Challenging and supporting students to develop holistically and globally

Symposium on Freshman Seminars Abroad Michigan State University

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Slide 1

Introduction

I am very pleased to be here and am honored to be a part of an initiative that has been one of my goals as an educator for most of my career. Today we are celebrating and exploring more deeply the commitment to integrate two very influential pedagogical strategies, which I call interventions in the journey students take while in college – first year freshmen experience and study abroad. It reflects two emerging goals of higher education today – caring about student learning and development and guiding students to be global citizens.

Today we are here to explore and share with each other our challenges and hopefully our successes in combining the two in an integrated way, so that we as educators are effectively preparing students to become responsible global citizens. Moreover, what is unique and important to me, is that this combination of interventions begins with students at entry into college, not a junior year abroad, for example. In fact here at MSU the educational interventions begin before the students arrive on campus for their freshmen year.

I will share with you my way of thinking and approach to the development of student learning and development that is intended to hopefully challenge you and provide you some support as you think about and plan "interventions" for students that will lead to integration and wholeness.

I will start with a little bit of theory about student development, then present some results based on the research we are now conducting about students in their learning and development, and end with some implications for us as practitioners and leaders on campus.

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Journey

Every one of us is on a journey, a journey of life in which we grow, change, and develop along several dimensions – intellectual, social, civic, physical, moral, spiritual, and religious. We all desire to be distinctive human beings yet still connected to the larger world around us. In our journey of life we continuously struggle with being a unique person, to be ourselves autonomous persons with our own identity and wanting a sense of belonging, being included in a community
of friends and colleagues, desiring intimacy. We want to have our own voice and integrity as a unique person, but also be a member of community. We struggle throughout life being independent and being in community and more appropriately communities.

We need to balance our desires to be separate and autonomous and to be responsible and responsive to others and enjoy intimate relationships with others. We need to be anchored in our sense of self and worth, but that only comes through community. Being too dependent is not healthy for developing our own self as a responsible human being with a sense of purpose and identity. But being too independent becomes narcissistic, and we are not able to be socially responsible. Thus we need to be grounded but open. We need to be “self-in-relation” (Magolda & Crosby, 2011). We need to have a voice and to open to other voices, that is, to be open and teachable.

In their journey students develop and grow up using their heads, hearts, and hands. Students develop cognitively, integrating knowledge in ways that reflect their learning, but they also grow both interpersonally, by considering themselves as part of a larger community or more accurately multiple communities, and intrapersonally, by establishing a sense of self that can influence and guide their choices and future experiences. And they need to do so holistically, i.e., they simultaneously develop their thinking, sense of self, and relationships with others, or to use other common words – their mind, body and spirit; or their head, heart, and hands. (And is often stated, students need to gain in knowledge, develop attitudes and skills to be a functioning person in this global society.)

Slide 3

I like to think of student development in terms of students asking several major questions in their journey. They are:

- How do I know?
- Who am I?
- How can I relate to others?

In my approach to thinking about student learning and development, I stress that when students are trying to make sense of their journey in life, they are engaged in more than an intellectual pursuit. As they seek to find meaning of their experiences, they are relying on their thinking, feeling and interactions with others. Moreover, their ways of interpretation become more complex and integrated as they develop. Like all humans, their making meaning of their experiences is motivating, since experiences become an integral part of who they are as persons with goals, values, and encounters with the world around them. “People invest themselves in certain activities depending on the meaning these activities have for them” (Maehr & Braskamp, 1986, p. 62).
This view of holistic human development is based on the seminal work of Robert Kegan (1994), who argued that three major dimensions of human development – cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal – need to be taken into account when humans make sense of their experiences. Patricia King and Marcia Baxter Magolda (2005) refined these dimensions in describing students in their social-cultural development during their college years. Students need to acquire “intercultural maturity,” a term that describes how human beings strive and struggle in forming their beliefs about what is true and good for them as a human being and what is meaningful to them, in terms of their beliefs, identity, and relationships with others.

Slide 4

As we view the journey of students today we need to think in terms of their relationships with many others who now are members of global society. In our global society today, their journey is increasingly complex. In short, they need to develop a global perspective. “[An] essential learning and developmental goal—which we call global perspective-- can be enhanced if it is further interpreted within the context of educating students to be citizens of a global society” Chickering and Braskamp (2009, p. 27.)

Slide 5

This way of thinking about the developmental process stresses a global perspective. As the students are experiencing the world around them, now actually as well as figuratively, are continually trying to make sense of their experiences and asking the three questions. That is, they use their head, heart, and hands in their journey. Here is a closer look at these three dimensions of the developmental process.

Slides 6 and 7

Cognitive development is centered on one’s knowledge and understanding of what is true and important to know. It includes viewing knowledge and knowing with greater complexity and taking into account multiple cultural perspectives. Reliance on external authorities to have absolute truth gives way to relativism when making commitments within the context of uncertainty.

Slides 8 and 9

Intrapersonal development focuses on one becoming more aware of and integrating one’s personal values and self-identity into one’s personhood. The end of this journey on this dimension is a sense of self-direction and purpose in one’s life, becoming more self aware of one’s strengths, values, and personal characteristics and sense of self, and viewing one’s development in terms of one’s self-identity. An ability to incorporate different and often conflicting ideas about who one is from an increasingly multicultural world is now an important aspect of developing a confident self-identity.
**Slides 10 and 11**

**Interpersonal development** is centered on one’s willingness to interact with persons with different social norms and cultural backgrounds, acceptance of others, and being comfortable when relating to others. It includes being able to view others differently; seeing one’s own uniqueness; and relating to others moving from dependency to independence to interdependence, which is paradoxical. Moving from autonomy to moving through autonomy toward interdependence is critical (Chickering & Braskamp, 2009).

This developmental process stresses that students – and all persons – need to develop in all three dimensions, if they are to be effective members of a global society. ”Development in all three dimensions (cognitive, intrapersonal, interpersonal) proceed “both within and across three dimensions of maturity … as college students become increasingly capable of understanding and acting in ways that are interculturally aware and appropriate… Those for whom development in one or more dimensions does not provide an adequate basis for coping with the complex life tasks they face often report being overwhelmed” (King and Baxter Magolda, 2005). Stated differently, “Demonstrating one’s intercultural skills requires several types of expertise, including complex understanding of cultural differences (cognitive dimension), capacity to accept and not feel threatened by cultural differences (intrapersonal dimension), and capacity to function interdependently with diverse others (interpersonal dimension)” (King and Magolda, 2005, p. 574).

**Slides 12, 13, 14, 15**

**What do we know about this journey in college?**

In their journey in college, do students develop a more sophisticated global perspective? Traditionally aged students with a higher class status— that is, juniors and seniors—have higher average scores on all six scales. Freshmen and seniors had the largest difference on the Knowing (complexity of thinking and taking into account cultural differences on what is important and valid) and Social Interaction (relationships with others unlike them in background) scales and the least differences on Identity (a sense of having a purpose in life) and Social Responsibility (desire to be interdependent and work toward a common good). Moreover, the differences between the cohorts by class status are more apparent between the freshmen and sophomore years, with relatively less pronounced changes from the sophomore to the senior year of college. Thus, the developmental gains in all three dimensions generally occurred early in the collegiate careers of traditional-aged students.
Not all students are similar in their global perspective-taking when they enter college or when they leave. Students enrolled at selective college and universities are more apt early in their college days to express a great global perspective, especially in Knowing and Social Interaction. On the other hand, students at colleges whose mission is religious and evangelical in focus have higher scores on Identity and Social Responsibility and lower scores on Knowing. Students also vary within colleges as well as between colleges. We need to take into account where students are on their journey to become global citizens in their thinking, self identity, and relationships.

In terms of the journey of college students, the Freshmen Study Abroad and First Year Experience programs are critical, since they have the potential to influence the direction of student’s journey through college. I will talk more later about how this influence can be maintained and even accelerated during the latter years of college.

Slide 16
During college students do develop in all three dimensions. They become more complex in their thinking, have a greater sense of who they are, especially in terms of their relationships with others unlike them. They have grown in a maturity that gives them freedom to be themselves around others with differing backgrounds and values. In short, they are striving to have self authorship.

Slide 17

The social cultural environment — what experiences have an influence on the holistic and global development of students?

Student learning and development does not occur in a vacuum, but rather builds on the symbiotic relationship between the person and environment (Maehr and Braskamp, 1986). Parks (2006) stresses the importance of the mentoring community in fostering student growth. Kegan argues that persons in their development into adulthood need bridges – supporting environments to guide and nurture them -- as they mature and grow in their complexity and development. “The roles we play, the norms to which we conform, the options that we perceive as possible, allowable, and worthy are established by and set within a community, or multiple communities. These communities are often created around belief systems, and while individuals play special and important roles, these roles are enacted within the community” (Maehr, 2005, p. 140).

Theorists of college student development have always recognized the importance of the college environment (Parks 2000; Pascarella and Terenzini 2005)—especially its potent influence on students’ development of a sense of self, often in terms of identity formation (Chickering and Reisser 1993). Today, the college community cannot be limited to the physical setting of a campus, since communications extend throughout the globe, and the relationships are more diverse than ever before. Within the multiple and diverse communities, students now are
engaged with others representing many cultural, social, ethnic, and religious identities (Chickering and Braskamp 2009).

The conclusion, "It takes a whole campus of whole persons to develop whole students" is our conclusion of our research at ten colleges and universities that have had a mission of holistic student learning and development. In our research on the potential influence of the socio-cultural environment on student development, we developed a framework, called “4 Cs”—culture, curriculum, co-curriculum, and communities within and beyond the campus—to classify the major environmental influencers of student development. (Braskamp, Trautvetter, and Ward, 2006).

Slide 18

Subsequently we have connected the desired dimensions of student learning and development with the environmental influences into a 3 X 3 framework, as shown in Slide 18.

What have we learned about the influence of these three C’s – curriculum, co-curriculum, and community—on global and holistic student learning and development?

Slides 19 and 20

Curriculum and courses

Faculty can influence the development of a global perspective of the students as professors in their courses, the types of assignments they provide and how they structure their classroom settings. Faculty who can create pedagogical strategies that incorporate diversity content and opportunities for dialogue among the students enrolled in the class can influence student changes on all three dimensions. Students who more frequently enroll and participate in courses that include “materials/readings on race and ethnicity issues” and “opportunities for intensive dialogue among students with different backgrounds and beliefs” are more apt to express higher levels of complexity in their understanding of the world and their acceptance of multiple perspectives in their thinking and knowing. In their self reports students who are more engaged with others unlike them in classes are more knowledgeable in their understanding of differing cultural backgrounds and values, and have greater preferences toward cross-cultural interaction and making a difference in society (Braskamp and Engberg, in press).

In short, interventions under the control of individual faculty are related to students' level of global perspective in their journey assignments structure of the class activities. Moreover, these pedagogical interventions are relatively easy to implement and do not require any extra funds to implement. One of the features of most FYE is small class size and a structure that promotes discussion of personal development as well as understanding a content area, often disciplinary in focus. This intimacy is the key to exploration, discovery, and understanding oneself. Growth comes through challenge and exposure to new experiences.
Slides 21 and 22

Co-curricular experiences, programs, projects,

For the traditionally aged students, experiences outside the formal classroom setting are influential. Students more highly involved in a variety of co-curricular activities also have a higher level of global perspective taking. Students who are more engaged in co-curricular activities are more apt to express a greater global perspective in all three dimensions—head, heart, and hands—than students not as engaged. Students’ views of their social responsibility are positively related to their level of involvement in activities and programs such as “community service activities,” “campus organized discussions on diversity issues,” and “religious or spiritual activities.” Students’ levels of attendance at “events or activities by groups reflecting a cultural heritage different from their own” and in “campus organized discussion on diversity issues” are related to their levels of social interaction, supporting the argument that students who are engaged in meeting others unlike themselves become more comfortable with persons unlike them.

The level of student involvement in “religious or spiritual activities” and “leadership programs” is related to students’ sense of their own unique identity and to their level of social concern for others. Social interactions in activities that purposefully foster pluralism and multiple cultural values outside the classroom are related to all three dimensions of holistic student development, but especially to social interaction.

Slides 23 and 24

Community

Community is important in our lives, since it allow us to be individuals, perhaps a paradox in some ways. But community is critical for society to function since they provide expectations and norms for us. Community is built on shared values, and beliefs—what we consider to be of value, valid, and important to know and build our lives on. They can provide the meaning of our experiences. They provide the necessary context of challenges and support.

Student perceptions of their campus community are related to their levels of global perspective taking. Students who have more positive perceptions of their campus as a community are more apt to have a more global perspective, especially in their intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions. Students who consider themselves to be “challenged and supported” by their college, have “been encouraged to develop their strengths and talents,” and “feel a part of a close and supportive community of colleagues and friends” are more apt to have a greater sense of who they are, feel more comfortable and self-confident about their own identities, and be more involved in interacting with others who are unlike them. However, student views of their
community were not as highly related to their self reports of their intercultural knowledge and tolerance for difference. In sum, creating a supportive community of college students is one of the hallmarks of most FYEs. Community building also can be an important element in SA programs. For example, the professionals in the “Semester At Sea” voyages tell me that students most remember their friendships formed rather than the places they visited. I want to note that the FSA program at MSU explicitly has relationship building as a major goal of its program.

Slides 25, 26, and 27
These charts show the relationships between the interventions and the level of global perspective development on each of the three dimensions.

Slide 28
A general theme that emerges is the "Exposure to difference is related to the development of a global perspective." The strongest relationships between environmental interventions and global perspective taking are for the Cognitive and Interpersonal dimensions, although a supportive environment in the views of students is related to all dimensions. Curricular activities that focus on diversity and involvement in addressing differences in their class discussion and in the assignments are most related to the cognitive dimension. Co-curricular activities involving differences – attendance at events with different cultural groups, and community service activities which most likely involve exposure to different types of persons -- are related to affect and social responsibility. In sum, “difference” presents cognitive dissonance, which may force students to adjust their thinking, attitudes and values, and behaviors, or at the very least get them to reflect on them.

Slides 29 and 30
“High impact” curricular interventions
We use the term, “study away” (Sobania and Braskamp 2009), to highlight both student involvement in domestic and international off-campus learning. The two prominent ones --- study abroad and service learning -- are commonly advocated as effective interventions in the lives of students. What have we found when the desired student learning is global perspective taking?

When service learning is employed as a curricular/pedagogical strategy, it has been successful in students finding more advanced answers to the three questions. Students enrolled more frequently in for-credit service-learning courses have self reported increases across all three dimensions of the GPI with the exception of the cognitive knowing scale. Students show the most inclination in developing a sense of social responsibility, a finding that has long been supported by those studying the relationship between engagement in service learning with students’ desire
to make a difference and give back to society. This relationship however does not equally apply to all students. Engberg and Fox (2011) found conditional effects related to both gender and ethnicity, with males associated with a significantly stronger effect compared to females, and both black and Hispanic students not showing significant changes due to participation in service learning course. Significant effects were also noted in relation to class status, with effect sizes incrementally increasing as students moved from freshman to senior status (Braskamp and Engberg, in press).

The influence of a semester abroad experience on global perspective-taking is also not equally related to all three of the major dimensions of global development (Chickering and Braskamp 2010). The influence of education abroad on the three dimensions of global learning and development varies, as shown in figure 4. After a semester abroad, students show the most gain in increasing their knowledge about different cultures. These changes in the cognitive domain are most apparent in knowledge (what students know and understand about cultural differences), rather than in knowing (how students rely on multiple perspectives in assessing the truth of statements). Students after a semester aboard show the least gain in their sense of social responsibility.

In sum, both interventions are effective educational practices but are not equally effective in fostering desired global learning and development. In fact, educators who use a complement of both study abroad and service learning may be more successful in achieving optimal rates of global learning and development for their students.

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**Why are SA and FYE such effective “interventions?”**

SA and FYE have been noted for their effectiveness. I want to offer some possible reasons why they influence students. First, both often represent new “places” for students – for the new freshmen it is a new setting often of greater diversity, faith traditions, and cultural and racial backgrounds. Study Abroad challenges students by its locale, cultural differences, and language barriers. Often they have new freedoms – from parents and from the local campus community – to explore, and as many students have told me the freedom to fail. Students in their lives are exposed to a more complex world and it is challenging. But students often have opportunities (through SA and FYE) to develop relationships with other students and with faculty and staff who serve as mentors and models. The “Semester at Sea” professionals have noted that students upon their return to the US and years after refer to the impact of a voyage around the world in terms of the relationships they developed with fellow students, staff, and faculty and not the places they visited. Thus “place” is not to be construed in terms of physical locations but in terms of experiences.
Second, these new experiences “touch students,” a key to meaningful experiences. How often have you heard students say, “This does not seem like education, since I am enjoying it so much!” To me, it reflects the principle that meaningful experiences are not only intellectual, but also affective and behaviorally.

Third, these experiences allow students to grow and change holistically. By being exposed to new settings, they have opportunities to problem solve, and become more independent. Consequently they grow in self confidence, because they have been able to be more self sufficient in their daily lives. Being self sufficient is rewarding.

Fourth, they get to view learning in a new way. They become engaged in learning – completing assignments from faculty -- that impact their total development. At MSU, faculty in the FSA program have a lot of freedom to develop assignments and experiences not typically found in the regular classroom (such as, for example, field observation logs, etc.) In short there can be a powerful combination of challenge and support in these “interventions.”

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**Implications, challenges, and next steps for you as an “interventionist” in the lives of students on their journey**

1. What is your expected destination for your students at end of their freshmen year, at graduation, at the end of their life?
2. What “places” do you want your students to be exposed to (to visit) in their journey?
3. What types of challenge and support are you willing to provide your students in their journey?
4. The journey never stops. Connecting being away with being home is critical where being home and being away are now becoming the same.

Slide 33

**What is your expected destination for your students at end of their freshmen year, at graduation, at the end of their life?**

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Liberal education remains the best preparation for preparing students for this global society. We need to recast the argument for an undergraduate education in terms of assisting students in making a difference in lives of others, with career and being a global citizen as a part of one’s “calling” in life. Students need to become “global citizens” and useful neighbors to everyone, including those in our own communities. In fact, being a global citizen requires a liberal education. Leaders and citizens of tomorrow need an understanding of the world’s cultures,
languages, religion, economics, science and technology, and a sensitivity and respect for all
cultural traditions. For many decades the goal of an undergraduate education was to “Know
thyself,” a worthy goal to be sure. Knowing about the world was implicit, and it primarily or
only meant “Western Civilization.” Today “Know yourself, Know your world” is a more
appropriate goal as we think about, plan, and implement undergraduate education. The “life of
the mind” is now more than a head trip. “The ubiquitous phrase life of the mind must now
encompass a far wider sense of meaning-making if we are to help students develop a strong
sense of self, a resiliency that enables them to face the ups and downs of modern life, and a
yearning for and capacity to learn from different peoples, cultures, and ideas” (Hersh, 2007, p.
30).

The Very Reverend Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., Superior General of the Society of Jesus, states
it this way, “True education, education really worthy of the name, is an organized effort to help
people use their hearts, heads, and hands to contribute to the well-being of all of human society”
(Conversations, 2007, p. 47). Jon Wergin, in the Forward to our book, Putting Students First:
How College Develop Students Purposefully, (Jossey-Bass, 2006) argues that effective colleges
“are not just fostering ‘engagement’ (as if simply being engaged in something, anything, were
enough), they are helping students with their vocation, their calling, something to be engaged
about” (p. xi).

This is critical since it impacts the way we look at and define student development. It is short
sighted to think only in terms of personal self development – what can this experience do for me.
A focus on personal gain for my advancement in society is too narrow a view of student
development. Earlier we discussed how the progression of students growing from dependence, to
independence, to interdependence, in which social relationships and being a productive member
of the larger society is critical to a healthy life style and well being.

**Helping students lead the “good life.”**

I like to think of the matters of the heart in terms of vocation and calling, linked to purpose and
meaning: An authentic vocation is not just about “me” and my personal fulfillment, but about “us”
and the common good. . . . Socially responsible discernment seeks a proper balance between
inward listening and outward, socially-engaged listening, between listening to our hearts and
listening with our hearts to the realities of the world we live in—especially to the ways the needs
and pains of the world and its people are calling us. (Neafsey, 2004). So vocation is more than
“unharnessed passion”— at its best it is a passion with a cause to contribute, to make a difference.
Living the “good life” is one that matters; it is being of consequence to those around us, argue
Mark Schwehn and Dorothy Bass (2005). The Provost from Villanova puts into balance the two
questions of “How do I know” and “How am I?” He told us, “We encourage students to let their
intellectual life be guided by their hearts. Students are learning and developing in college for a
purpose: that is, to be of service to the world” (Braskamp, Trautvetter, and Ward, 2006, p. 191)
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The goals of MSU.

Using my definition of the “good life” as the goal of a college education, I examined the strategic plan of MSU, which includes a goal, Global Competence. Here is part of what they state, "MSU—recognizing that its students live and work in an increasingly complex and interconnected world—provides opportunities for its students to engage the world as professionals and citizens who will demonstrate leadership in their professional, personal, and civic life. …In the context of MSU’s land-grant tradition, MSU will provide opportunities for all its undergraduate students to become globally-competent professionals and citizens, people with the following knowledge, attitudes, and skills: Graduates will demonstrate 1) Analytical Thinking, 2) Cultural Understanding, 3) Effective Citizenship, 4) Effective Communication, and 5) Integrated Reasoning." The trio of knowledge, attitudes, and skills roughly map the three dimensions of student development – cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal. The five MSU goals can furthermore be mapped into these dimensions which stress that holistic and global student development is a priority.

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The goals of the FSA at MSU are also highly consistent with my argument of global citizenship. Inge Steglitz (2011) writes, "Freshmen Seminars Abroad, by helping to place student development into a global context, have great potential for contributing to students' cognitive, emotional, and social development and for setting them on a course to becoming globally competent contributors to society" (p. 53). I think that these two sets of goals reflect the overall MSU mission and desire to educate student to be “globally engaged citizen leaders.”

What “places” do you want your students to be exposed to (to visit) in their journey?

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Going places that challenge students is critical. Today that means meeting people who are different—different cultures, values, religious traditions, social economic status, race, talents, life styles, etc. The journey begins in the freshmen year but it is only the beginning. Students getting a wide range of experiences in their freshmen years but also need to practice and integrate what they experience. Going places needs to be accompanied with reflection, hard work, exchanges with students once they return is necessary. So being back home on campus is just as important as going places. What students do—where they travel -- during their entire journey in college is equally important.

When I interview students, the first question I like to ask them is: Do you feel safe here? Often they talk of physical safety, which is important but I want to know if the campus ethos in and out of the classroom allows students to express themselves freely without judgment.
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Different campuses have different strategies in engaging students to difference, diversity, and cultural differences. I am big proponent of using the local settings in and off campus to engage students in experiencing difference. They combine and integrate exposure to difference with practice.

I want to mention some programs at a number of colleges and universities including MSU that from my vantage point are productively exploiting local settings to engage students in being more global in their thinking, viewing themselves as global citizens, and interacting with others unlike them. All use a freshmen year experience (FYE) as the beginning point, but MSU intentionally integrated FSA with FYE, with its summer orientation program.

Elmhurst College has a FYE, with faculty with SA professionals sharing the instructional responsibilities, a common practice. In one section focusing on student learning and development, many of the assignment are intended to assist students to discover and develop their strengths, calling in life, using the SQ as the tool for self discovery and awareness. One key theme is differences – we are different human beings. The college has also embarked on a program to assist immigrants coming to the US and living in the Chicago area.

At DePaul University located in Chicago, freshmen can take a FYE course that gets students into the neighborhoods. The course which meets for 4 hours once a week is structured so that students in classes of less than 20 with a faculty mentor go into various neighborhoods for an afternoon.

Kansas State offers some of its FYE courses in which one half of the students are international students, so they (an untapped resource on many campuses) can interact in small groups with American students, thus enhancing the social interaction among students during the freshmen year.

At Loyola University Chicago they have a program called Achieving College Excellence, in which students, many first generation college students, have special tutoring and support, to help them remain in college and to enter graduate school. The success of the program is very impressive, but I want to share with you some thoughts based on a banquet held in the students honor that I had the privilege to attend two weeks ago. At my table, I met an African American student, a native American SA professional, a student who parents came from Poland, etc. I asked them about if and how they met students unlike them. The AA student was taking several classes and seeing a medical doctor a lot lately since she was going to give one of her kidneys to her mother and hopefully over the holidays since that worked best in their schedule. Her dream is to get on a plane before she graduates. The student whose parents came from Poland goes home sometimes to teach them the English language. When I asked them about feeling safe, all stated that today students are quite open and accepting of differences. At one point one stated, “I would like to meet a normal white person!”
The other highlight of that evening point to the role of us as models and mentors. Three Loyola faculty – one whose parents were from China, one from India, and one from an Hispanic home here in the US – talked about their college experience. The women form faculty focused her remarks on “Who am I” and the struggles she had as a college student in making the adjustment to an American university. In talking to her afterward, she stated that has never talked that way to her students, even though she is in the College of Social Work. The University of Minnesota has just introduced a theme in their FYE – “Building a strengths based campus.” MSU has a program that I wish to recognize in my list -- “Unpacking your FSA Experience”, a workshop in which students are challenged to reflect deeply on their experiences. (Dr. Linda Gross who conducts these workshops will be one of the presenters today.)

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What types of challenge and support are you willing to provide all of your students in their journey?

Theorists in college student development have recognized the importance of designing learning environments that both challenge and support students in moving to higher levels of cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal development (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Learning environments that combine both challenge and support intentionally structure and sequence educational experiences to assist undergraduates in adapting to the challenges they encounter in college. This principle of support and challenge is not new. Sanford (1962) stressed the importance of the challenge and support balance. Sharon Parks (2000) refers to the critical presence of a mentoring community to guide and assist students in their journey.

Challenge and support can and should be present in all environments, including the three Cs of curriculum, co-curriculum and community. In our article, Art Chickering and I (Chickering & Braskamp, 2009) suggest strategies that include differing assignments for students, different structures of the classroom environment, “study away” experiences, leadership programs, etc for engaging students to be confronted with difference and being engaged in many different types of communities. In this keep in mind the principle of exposure to difference and reflection – practice.

Another important issue here is the how professional staff and faculty demonstrate their expertise. How do mentors share their knowledge and experience? Related to this issue is the nature of the goals mentors have for students. Faculty and staff can think of themselves as assisting students to become engaged in the world to make a difference, rather than to prepare students to escape into a world of abstraction and apart from the world. It should be a life of engagement to make a difference in the lives of others, that is, to go beyond analytical and critical thinking, but to prepare students as person to act holistically and globally. Showing a constructive and creative posture is more difficult than presenting a critical thinking perspective, but living in a diverse world requires adaption and problem solving as well as critical thinking.
How can you at your campus increase support and challenge so that more than 1/3 of them think that they are being supported and challenged and recognized and encouraged to use their strengths—that their talents, interests, passions to contribute to a now global society?

In my conversation with an Associate Provost in charge of the ACE program at Loyola University Chicago, she mentioned that effective programs work best when we are meeting the needs of students. Programming cannot be “hit or miss” endeavor, but focused on what students find meaningful to them. Students vary in their readiness, which cannot be ignored. She also told me another important theme. Guiding and helping students is not done in isolation, but in community, a theme that is critical in designing FYE (and one that the MSU FSA leaders readily acknowledge and promote).

This is difficult for both students and for faculty and professional staff. Traditional age students have been educated to mostly complete assigned structured tasks. In my conversation with a math teacher at a selective high school that attracts college bound students, she commented that in recent years she has found that students had seemed to lose a sense of mystery, challenge, and fortitude to tackle problems for which answers are not simply apparent and straightforward.

They did not want to struggle with the unknown. She used this quote to characterize the learning goals of the students. “I don’t want to be puzzled. I just want to be told.”

**Slide 41** The journey never stops. Connecting being away with being home is critical where being home and being away are now becoming the same.

I end with this because the longer I am able to be on my journey in life, the more I realize that this point is self-evident. While we have been talking about students today, much of what I stated and argue can be applied to each one of us. So have safe and rewarding travels.

**Slide 42**

**References**


http://collegevalues.org/pdfs/Braskampthreecentralquestions.pdf


