Aspirations Symposium

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Self-Authorship:
The Key to Student Learning Aspirations

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VT LEARNING ASPIRATIONS

- Commit to unwavering *Curiosity*
- Pursue *Self-Understanding and Integrity*
- Practice *Civility*
- Prepare for a life of *Courageous Leadership*
- Embrace *Ut Prosim* as a way of life
DEVELOPMENTAL CAPACITIES

- How we “make sense” of our experiences
- How we view knowledge - decide what to believe, come to know
- How we view ourselves - sense of identity
- How we view social relations - how we construct relationships
- Holistic perspective - all three dimensions intertwined
A DEVELOPMENTAL BRIDGE

“a holding environment that provides both welcoming acknowledgement to exactly who the person is right now as he or she is, and fosters the person’s psychological evolution. As such, a holding environment is a tricky, transitional culture, an evolutionary bridge, a context for crossing over” (Kegan, 1994, p. 43)

INFORMATIONAL VS TRANSFORMATIONAL LEARNING

- Informational learning focuses on increasing our fund of knowledge, our repertoire of skills, and extending already established capacities into new terrain; deepening resources for an existing frame of reference.

- Transformational learning focuses on shifts in how we know – developing the cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal capacities that enable people to navigate complexity.

LEARNING ASPIRATIONS REQUIRE TRANSFORMATION

- To meet learning aspirations learners will need to transform how they think about learning & knowing, their identities, and their social relations.

- To promote learning aspirations educators will need to transform how they think about learning & knowing, their identities, and their social relations.
WORKSHOP GOALS

- Understand one possible portrait of the journey toward self-authorship and complex developmental capacities and its relationship to the learning aspirations

- Explore the nature of Learning Partnerships that help adults develop more complex capacities to meet aspirations

- Consider how Learning Partnerships could enhance your educational practice
BAXTER MAGOLDA
LONGITUDINAL STUDY

- Began with 101 first-year traditional age college students in 1986
- 80 interviewed annually during 4 years of college [see Knowing & Reasoning in College, 1992]
- 30 remain in study in 29th year [see Making Their own Way, 2001; Authoring Your Life, 2009]
- Learning Partnerships Model [see Learning Partnerships, 2004]
WABASH NATIONAL STUDY
www.liberalarts.wabash.edu/nationalstudy

- Designed to discover the student experiences and developmental capacities that affect growth toward seven liberal arts outcomes (King, Kendall, Brown, Lindsay & VanHecke, 2007)

- Began with 315 traditional age students on six campuses in 2006 [approximately one third identified as students of color]

- 177 students returned for interviews all four years of their college experience [228 year 2; 204 year 3]

CAVEATS

- Developmental narratives offer *possibilities* regarding how to interpret meaning making
- Transferability: leaders’ responsibility to judge applicability based on deep understanding of particular context
- Learning partnerships: key to understanding partners and interpreting development in context
FOLLOWING EXTERNAL FORMULAS

✶ Believe authority’s plans; how “you” know
✶ Define self through external others
✶ Act in relationships to acquire approval

REFLECTIVE INTERLUDE

★ Consider your context – are any of the participants using external formulas uncritically?

★ If so, how does that affect learning aspirations?

★ How does learners’ use of external formulas affect their capacity to meet a learning aspiration?

★ How does educators’ use of external formulas affect their/your capacity to promote a learning aspiration?
CROSSROADS

Torn between following others’ versus own visions and expectations

Questioning External Authority E(I)
Constructing the Internal Voice E-I
Listening to the Internal Voice I-E
Cultivating the Internal Voice I(E)
REFLECTIVE INTERLUDE

- Consider your context – do any of the participants seem to be in the crossroads?

- If so, how does that affect learning aspirations?

- How does learners’ being in the crossroads affect their capacity to meet a learning aspiration?

- How does educators’ being in the crossroads affect their/your capacity to promote a learning aspiration?
SELF-AUTHORSHIP

Internal voice comes to the foreground to coordinate external influence.
Realize that external realities are beyond your control, but that you can control your reaction to them.

*Trust* the internal voice sufficiently to refine beliefs, values, identities and relationships.

Use internal voice to shape reactions and manage external sources.


Trust internal voice sufficiently to craft commitments into a philosophy of life to guide how to react to external sources.

Internal foundation is a filter through which to process external circumstances.

REFLECTIVE INTERLUDE

- Consider your context – do any of the participants seem to be self-authoring?
- If so, how does that affect learning aspirations?
- How does learners’ self-authorship affect their capacity to meet a learning aspiration?
- How does educators’ self-authorship affect their/your capacity to promote a learning aspiration?
LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS MODEL

Balancing Challenge & Support
Respect learners’ thoughts and feelings

Complex work & life challenges

Develop personal authority

Share authority; interdependence

Mutual learning & problem solving

Situate in learners’ experience

Support

Learning Partnerships

Challenge

Urban Leadership Internship Program

Reflective writing; group process

Role in placement, community

Challenge

Negotiate new environment & identity

Mutual learning with peers

Support

Job, community service in urban setting

Collaboration: co-workers, roommates, supervisor

Learning Partnerships

Learning Community; Reflective Assignments

Complexity of ES; multi-disciplinary, spiraling curriculum

Problem based pedagogy; personal assignments; service learning

Joint processing; weekly note-card feedback

Develop own perspective

Mutual construction of knowledge

Earth Sustainability Series

Support

Challenge

Learning Partnerships

DEVELOPMENTALLY SEQUENCED GOALS

- First semester: sorting opinions from arguments supported by evidence
- Second semester: identifying assumptions
- Third semester: evaluating arguments and supporting assumptions
- Fourth semester: framing arguments from multiple perspectives, justifying assumptions, and assessing evidence

REFLECTIVE INTERLUDE

- In what ways does your practice already incorporate LPM components?
- In what ways could you alter your practice to make it more like a learning partnership?
- Are there aspects of your own development that you will need to consider to implement developmentally-sequenced learning partnerships?
TRANSFORMATION FOR EDUCATORS

- LPM is a philosophy about learning
- Recognize assumptions about learning & learners
- Recognize how our authority is interwoven in our behavior
- Examine our own development - are we self-authoring such that we can share power and authority with learners? Challenge structures & systems that constrain learning?