patton, Renn, Guido, & Quaye, 2016). These theories help to make sense of the process of social identity construction related to ethnicity, race, sexuality, gender, ability, and other social locations. They also provide frameworks for understanding how these identities impact all aspects of our lives. Theories such as those related to racial, ethnic, sexual, gender, disability, and faith identity development can provide educators with powerful insights into the lived experiences of their students that can help them to connect and support all students more effectively.

SCENARIO 1:

The first student comes up to you after the Study Abroad 101 session and states: "I just wanted to thank you so much for talking about how who we are impacts our experiences abroad. I hadn't thought of that before! I mean, as a woman going to Morocco next Spring, I've got to really plan for what to do when I stand out. Do you have any, like, advice for the trip? Is being a woman dangerous there?" The adviser thinks about the student's questions carefully while also taking in some other information. The student is wearing a very prominent religious symbol on her necklace and presents an ethnicity that will likely stand out in Morocco.

▸ What stands out to you in this scenario?

▸ How can the advisor make sense of the students' need?

▸ It sounds like the student is focused on her identity as a woman,
  but what about those other identities?

▸ What should the advisor do to respond?

Renegotiating the Multiple Dimensions of Identity Abroad.

We negotiate every aspect of our identity at all times. However, context and environment often shape which aspects are most salient, or relevant, at a certain moment in time. Some contextual influences include peers, family, cultural norms, stereotypes, socio-political conditions, privileges, physical location, etc. The degree to which each of these contextual influences impacts an individual depends on how the individual constructs meaning of those factors. The conceptualization of how individuals make sense of the relationships between our multiple dimensions of identity and external influences created by Abes, Jones, and McEwan (2007) can provide powerful insights into the relationships between these identities and international experiences.
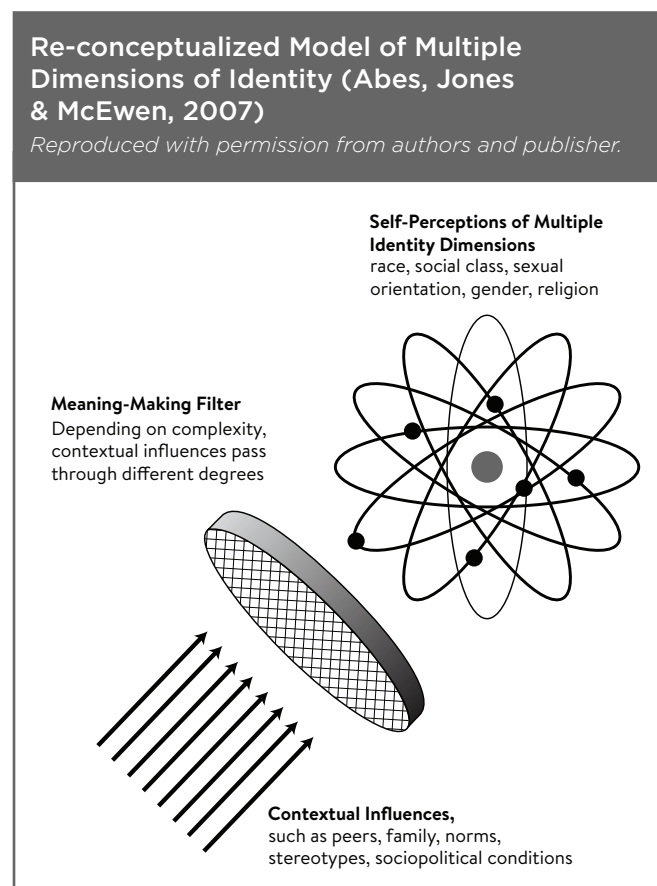
For international educators the Reconceptualized Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity (RMMDI) can offer some insight into the ways that experiences abroad can change the dynamic among the dimensions of identity. When students travel to a new place, the contextual influences change. While abroad, students join a new peer group, are confronted with different socio political conditions, and face new cultural and linguistic norms. These contextual factors cause a shift in the salience of aspects of identity that can create a powerful opportunity for development and can also create significant intrapersonal and interpersonal challenges. For example, a student who is a self-described Mexican-American atheist with limited Spanish-language skills who is living with a Catholic host family in a small town in Mexico may be more aware of their "Americanness," language skills, and religious beliefs than they would be at their home institution or in their own home.

With the RMMDI perspective on how aspects of our identities have more, or less, importance in different contexts, it becomes clear that students will benefit from curricular and co-curricular efforts to support their negotiation of their intersecting identities. The Meaning-Making Filter represents the student's capacity to make meaning of contextual influences. The more developed the filter, the better the student will be able to interpret and respond to the contextual influences. By teaching students to refine their knowledge of their identities and providing them with tools and practice for interpreting contextual influences, they can become more self-aware and better prepared to develop their cognitive skill for navigating intrapersonal and interpersonal complexities related to multiple dimensions of identity.

Re-conceptualized Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity (Abes, Jones & McEwen, 2007)
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Self-Perceptions of Multiple Identity Dimensions
race, social class, sexual orientation, gender, religion

Meaning-Making Filter
Depending on complexity, contextual influences pass through different degrees

Contextual Influences,
such as peers, family, norms, stereotypes, sociopolitical conditions

As we have seen with the RMMDI, internal and external relationships and environments have tremendous influence on how one understands one's own identity. Identity itself is both highly individual and highly relational. In addition to interrogating our own identities as professionals and working with students on their own identities, it is also important to expose students to difference and guide them to develop their knowledge of other lived experiences, so that they can learn to value others.

Individual Diversity Development Framework for Supporting Student Growth

The framework for Individual Diversity Development (Chávez, Guido-DiBrito, and Mallory, 2003) represents each facet of one's identity as a "slice of the pie" of our whole selves. One slice might represent our religious faith, another our family background, another the region of the country we grew up in, etc. By visualizing each aspect of human difference as a part of a whole circle, the authors present a way of understanding self and also a model for individual diversity development, which they define as the "cognitive, affective and behavioral frameworks of development toward consciously valuing complex and integrated differences in ourselves and in others."

The authors of the Individual Diversity Development model have visualized each slice as a developmental process that begins with Unawareness/ Lack of Exposure. Their work suggests that for

Framework of Individual Diversity Development (Chávez, Guido-DiBrito & Mallory, 2003)
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Integration /Validation
Making complex choices about validating others
Cognitive: Commitment/Interest in self and others
Affective: Increaed Self Confidence
Behavioral: develop culture of integrity, congruent behavior, thouhg, feeling , become multicultural (able to interactin and out of own culture), affirm and validate others' experience
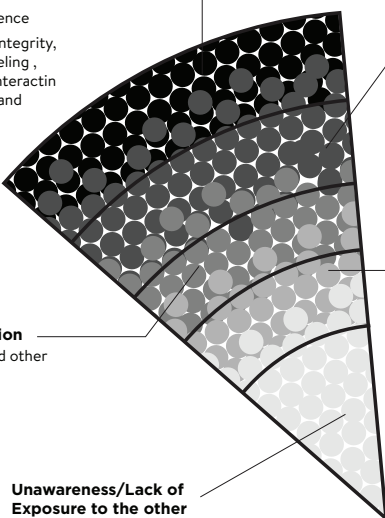
Risk Taking/Exploration of otherness
Confront own perceptions about the other
Cognitive: Self-reflection
Affective: finds courage to take risk and change behavior toward the other
Behavioral: confrontation manifests itself in ways external to the individual

Dualistic Awareness
Confront own perceptions about the other
Cognitive: dualism betwen good and bad; I'm god; the "other" is bad/wrong/unnatural
Affective: is egocentric and/or feels superior to the other sees self as individual; not connecting to anything
Behavioral: aware that the other exists but does not validate, affirm, or become involved with

Questioning/Self-Exploration
Questions perceptionof self and other
Cognitive: moves from dualism to relativism
Affective: experiences feeling that make one question own experience
Behavioral: some conflct or meaningful encounter with each other

Unawareness/Lack of Exposure to the other
Lack of awareness of the other
Cognitive: unaware that the other exists
Affective: no feelings for the other
Behavioral: does not recognize the other

each aspect of human difference, we cannot make complex choices to connect with and validate others unless we are first exposed to that type of difference and become consciously aware of that aspect of humanity. As an individual begins to develop their cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills in relation to others, they can move back and forth between any of the other stages: Dualistic Awareness, Questions/Self-Exploration, Risk Taking/Exploring of Otherness, and Integration/Validation. This process does not happen automatically and there are no set or defined time frames for when each stage would happen or how long it would take to move from one set to another.

The movement from Unawareness/Lack of Exposure to any other stage is always precluded by exposure to difference, a process which must take place for each aspect of human difference. In other words, learning to value people with different mental abilities and "making complex choices about validating others" related to mental abilities does not mean that we can do the same for people of differing physical ability or race. Taken together, each slice can be examined separately, and each exposure to difference presents an opportunity for development.

That is why the education abroad environment and identities of globally- mobile students provide such a rich context for diversity development.

However, exposure to difference, to others, or to multiplicity does not preclude an automatic movement towards Integration/Validation. Intentional interventins, discussions, self-reflection, and questioning must happen for a student to engage in a health way with new aspects of identity. The challenge, of course, is that not all identities are visible, and we cannot always know how a student or colleague feels intellectually and emotionally about certain aspects of identity. The opportunity with globally-mobile students is significant, and we must take it upon ourselves as educators to create brave spaces (Arao and Clemens, 2013) in which we can move thought and action beyond Dualistic Awareness of a foreign culture, group, or identity. By adapting the content of our courses abroad, our teaching methods, and our co-curricular support structures, we can create powerful opportunities for students to develop the "cognitive, affective, and behavioral growth processes toward consciously valuing complex and integrated differences in others and ourselves" (Chávez, Guido-DiBrito, and Mallory, 2003).

Reflection:

*What identities of yours or which aspects of who you are gain more importance in a new context? How does the context change the salience or power of certain aspects of your identity? Which aspect of your identity are you still questioning? Which aspects of your work could you approach differently with these theories? **Advising** (one-on-one, group, virtual) **Events** (orientation, trainings, cultural, social) **Programs** (curricular or co-curricular) **Materials** (print and electronic). Set a short-term goal to incorporate this theory in an aspect of your work. Aim to accomplish it by the end of the month.*

Cognitive Structural Theories

Cognitive structural theories help to make sense of how thinking and processing takes place in the brain. Gaining perspective on how thinking, reasoning, and meaning making occurs can help international educators design and implement programs that are optimized for learning.

Perry's (1968) theory of intellectual and ethical development provides a practical way of visualizing the intellectual development of college students.

Examining Perry's Intellectual Development Stages

In examining the ways that college students came to understand the world, Perry (1968) identified four main positions that students move between as they develop greater cognitive acuity. In Perry's model the positions do not function as stages, but instead as points on a continuum that provide insight into the ways that students may be able to manage and use ideas (Patton, Renn, Guido, & Quaye, 2016). Furthermore, Perry found that students moved back and forth through the positions based on new challenges, outside sources of stress, and other factors. Thus, someone who has appeared to be cognitively relativistic may shift to dualism under changed circumstances. The positions themselves describe how a student currently thinks and movement or growth occurs between each position. The figure below presents a simulated quote of a student who is demonstrating each stage of thinking.

Visualization of Perry's Intellectual Development Model in the International Education Context

INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT STAGES

DUALISM
"You should have given me more specific tips about how to interact with my host family. Why didn't you give me better details?"

MULTIPLICITY
"I see that there is some scientific evidence behind the Sandford model of challenge and support. But, I have found a sink or swim model works best for students abroad. They need to really immerse to get anything out of it."

REALATIVISM
"I have been thinking about my frustration with my host family and I now realize that what they were asking me to do differently was connected to their cultural values. I'll work to change my behavior. I might also talk to the host brother, who is really interested in learning more about me, about how I would be expected to behave differently in the US."

COMMITMENT
"What my professor abroad taught me doesn't seem right with what I know about the subject from home. It makes me wonder if there are different approaches that I should consider when doing a project like this in the future."

Dualism:

When students make meaning in a dualistic way, they are seeking to define or understand all things dichotomously. For dualistic thinkers, definitions of right and wrong or good and bad are sought after and accepted. Dualistic thinkers also tend to rely heavily on authorities such as faculty, staff, and books. In their quest for the right answers, students may rely heavily on quantitative facts. Change from this stage occurs when students begin to notice differences of opinion among trusted experts and instances when authority figures do not have the answers. The dissonance created by this can lead to growth toward the next position, multiplicity.

Multiplicity:

In many ways this approach to meaning making can appear to be honoring all views and seeking answers and ideas, rather than seeking to differentiate between answers. The student's relationship to knowledge shifts at this stage too, and they may begin to see themselves, their peers, authority figures, and many types of sources all as equally valid sources of knowledge. It is when this movement toward independent thought becomes connected to a deeper critical analysis of the validity of different sources that students move toward relativistic cognition.

Relativism:

Thinkers operating from the relativistic position distinguish between sources of information and recognize that some opinions have more basis in fact or relevance in a specific context. They also seek to provide evidence to support arguments or ideas. In this position, meaning is made through critical examination of sources and with consideration for their own ideas and experiences. When thinkers begin to question where they stand in accordance with the critical examination, they move towards the Commitment to Relativism stage.

Commitment to Relativism:

In this position students have the cognitive ability to make complex, context-bound choices and decisions based on many sources of information. This position describes not only a cognitive process, but also moves into ethical development. Students at this stage are able to integrate external sources of knowledge with their subjective views in order to make major life decisions and take action on those decisions.

Students enter into the realm of study abroad from many different backgrounds. Some students are reminded of their uniqueness or difference as they transition from home, to community, to school, other students may have travelled internationally, still others may have spent their entire lives in a relatively familiar and homogeneous environment. Willingness to think critically and move towards a Commitment to Relativism takes more than just exposure to something new. In education abroad we must be cognizant of how students move back and forth along these lines of cognitive development and can work with faculty to ensure that students do not leave an experience with a dualistic view of the world and their place in it.

SCENARIO 2:

Another student approaches the advisor. This student expresses excitement about going to Spain, but can't choose between Madrid or Barcelona. The advisor asks more about the student and their goals for study abroad, and the student responds that they study environmental science, want to travel, go to the beach, and maybe see bullfights. The advisor is tempted to redirect the student to their environmental studies program in Costa Rica, which the advisor knows needs more enrollment and involves student research. But how can they get the student away from bullfights in Barcelona?

- ▸ What stands out to you in this scenario?
- ▸ How can the advisor make sense of the students' need?
- ▸ In what ways might an understanding of Cognitive structural theory help the advisor here?
- ▸ What should the advisor do to respond?

As applicable as Perry's (1968) theory is, there are some important critiques that have led to newer conceptualizations of cognitive development. These include Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberg, and Tarule's (1986) examinations of cognitive processes among women that lead to their work on women's ways of knowing. More recently Baxter Magolda's (2004) conceptualization of self-authorship has provided a more comprehensive perspective on how college students make meaning and develop cognitively, interpersonally, and intrapersonally. As such, this integrative theory can be productive in conceptualizing student capacity to think about complex learning experiences such as study abroad programs.

These theories are being supplemented and supported by new research on brain development that examine how brain structure changes through learning. Some of these studies have generated new insights into the cognitive changes that can occur during study abroad programs (Leung, Maddux, Galinsky, & Chiu, 2008; Maddux, Bivolaru, Hafenbrack, Tadmor, & Galinsky, 2014).

Reflection

How does academic coursework and intellectual development factor in to the international programs on your campus and abroad? To what extent does the cognitive development abroad contribute to students' overall cognitive development during their time in higher education? Which aspects of your work could you approach differently by applying these theories? **Advising** *(one-on-one, group, virtual)* **Events** *(orientation, trainings, cultural, social)* **Programs** *(curricular or co-curricular)* **Materials** *(print and electronic). Set a short-term goal to incorporate this theory in an aspect of your work. Aim to accomplish it by the end of the month.*

Psychosocial Theories

The underlying construct for the set of psychosocial theories are relationships. These theories collectively examine the nature and content of how people's relationship to themselves and to others changes over their lifetime (Patton, Renn, Guido, & Quaye, 2016). Psychosocial development in higher education is only a piece of a person's lifetime trajectory of growth and change. Like cognitive development, a students' perspectives of their own identity and of society evolve through new environments, conflicts, or challenges that they experience. When we understand the different dimensions of that identity development (Chickering and Reisser, 1993), and the contexts within which there exists maximum potential for growth (Sanford), then we can reframe how to guide students through their psychosocial development while abroad. Resolving conflicts and challenges lead to developing independence
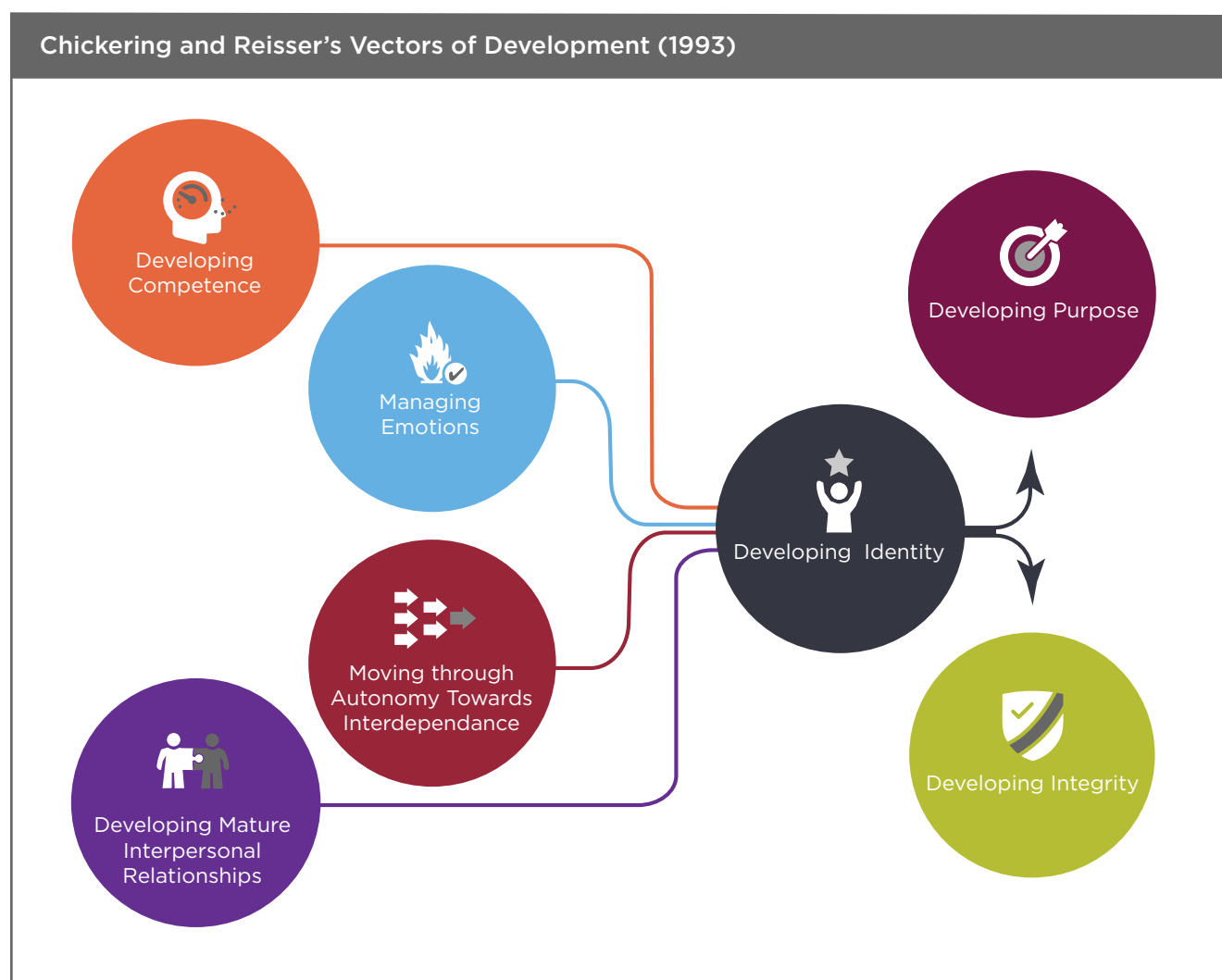
and autonomy, and psychosocial theories are often used to frame discussions of identity, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

Including Chickering and Reisser's Vectors of Development

Chickering and Reisser (1993) discuss a method for identifying the ways to perceive certain changes and to help move students along the developmental processes. While growth itself is hard to pinpoint, "we can observe behavior and record words, both of which can reveal shifts from hunch to analysis, from simple to complex perceptions, from divisive bias to compassionate understanding" (Chickering, 2007). For the globally-mobile student, reflection before, during, and after a particular experience can be key for both the student and their program director to pinpoint shifts in thinking and being.

Through this theory, Chickering and Reisser identify seven vectors of psychosocial development. The vectors move away from a stage-based model used by Perry (1968). Student services professionals generally believe that it is the role of the educational institution to create opportunities that foster development in all seven realms (Patton, Renn, Guido, & Quaye, 2016). Whole student development is also frequently implied in the work of international educators. Thus, this framework offers specific language for understanding the different types of development that we need to support.

Chickering and Reisser's Vectors of Development (1993)

Developing Competence

Managing Emotions

Developing Purpose

Developing Identity

Moving through Autonomy Towards Interdependance

Developing Integrity

Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships

As you can see in the figure of Chickering and Reisser's Vectors of Development, we have outlined the relationships between the seven vectors in a precise way. The first four vectors often happen in conjunction with each other, then lead towards vectors five and six. The seventh vector is the last area of psychosocial development to begin development, but growth in all areas can happen at all stages of life.

Developing Competence

An individual is working on intellectual, physical/manual skills, and interpersonal competence.

Key Skills: mastering content, build set of skills to comprehend, analyze, and synthesize information, listening, cooperating, communicating effectively, use strategies to help a relationship or group function

Managing Emotions

An individual is developing the ability to recognize, acknowledge, and appropriately channel or handle emotions.

Key skills: awareness of emotional states, learning appropriate ways to deal with feelings and emotions, develop flexible self-control and self-expression

Moving through Autonomy toward Interdependence

An individual is learning to function self-sufficiently, take responsibility, and move from both emotional and instrumental independence to acceptance of interdependence.

Key skills: move away from need for approval and reassurance from peers or family, solve problems in a self-directed way, recognizing how to create relationships with equality and reciprocity

Developing Mature interpersonal relationships

An individual is learning to tolerate and appreciate differences and creating new capacity for intimacy.

Key Skills: intercultural and interpersonal tolerance, awareness and respect of differences, reducing ethnocentrism, developing relationships based on honesty and responsiveness

Establishing Identity

An individual is using the previous four areas of development, establishing their identity is the process of discovering all aspects of self in each new context[1].

Key skills: comfort with body, gender identity, and sexual orientation, sense of self in social/historical/cultural context, clarifying self-concept through lifestyle and roles, self-acceptance and self-esteem, personal stability and integration

▶ [1] Keep in mind here the ways in which the Individual Diversity Development Model and the Reconceptualized Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity play into this vector.

Developing Purpose

An individual is working towards an increased ability to assess their own interests and options, clarify goals, and persist despite challenges.

Key skills: making plans of action, setting priorities, unify goals for vocational, personal and interpersonal life

Developing Integrity

An individual is engaging core values and beliefs as the foundation for informing behavior, interpreting experiences, and maintaining self-respect.

Key skills: balancing self-interest with the interests of others, personalizing values, affirming beliefs, respecting other points of view
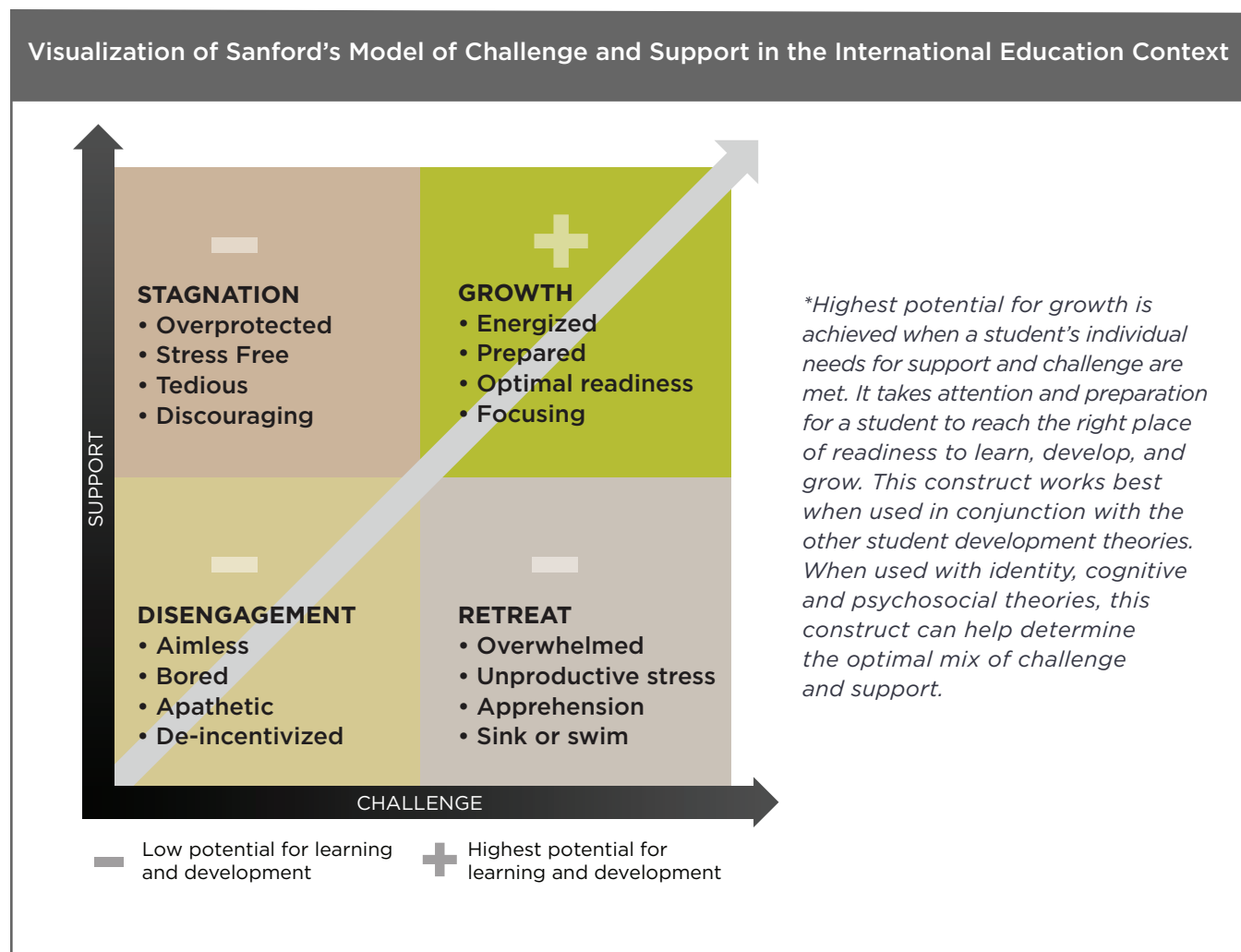
Reflection:

Which of the seven vectors are emphasized in the values of your institution or organization? How are those values incorporated into actual activities/engagement with students? What vectors could be more fully incorporated into programming before, during, and after study abroad?

How can international educators move from understanding that students develop in these seven distinct ways, to actually implementing effective targeted interventions to promote growth and development? From the previous theorists highlighted in this white paper, it is clear that growth and development does not happen automatically, and exposure to difference is not enough to learn how to be aware of it, tolerate it, or embrace it. Sanford's 1968 model of Challenge and Support puts Chickering into context (Patton, Renn, Guido, & Quaye, 2016) by providing a simplistic theoretical tool with which to understand a students' level of readiness for an experience and for potential growth through that experience.

Reviewing Sanford's Model of Challenge and Support

This visualization demonstrates that as levels of challenge and support increase, there are consequences for the student experiencing it. If support increases, but challenge does not, students often stagnate in their learning and growth. Conversely, if the level of challenge increases without an appropriate level of support, students may retreat from the experience altogether. The optimal balance of between challenge and support, which varies for each student, is the target zone for maximal potential growth. That balance is different for each student, some need more support and others need more challenge to

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Visualization of Sanford's Model of Challenge and Support in the International Education Context

STAGNATION
- Overprotected
- Stress Free
- Tedious
- Discouraging

GROWTH
- Energized
- Prepared
- Optimal readiness
- Focusing

DISENGAGEMENT
- Aimless
- Bored
- Apathetic
- De-incentivized

RETREAT
- Overwhelmed
- Unproductive stress
- Apprehension
- Sink or swim

SUPPORT

CHALLENGE

Highest potential for growth is achieved when a student's individual needs for support and challenge are met. It takes attention and preparation for a student to reach the right place of readiness to learn, develop, and grow. This construct works best when used in conjunction with the other student development theories. When used with identity, cognitive and psychosocial theories, this construct can help determine the optimal mix of challenge and support.

— Low potential for learning and development

+ Highest potential for learning and development

thrive and grow. For international educators, Sanford's model frames how to think about differentiation at an individual or small group level in order to avoid student disengagement, stagnation and retreat for as many students as possible.

SCENARIO 3:

The final student to approach our adviser is someone the adviser already knows. They are an active leader on campus, and often use the open space in the Global Education Center to hold meetings with the campus Third Culture Kids Club. The adviser has noticed this student already speaks at least two languages in addition to English. This student asks "I have some friends who are going on the 10-day theater program to London over winter break and I'd really like to go with them. Am I too late to apply?" The adviser is somewhat disappointed this student is interested in the London program. They know this student and feel that they would not be challenged at all by the curriculum or culture. The adviser wonders if having someone with so much foreign travel experience would be a detriment to the student themselves and the rest of the participants?

- ‣ What stands out to you in this scenario?
- ‣ How can the advisor make sense of the students' need?
- ‣ In what ways might an understanding of psychosocial theory help the advisor here?
- ‣ What should the advisor do to respond?

In the context of education abroad, the growth and development of a student is not defined on a predetermined trajectory of academic or psychological steps. Depending on each student's level of readiness and interpretation of environment and self, their growth pattern might look more like a roller coaster than a staircase. The interventions from education abroad professionals, before, during, and after the experience can help determine the frequency and type of support and challenge each student needs in order to achieve optimal growth and development. In this sense the length of the abroad experience or the rigor of academic courses are less important factors than the integration of challenging environments, circumstances, and experiences with appropriate support to stimulate reflection and positive cognitive, psychosocial, and identity change.

Consider in Scenario 2, which discussed the student interested in programs in Spain. The adviser might begin by taking the time to determine what the student's academic goals are. The student is demonstrating enthusiasm for Spain as a destination, but study abroad is ultimately a learning experience. Maximum growth might be attained in a program with a different set of learning outcomes.

Indeed, once students have chosen a program and they are abroad, the on-site staff can take an active role in identifying students who may be falling into a disengaged, stagnated, or retreating position. When a students' position is accurately determined, support levels and challenge levels can be adjusted, as possible, to ensure student success. On-site staff can also consider their own awareness of what circumstances they assume to be challenging versus what a student might be experiencing as challenging. Historically underrepresented groups in education abroad may experience microaggressions from peers or discrimination in a host community, or they might be able to navigate the linguistic barriers and differing social norms with fewer supports than their historically overrepresented peers (Yosso, 2005). Assuming that certain circumstances or encounters will be challenging for students does little to impact how a student actually handles the experience. In either circumstance, Sanford demonstrates the need for attention to the individual and the rejection of the assumption that all students will learn and experience growth abroad simply by being there.

Reflection:

In what ways do you individualize the student support offered at your university or organization? Take a moment to reflect on the assumptions you make about what students need. In what ways could you check your assumptions to foster maximum potential growth? Which aspects of your work could you approach differently with these theories? **Advising** *(one-on-one, group, virtual)* **Events** *(orientation, trainings, cultural, social)* **Programs** *(curricular or co-curricular)* **Materials** *(print and electronic).* *Set a short-term goal to incorporate this theory in an aspect of your work. Aim to accomplish it by the end of the month.*

Theory to Practice

The premise of higher education is that students' learning is impacted not only by the courses taught and programs provided, but also by the policies implemented, the environments experienced, and the interactions that take place. They are learning and growing throughout their educational experience, and student development theory research highlights that this happens in different ways and at different times for everyone. Knowing more about how students develop cognitively, psychologically, and socially can change the way international educators design, implement, and evaluate the effectiveness of the specific programming related to cross-cultural and cross-border opportunities.

Research shows that the gains made to increase access for racially and ethnically diverse students have a) not been translated equally across the board to all historically underrepresented groups in study abroad (such as gender identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic level, etc.), and b)

not necessarily been met with equal attention to specific preparation or interventions for these students during and after their experiences. This gap is an opportunity for international educators to do better than just getting students out the door, and truly move towards inclusive excellence.

The following are 6 practical tips for international educators looking to change how they work with students using student development theories.

1. **Review institutional data carefully and use it to make targeted changes.**
   What are the demographics of your institution? Who is going abroad and who is not? List what specific activities (advising, marketing, outreach, programs) exist for specific historically underrepresented groups. What groups aren't being reached? What programs exist for intersecting identities? What activities are missing? Do your events heavily center around marketing activities, and less on on-site interventions to help students who identify in those groups? Brainstorm specific strategies to engage other offices, faculty, and staff in differentiation. Implement the best of these ideas before the end of the 2018/2019 school year.

2. **Reflect on your own identity and challenge yourself to learn about social identities with which you do not identify.**
   Re-examine what groups receive your office's funding, attention, advising time, collaboration, etc. Do you shy away from working with certain identity groups that make you uncomfortable? If yes, how is that impacting students who identify in that group? Brainstorm specific strategies to increase your knowledge about other social identities and identify the colleagues who could help. Identify how you could incorporate that new knowledge into

your area of expertise (advising, marketing, programming, administration, etc.) Reach out to those colleagues and your students to challenge yourself to explore one new social identity before the end of the 2018/2019 school year.

3. **Review the mission and vision of your institution or organization, then examine how the mission guides education abroad policies and practice.**
   How is study abroad viewed on your campus? Is it seen as a part of the curriculum and holistic development of students? If not, why not? Dig into the reputation of education abroad and identify three ways you could work to change, shift, or call out the perceptions. Brainstorm the key stakeholders who might be neutral or passive supporters of education abroad initiatives. Reach out to these colleagues and engage in a dialogue about the benefits of education abroad before the end of the 2018/2019 school year.

4. **Create a visualization for using education abroad to move students forward in their development of social identity, cognitive ability and psycho-social behaviors, then use this as rationale for increased collaboration or resources.**
   Can you succinctly articulate the ways in which each program in your portfolio works to help students grow according to student development theory? If not, which areas or elements could be added to the programs to help align them with developmental growth? Once you create a clear map, infographic, or report outlining these items, share it with colleagues and key stakeholders. Host at least one key meeting with an important stakeholder on this topic before the end of the 2018/2019 school year.

5. Review program evaluations specifically to pull out data related to challenge and support, then identify gaps or changes needed.
Look for patterns in the data. Are there programs, classes or specific faculty members that stand out for being too easy or too challenging? How could your team modify the level of challenge or support for those programs, classes, and faculty to move students towards maximum potential growth? If you do not have this data, consider creating program evaluation questions that would provide insight on these questions. Classify the program portfolio by level of challenge and support to see if there is a heavy preference at your institution for one type of programming vs. another. Before the end of the 2018/2019 school year, identify next steps to continue internal assessment and diversification.

6. Talk about it, read about it, research it.
Student development theories are relevant to every educator, practitioner, and scholar in the field of international education. We can all do more to link theory to practice. Engage your colleagues in a round table discussion, set up a cross-functional committee, take a critical eye to the assumptions that were made when creating the education abroad programs you offer, challenge what you do and how you do it using data-backed theory. Continue your learning about student development theory by reading one of the references cited in this white paper by the end of the 2018/2019 school year.

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