

# ...Reconsidering Transition...

*in the collegiate context*

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# ...learning outcomes...

- Reflect on the meaning and process of 'transition'
- Consider 'rites of passages' in the collegiate environment
- Focus on the variety of transitions experienced by college students
- Develop strategies for improving student transitions in an institutional context



# ...transition...

Many connotations and uses  
of the word



# ....words and phrases....

**Transition words**  
allow us  
to work  
smooth  
changes into  
our writing

last

first but

**as a result**

**on the other hand**

moreover

**in addition**

otherwise

**conclusively** lastly

most importantly

**in conclusion**

to end with

furthermore

**on top of all**

second

next

**first of all**

**last of all**

**to sum it up**

last, but not least

**finally**

...consumer products...



Transitions  
eyewear  
lenses

# ....film editing....



A dissolve from  
the end  
of one clip  
to the beginning  
of another

# ....judo....

refers to the  
skillful  
movement  
between  
a standing phase  
and  
the  
ground phase



# lessons from Monty Python

*“No! No!  
Anything but  
the transition!”*





.... transitions we have  
experienced ....



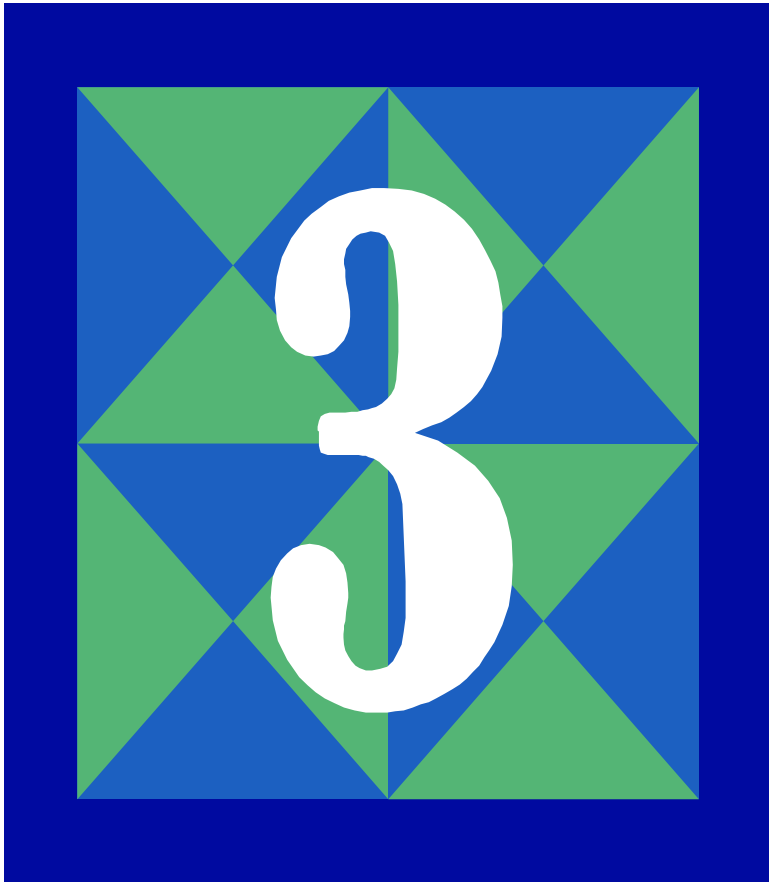
# lessons from anthropology



Arnold van Gennep  
Dutch Anthropologist  
(1873 –1957)

Coined the term  
“Rites of Passage”

....3 stages....



Rites of passage:

Separation

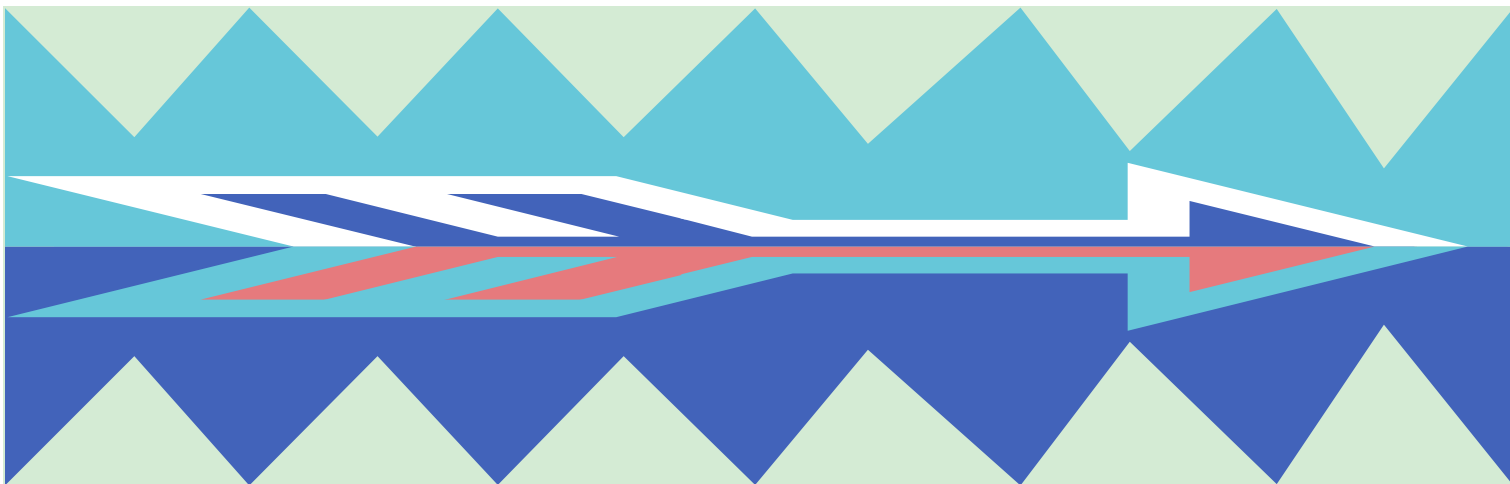
Transition

Incorporation

# ....the transition process....

*William Bridges*

- Endings
- The Neutral Zone
- The New Beginning



# ....endings....

- Disengagement
- Dis-identification
- Disenchantment
- Disorientation



# ....endings....

*“In my end is my beginning.  
That’s a quotation I’ve  
often heard people say...  
but what does it mean?”*

-- Dame Agatha Christie



....endings....

“What is past is prologue”



William Shakespeare  
– The Tempest

# ...the neutral zone...

- Temporary, but critical stage to experience
- What is happening to me? Am I going crazy?  
When will this end?
- May include period of inactivity
- Reluctance to discuss with anyone
- Live the questions
- Time of inner reorientation



# ...the neutral zone...

“Who are you?” said the caterpillar.....

“ I – I hardly know, Sir, just at the present, “ Alice replies rather shyly, “at least I know who I was when I got up this morning, but I think I must have been changed several times since then.”



# ...the new beginning...

- Begins within person... even when brought to attention by external opportunities
- Will not happen until person is ready...then opportunity will come
- Powerful motivation occurs when aligned with deep longings
- About the process of reaching a goal, not the goal itself



# ...the new beginning...

“A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.”

--Chinese Proverb



.... the student experience ....



What opportunities do we have as educators to influence student transitions?

# ...collegiate rites of passage...

- Move-in Day
- Convocation
- Orientation
- Registration
- Ring ceremony
- Graduation
- Others??



# ... college students in transition ...

- First-year students
- Sophomores
- Major-changers
- Transfer students
- Senior students



...sophomore year...

*perhaps our best opportunity to influence an entire  
transition process*

endings...neutral zone...new beginnings



# ...stages of the sophomore year...

Schaller (2005)

- Stages have *tone* and *content*
- Students may experience multiple stages at one time

- Major content areas:

– Relationships

– Self

– Academics & Future: Major & Career





# ...stages of the sophomore year...

Schaller (2005)

- ***Random Exploration:*** exuberance, lack reflection
- ***Focused Exploration:*** frustration, reflection begins
- ***Tentative Choices:*** relief, some lingering anxiety – action begins
- ***Commitment:*** confidence



# ... rationales ...

## for developing sophomore initiatives

Retention concerns

Logical next steps

The students' voices

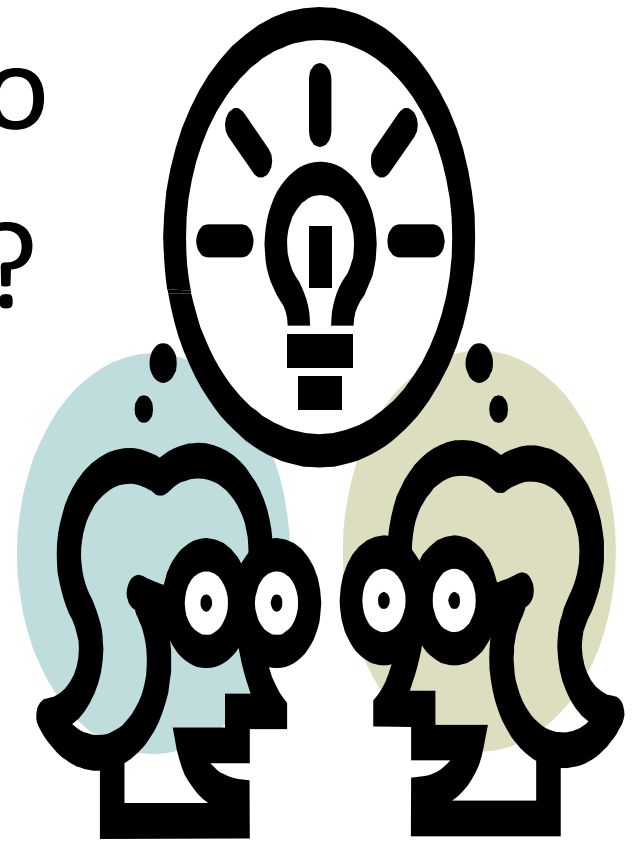


*“I think my sophomore year kind of left me more stranded, not so much stranded because you have that friendship of the people you met last semester and you know the campus. More because your freshman year there were so many things that were reaching out to you that you come back your sophomore that it’s just like your on your own.” --USC Sophomore*

...think, pair, share time...

What opportunities do we have as educators?

- Endings
- The Neutral Zone
- The New Beginnings



....endings....

*....opportunities for educators....*

....the neutral zone....

....*opportunities for educators*....

....the neutral zone....

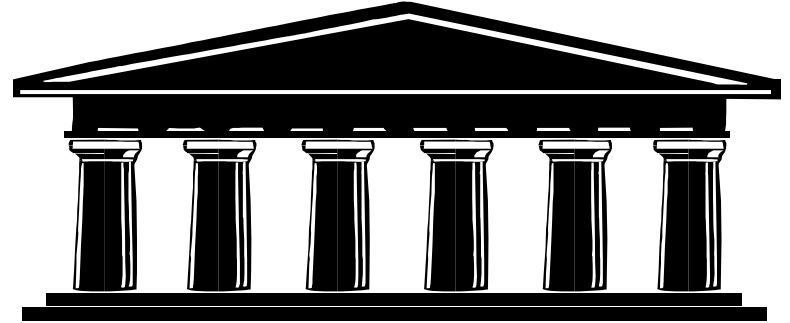
....*opportunities for educators*....

- Encourage time to be alone (reflection)
- Suggest students log / blog their neutral zone experiences
- Take the pause in action of life to write an autobiography
- Provide opportunities to discover what they really want (values)

....the new beginning....  
....*opportunities for educators*....

# ...where to begin...

- Institutional Mission and Goals



- Get to know the sophomores on your campus
  - Mine existing data
  - Understand the first-year experience
  - Understand first-year students as they look to enter their sophomore
  - Focus groups with sophomores



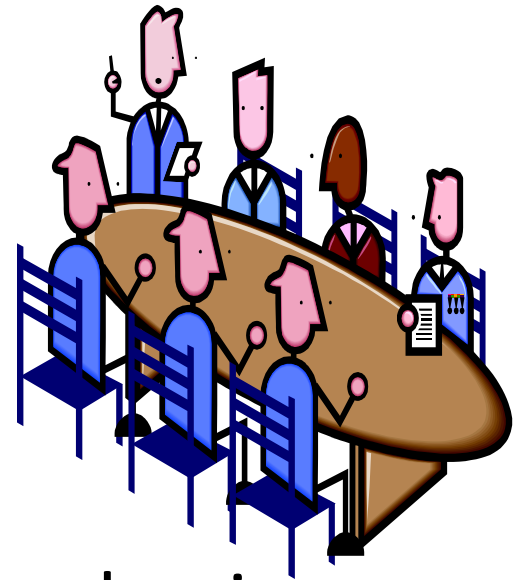
# ...how to begin...

- Develop initiatives to intentionally support the needs of sophomores
- Start small and with what you have - fill in the gaps
- Create campus traditions that celebrate sophomores



# ...how to begin...

- Become a sophomore advocate on your campus
- Give attention to academic advising, major selection, and career development
- Create a working group of including student affairs and academic affairs functional areas



# ...where to find help...

Join the national conversation about initiatives for second-year students

~ Sophomore list-serv

~ National Resource Center for The



First-Year Experience and  
Students in Transition website

~ Other professional and organizational  
meetings

.... questions and discussion ....



# Thank you!

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