Looking Back and Looking Around: Transition Fundamentals and Success Principles as Object Lessons

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- Review context and history of student success
- Consider “transitions” from a broad perspective
- Review scholarship that undergirds our work today
- Apply what we know to our ourselves
Higher education’s approach to students over time
“College for the Elite” Era
“Survival of the Fittest” Era

Darwinian attitude

For the privileged

Sellers’ market
“Student Survival” Era
changing demographics
“Student Retention” Era
Proliferation of colleges and universities

Competition in the marketplace

Driven by economics

BUT....... A minimalist goal
“Student Success” Era
Help students do more than just persist ... progress to degree

Focus primarily on academic success, but with psychosocial aspects, too

Programmatic interventions
WHAT'S NEXT?
The “Thriving” Era
“The construct of thriving as an expanded vision of student success provides a framework for conceptualizing new ways of helping students reap the full benefits of higher education. The very word **thriving** implies that success involves more than surviving a four year obstacle course. Students who thrive are **vitaly engaged** in the college endeavor – intellectually, socially, and emotionally, they experience what Tagg (2003) calls **deep learning**; they are investing effort within the classroom and managing their lives well beyond it.
Thriving students are also *goal oriented*, applying their strengths to address the academic challenges they face. When they are thriving, students are *connected* to others in healthy and meaningful ways, and they *desire to make a difference* in the world about them. They also see the world differently. Equipped with a *positive perspective* on life, they are secure in the present and confident of the future.”

*Schreiner, Louis, & Nelson, 2012*  
*Emphasis mine*
Education for the Elite
Survival of the Fittest
Student Survival
Retention
Student Success
Thriving
Many connotations and uses of the word
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

furthermore

ON TOP OF ALL

SECOND

next

first of all

last of all

to sum it up

last, but not least

finally
film editing

A dissolve from the end of one clip to the beginning of another
Judo refers to the skillful transition between the standing phase and the ground phase.
“No! No! Anything but the transition!”
60-60 / 30-30
lessons from anthropology

Arnold van Gennep
Dutch Anthropologist
(1873 –1957)

Coined the term “Rites of Passage”
3 stages

Rites of passage:
Separation
Transition
Incorporation
...collegiate rites of passage...

- Orientation
- Move-in Day
- Convocation
- Registration
- Ring ceremony
- Graduation
the transition process

William Bridges

• Endings
• The Neutral Zone
• The New Beginning
• Disengagement
• Dis-identification
• Disenchantment
• Disorientation
“In my end is my beginning. That’s a quotation I’ve often heard people say...but what does it mean?”

-- Dame Agatha Christie
“What is past is prologue”

William Shakespeare
– The Tempest
...the neutral zone...

- Temporary, but critical stage to experience
- May include period of inactivity
- Reluctance to discuss with anyone
- Time of inner reorientation
“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.”

Lewis Carroll, Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland
...the new beginning....

- Begins within person
- Will not happen until person is ready
- Motivation comes when aligned with deep longings
- About the process
“A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.”

--Chinese Proverb
... college students in transition ...

- First-year students
- Sophomores
- Major-changers
- Coming out
- Transfer students
- Senior students
What is an institution’s responsibility?
What do we know about student success?

Research & theories on student success and persistence
Institutional Fit
(Tinto and others)

• Congruence between student and institutional goals and values.
• Can students needs be met at the institution?
• Can fit be cultivated?
Social & Academic Integration

(Tinto, Pascarella & Terenzini, Light, others)

• Learning and retention increase when what students learn outside the classroom is incorporated inside the classroom

• Relevance and integration
Involvement and Community

(Astin, Kuh, Sanford, Light)

- Time on task
- Link between quality and quantity of involvement and student performance
- Interactions with peers
Engagement
(Kuh et al)

• Purposeful, intentional, and connected

• Links cognitive and affective dimensions
Learning

(Astin, Kuh, Tinto, others)

• Is key to success
• Is root of persistence and success
• Book learning and life skills learning are both critical
Comprehensive Collaboration

(Gardner and colleagues)
Comprehensive Collaboration

(Gardner and colleagues)
Effective Educational Practices

• Level of Academic Challenge
• Active & Collaborative Learning
• Student Interactions with Faculty Members
• Enriching Educational Experiences
• Supportive Campus Environment

10 High-Impact Activities

★ First-Year Seminars and Experiences
★ Common Intellectual Experiences
★ Learning Communities
★ Writing-Intensive Courses
★ Collaborative Assignments and Projects
★ Undergraduate Research
★ Diversity/Global Learning
★ Service Learning, Community-Based Learning
★ Internships
★ Capstone Courses and Projects
High Impact Practices

...while promising, they are not a panacea. Only when they are implemented well and continually evaluated to be sure they are accessible to and reaching all students will we realize their considerable potential.

• From the forward by George Kuh
Good Practices in Undergraduate Education
(Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005)

✓ Student-faculty contact
✓ Active learning
✓ Prompt feedback
✓ Time on task
✓ High expectations
✓ Respect for diverse learning styles
✓ Cooperation among students
Looking Around

applying student success principles to ourselves
High Expectations
Time on Task
Active Learning
Respect for diverse learning styles
Cooperation
Positive Interaction with Peers
Comprehensive Collaboration
Prompt Feedback
Challenge and Support

Nevitt Sanford

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi
"Flow" concept by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. Drawn by Sonya Maymin.
”the line between the actor and the act blurs and, on some cases disappears entirely. There is not dancer. There is only dancing. Flow is not the same as happiness. In fact, when we interrupt flow to take stock of our happiness, we lose both.”

-- Eric Weiner *The Geography of Bliss* p 172
Purposeful
Intentional
Connected

![Diagram showing puzzle pieces labeled 'Activities', 'Resources', 'YOU!', and 'Connections']
Enriching Educational Experiences
Thank you ..... and enjoy the conference!
References


• John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Higher Education. Available at http://www.jngi.org/institute/


