

# Understanding if your Latino/a Students Experience Higher Education Differently

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# What do we know about student success?

Factors that influence retention and graduation:

- ***Parents' educational level*** – first generation college students are LESS likely to succeed.
- ***Parental income*** – low income students are LESS likely to succeed.
- ***Academic preparation*** – minority students are LESS likely to have sufficient academic preparation.
- ***Native language spoken*** – English as a second language students do not do as well.
- ***Hours worked for pay*** – underrepresented students tend to work MORE hours for pay.

# Ways knowledge about student success been used with Latino/a students?

- Focus on deficiencies of students.
- Excuses for explaining students failure.
- Allows for the status quo to continue.
- Used to justify denial of access to students who do not meet “higher standards.”
- Knowledge base on deficiencies has influenced the practices around First-Year experiences.

# Re-constructing what we know to focus on Latino/a student success

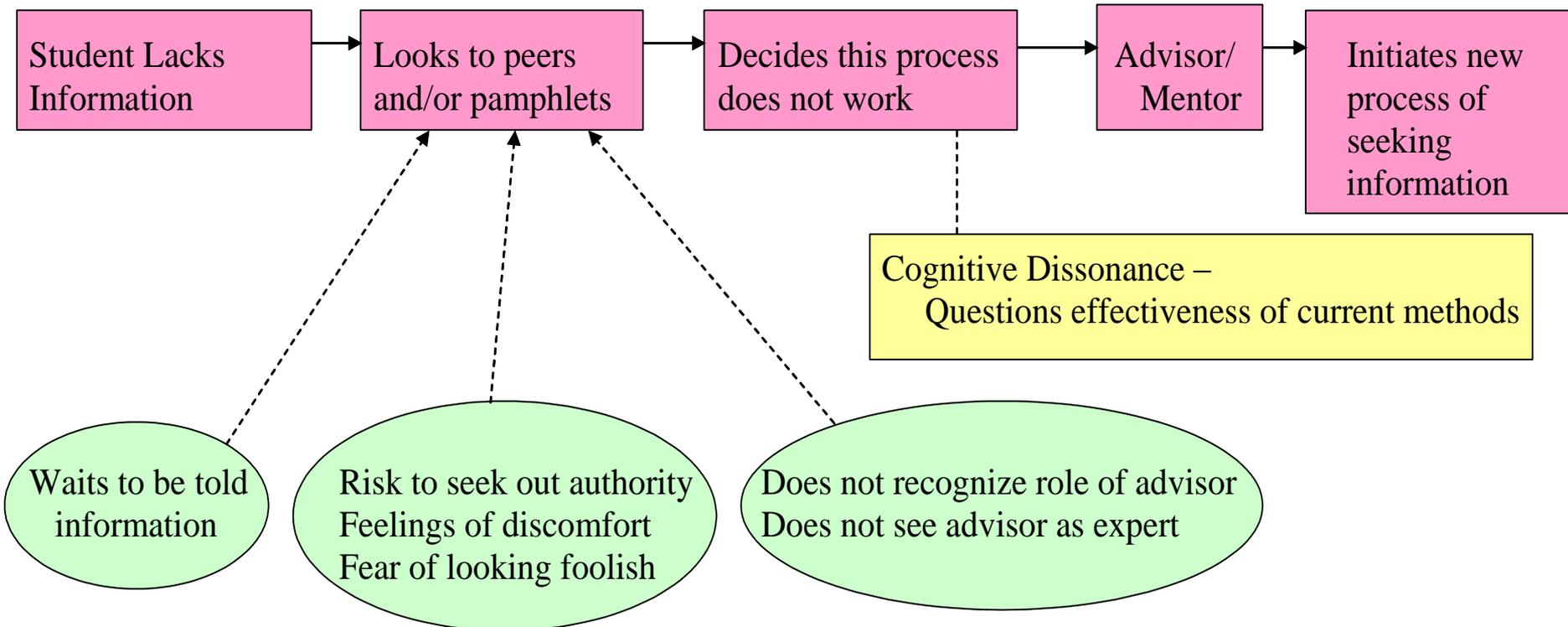
- Individual student needs
  - Information seeking model for first-generation students
  - Re-constructing negative self-images to positive images.
- Environmental needs
  - Influences on Latino/a student retention
- Practitioner needs
  - What professional development should I think about
  - Role FYE for students.

# Assumptions about information seeking behaviors

- Assumptions professionals have about how students seek out information.
  - They will trust my advice.
  - They will come to me at appropriate times of the year.
  - If they do not come to see me, they are doing fine.
  - They prefer to talk to me instead of reading a piece of paper.
- Reality for first generation college students.
  - Many first generation students do not understand the role of advisor.
  - Peers are more trusted sources of information than professionals.
  - Many do not know the question to ask until a crisis occurs, then it may be too late.
  - Change in behavior does not usually occur till they experience negative consequences.

# Help Seeking Patterns

## Model of First Generation Latino/a College Students' Approach to Seeking Information



# Seeking Faculty and/or Academic Advisors

- Among Latino/a college sophomores only 40% had an identified advisor or mentor (Torres & Hernandez, 2009).
- NSSE results (2013)
  - During the current school year which of the following has been *your primary source of advice* regarding your academic plans?

Primary Source	First Year Students	Senior Students
Academic Advisor assigned (any advisor)	35% (9%)	34% (9%)
Friends or other students	15%	10%
Family members	18%	8%
Faculty or staff not formally assigned	10%	20%

# Developmental Concerns for Latino/a Students

Looking at Latino/a Students' developmental tasks (Torres & Hernandez, 2007)

- Managing familial relationship
- Recognizing racism in order to transform negative images into positive ones
- Creating an Informed Latino Identity

# Additional developmental tasks



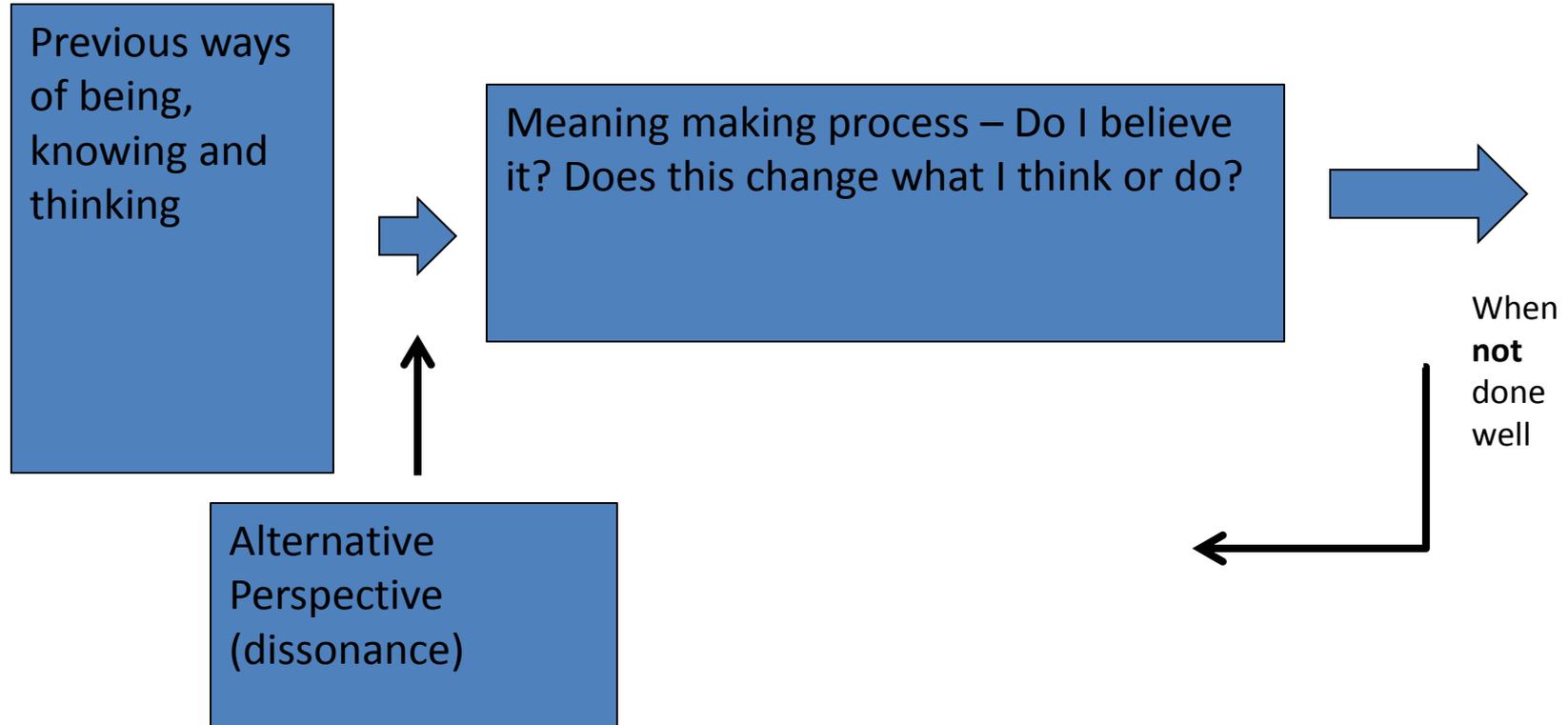
- Reconstruction of negative images
  - Stereotype vulnerability (Steele, C.M. & Aronson, J., 1995)
- Changing images to positive images:
  - Development is the organization of increasing complexity in ones life (Sanford, 1967).
  - Developmental theories have some type of change mechanism that can illustrate this increased complexity (Torres, 2011).

# How does development occur

- Disequilibrium (dissonance) is introduced and the person has to make different meaning of understanding. (Piaget, 1964)
- Development occurs when there is a balance of challenge and support (Sanford, 1967)
- Students are not likely understand a concept more than one status above where they are (Loevinger, 1993)

# Changing students' ways of thinking

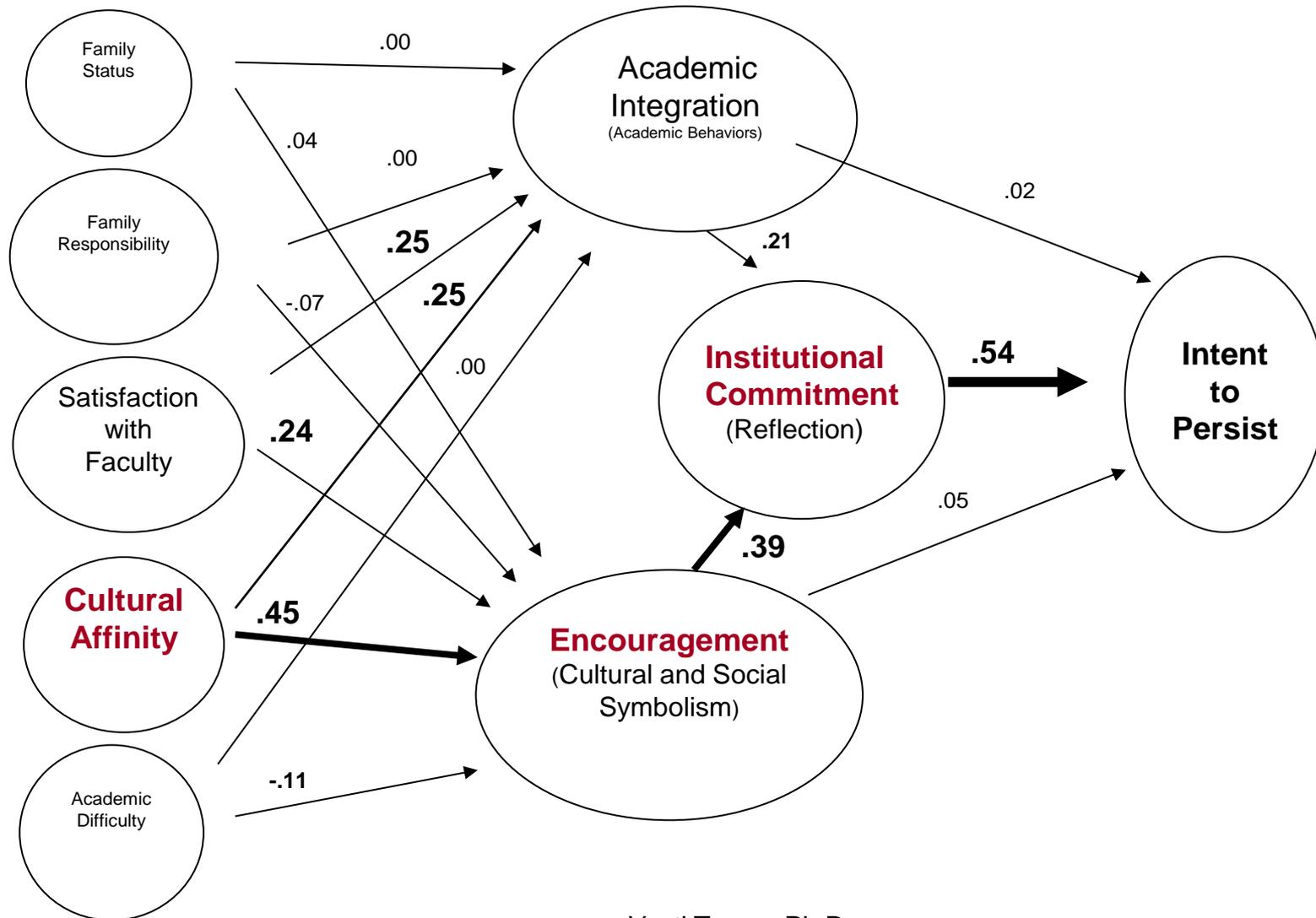
Developmental changes occur when students make meaning of dissonance in their daily lives.



# Environmental influences on retaining students

- If we took academic preparation out of the equation for retention – what other things would influence student success?
- Influenced by social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986)
- Environmental Variables
  - Academic Difficulty
  - Cultural Affinity
  - Satisfaction with Faculty
  - Family Responsibility
  - Family Status

# Social Cognitive Retention Model for Latino Students at Urban Universities (Standardized Solution) (Torres, 2006)



# What can I do?

- Being proactive (when the advisor assumes responsibility for making contact with student) is most appropriate for underrepresented students (Museus & Ravello, 2010).
- Advisor awareness of students' worldview increases effectiveness (Coll & Zalaquett, 2008).
- Skills, knowledge, and awareness to address cultural issues with someone who is from a different culture than yourself (Pope, Reynolds, & Mueller, 2004).
- Information about difference is not as effective as experiences with different cultures.

# Issues to consider

- What does a trusting and developmental relationship look like within your role?
- Assist students in making meaning of alternative messages.
- Helping students understand new social capital.

