

*Building Bridges across the Curriculum & Co-
Curriculum:
Promoting Partnerships between Academic & Student Affairs*

34th annual conference on the First-Year Experience
Dallas, Texas

February 10th, 2015
10:30-11:30

Joe Cuseo
Professor Emeritus, Psychology; Educational Consultant, AVID for Higher Education
(jcuseo@earthlink.net)

Getting on the “Same Page”: Working Definitions of Learning, Development, & Education

1. Defining Student Learning & Student Development

Positive, enduring *change* in any component (element) of the self resulting from an *environmental experience* (e.g., the college experience).

2. Major Components (Elements) of the Self where Learning May Take Place



- **Intellectual:** acquiring broad-based knowledge, learning how to learn, and learning how to think critically.
- **Emotional:** understanding, managing, and expressing emotions.
- **Social:** improving the quality and depth of interpersonal relationships.
- **Ethical:** building moral character—making sound ethical judgments, developing a clear value system for guiding personal decisions, and demonstrating consistency between our convictions (beliefs) and our commitments (actions).
- **Physical:** acquiring knowledge about the human body and applying that knowledge to prevent disease, preserve wellness, and promote peak performance.
- **Spiritual:** devoting attention to the “big questions”, such as the meaning or purpose of life, the inevitability of death, and the origins of human life and the natural world.
- **Vocational:** exploring career options and pursuing a career path that is consistent with our talents, interests, and values.

- **Personal:** developing a strong sense of personal identity, a coherent self-concept, and capacity to manage personal affairs and resources.
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3. Key Routes (Avenues) through which Learning May Take Place

Learning may be manifested in any of the aforementioned components of self by positive change in students' *affect*, *behavior*, or *cognition*—as summarized by the following “ABC” mnemonic:

A = **Affective learning:** positive change in attitude, motivation, values, interests, feelings or emotions.

B = **Behavioral learning:** positive change in actions, habits, skills, competencies or proficiencies.

C = **Cognitive learning:** positive change in knowledge, quality of thinking, or breadth of perspective.

4. **Education:** an inclusive learning process that embraces: (a) *academic* learning occurring through the formal (course) curriculum, and (b) *experiential* learning taking place outside the formal curriculum.

- **Academic Learning:** *vicarious* learning tied to the formal curriculum that takes place through *classroom-based* lectures/discussions, course readings and course-related assignments.
 - **Experiential Learning:** learning that takes place *outside the classroom*, either on or off campus, which may either be:
 - (a) formally connected to the course curriculum (“co-curricular” experiential learning), or
 - (b) independent of the course curriculum (“extra-curricular” experiential learning).
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Unifying Campus Culture by Identifying Common Educational Outcomes

1. **Student Retention (Persistence):** students *remain*, *re-enroll*, and *continue* to make progress toward degree completion.
2. **Educational Attainment (Completion):** students that *persist in college until they reach* their intended degree, program, or educational goal.
3. **Academic Achievement:** The quantity and quality (nature) of student *learning/cognitive development*

that takes place during the college experience—particularly *deep learning* (beyond memorization), *durable learning* (beyond the test), *higher-order thinking* skills (critical/creative thinking), and *communication* skills (written/oral).

4. **Personal Development:** *Holistic* (whole-person) development/ learning that occurs during the college experience—e.g., identity formation, character development, social and emotional intelligence, diversity tolerance/appreciation, civic responsibility, and leadership.
5. **Student Advancement:** students *aspire* to do, *proceed* to do, and *succeed* at doing beyond college completion—e.g., educational and/or occupational plans, placement, performance and advancement.

Unifying Campus Culture by Identifying Common Learning Principles & a Common Language of Student Success

1. **PERSONAL VALIDATION:** Learning and development are fostered when students feel personally *significant*—i.e., when they feel recognized as *individuals*, that they *matter* to the institution, and that the institution *cares* about them as “whole persons.”
2. **SELF-EFFICACY (GROWTH MINDSET) & GRIT:** Learning and development are maximized when students believe that their *personal effort* matters—when they think they can *influence or control* educational outcomes and continue to grow intellectually.
3. **PERSONAL MEANING & PURPOSE:** Learning and development take place when students find *meaning or purpose* in their college experience—i.e., when they perceive *relevant connections* between what they’re learning in college, their current life, and their future goals.
4. **ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT (ENGAGEMENT):** Learning and development increase proportionately with the depth of student *involvement* in the learning process—i.e., the amount of *time* and *energy* students invest in their college experience—both *inside* and *outside* the classroom.
5. **REFLECTION:** Learning and development are strengthened when students reflect on their experiences, *think deeply* about them, and *transform* them into a form that connects with what they already know or have previously experienced.
6. **SOCIAL INTEGRATION:** Student learning and development are promoted by *human interaction, collaboration*, and the formation of *interpersonal relationships* between the student and other members of the college community—peers, faculty, staff, administrators, and alumni.
7. **SELF-AWARENESS:** Students learn and develop when they are *aware* of themselves, remain *mindful* of their learning strategies, styles, habits, and ways of thinking, and gain *self-insight* into their personal talents, interests, values and needs.

Unifying Campus Culture by Designing Comparable Educational *Materials & Artifacts*

*** Creating co-curricular programs and products that *parallel* those found in the formal curriculum.**

For example:

1. Co-Curricular *Syllabus* (comparable to the traditional course syllabus) that provides a one-page outline of the co-curricular event's learning objectives, content, and process of educational delivery.
2. Co-Curricular *Assessment*—e.g., students write a one-minute paper after experiencing a co-curricular program or event, which asks them to evaluate the experience in terms of how it contributed to their learning or development—particularly with respect to its intended educational outcome(s).
3. Co-Curricular *Schedule* (comparable to the schedule of classes issued each term) that contains the titles, dates, times, and brief descriptions of co-curricular events to be offered during the semester.
 Note: Ideally, a co-curricular events schedule would be attached to, and included as a section within the traditional schedule of classes.
4. Co-Curricular *Catalogue* (comparable to the traditional course catalogue) that contains:
 - a mission statement for the co-curriculum
 - educational goals and objectives of the co-curriculum
 - annually offered programs and activities
 - names and educational background of student development and student-service professionals.
 Note: Ideally, a co-curricular catalogue would be incorporated within the traditional college catalogue as a special, clearly identifiable subsection.
5. Co-Curricular *Honors Program* (comparable to the academic honors program) that recognizes students who make outstanding contributions to student life or community life outside the classroom—e.g., campus involvement/leadership or service to the local community.
6. Co-Curricular or Student Development *Transcript* (comparable to the traditional registrar-issued transcript of completed courses) that formally lists and documents students' co-curricular achievements—both for personal recognition and for future use

by students when they apply to career positions or graduate schools.

Note: Ideally, a co-curricular transcript would be incorporated within or appended to the student's course transcript.

Creating a Unified Culture through *Organizational Structures* that Stimulate & Sustain Cross-Divisional Partnerships

1. Capitalize on naturally occurring or already existing *cross-divisional "intersection points"*—i.e., cross-functional areas where Academic and Student Affairs cross paths with respect to program administration or delivery.
For example:
 - * New-student orientation (Student Affairs) and convocation (Academic Affairs)
 - * First-year seminar ("extended" first-year orientation course) taught by faculty and student development professionals who received joint training
 - * Academic advising (intersecting with career counseling and personal counseling)
 - * Leadership and community-based learning experiences
 - * Residential life-based academic programming (e.g., "living-learning" experiences such as tutoring or academic advising conducted in student residences)
 - * Transitional programming for graduating students—e.g., sophomore-year courses/programs for graduating 2-year college students who are transferring to 4-year institutions; senior-year seminars/programs for graduating 4-year college students who are transitioning to careers or graduate school.

2. Incorporate *courses* into the curriculum that *integrate student development theory with academic learning*.
Examples: first-year experience course; service-learning courses; senior/sophomore seminar; interdisciplinary courses with experiential components; leadership development course.

3. Create *structured opportunities* for Academic and Student Affairs professionals to collaborate on campus issues (e.g., cross-functional teams, task forces, ad hoc committees, or joint research projects that address topics of mutual interest and concern—such as accreditation, assessment, and/or student retention).

4. Arrange *office locations* that intentionally place faculty members and Student Affairs professionals *within physical proximity of each other*—to increase the likelihood of dialogue, interaction, and potential collaboration.

5. Organize *discussion groups* or "*critical-moment learning teams*" of faculty and student affairs professionals after a high-impact event or critical incident has taken place on campus (e.g., racial incident or student suicide).

6. Arrange for *temporary exchanges* of Academic & Student Affairs professionals who are willing to "crossover" to another division of the college and gain an expanded perspective (e.g., via reassigned time, internal sabbatical, or temporary positional exchange).

7. Create *administrative positions* that involve *integration of* Academic & Student Affairs responsibilities (e.g., Director of the First-Year Experience; Coordinator of Student Success; Dean of Student Learning).

Creating a Collaborative Campus Culture through Intentional Faculty Recruitment, Orientation, Development, & Reward Strategies

1. Intentionally *recruit and select* faculty members who have an interest in and commitment to student development (e.g., via intentional position announcements, interview questions, and hiring criteria).
2. During *new-faculty orientation*, alert faculty to professional advancement opportunities that involve partnerships with Student Affairs.
3. Include workshops on partnering with Student Affairs as a component of *faculty development* programming.

Examples:

- * Student Development professionals make professional presentations to faculty on their “turf.” For instance, some faculty development programming or a piece of new-faculty orientation is devoted to providing faculty with information on student development theories and their compatibility with learning theories.
 - * Student Life professionals create a newsletter for faculty that includes information on student development research, theory and practice.
4. Provide prestigious *awards* to faculty for contributions to student life (e.g., a “student service award” presented to a faculty member at graduation, convocation, or on “awards night”).
 5. Create *incentives* for faculty to participate in campus initiatives that involve collaboration between Academic and Student affairs (e.g., mini-grants, travel funds, campus space).
 6. Weigh faculty collaboration with Student Affairs seriously in the *faculty retention-and-promotion* process (e.g., as a heavily weighted form of faculty “service”).

For more detailed information relating to the topics included in this handout, contact:
Joe Cuseo (jcuseo@earthlink.net)