

*Listening to Students Interpret
their Collegiate Learning
Experiences*

*AACU General Education Conference
March 10, 2006*

Patricia M. King
University of Michigan

In-Depth Component Team, 2005-06

Patricia M. King Marcia Baxter Magolda
University of Michigan Miami University (Ohio)

Un. of Michigan Research Assistants

Jim Barber	Marie Kendall Brown
Julie DeGraw	Cindy Xinquan Jiang
Kimberly Johnson	Nathan Lindsay
Geise Ly	Donna Scheid
Ethan Stephenson	JoNes VanHecke

What are key insights that you'll take with you from college?

- "...unbiased curiosity, a desire to explore and learn, being open-minded from the diversity of people, and the coursework.
- "College just entirely changed the way I approach learning..."

Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education Learning Outcomes

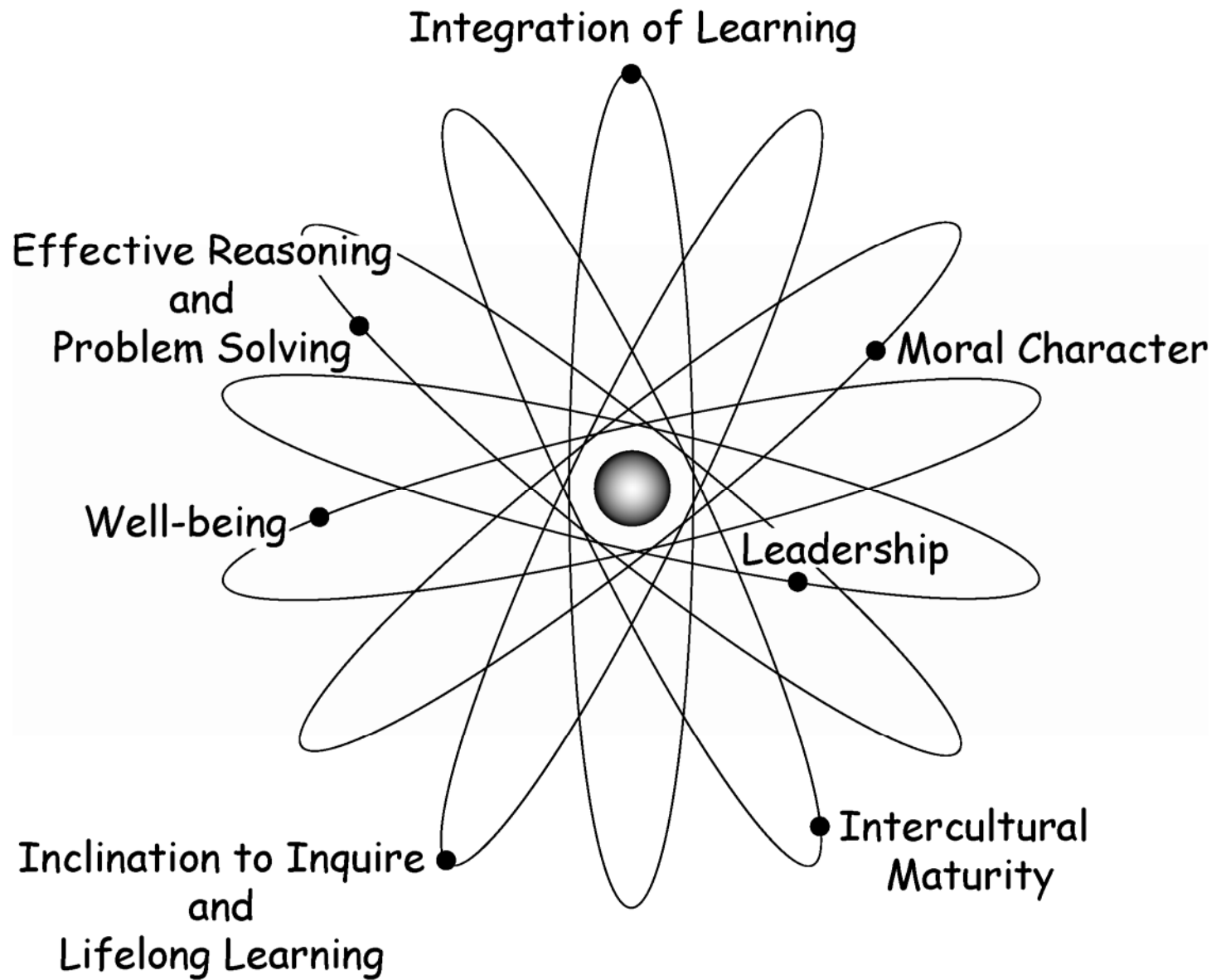
Wisdom

Wise Citizenship

Citizenship

Outcomes

- Integration of Learning
- Inclination to Inquire and Lifelong Learning
- Effective Reasoning and Problem Solving
- Moral Character
- Intercultural Effectiveness
- Leadership
- Well-being

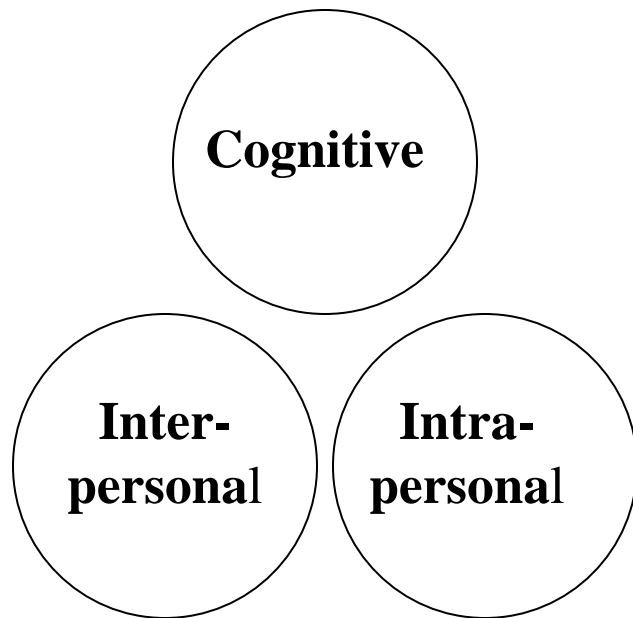


Learning Outcomes-Holistic Features

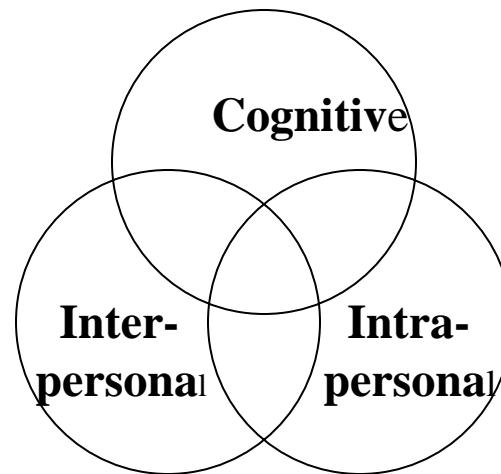
- Integrated across domains (problem-solving, character, wellness, etc.)
- Self-Authorship (cognitive, intrapersonal, interpersonal)

Holistic View of Development

Separate Domains



Related Domains



Integrated Domains

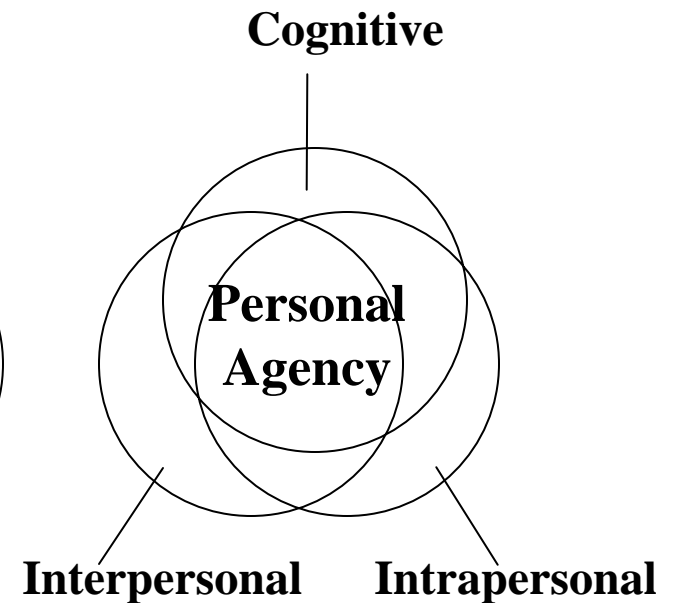


Figure 2. Separate, Related and Integrated Perspectives on Domains of Development.

King, P. M., & Baxter Magolda, M. B. (2002). Toward a developmental model of intercultural maturity: an holistic approach to collegiate to collegiate education. In C. Rust (Ed.), *Improving student learning: Vol. 10. Improving student learning theory and practice – 10 years on* (pp. 269-284). Oxford: The Oxford Centre for Staff & Learning Development.

Self-Authorship

- A *guiding perspective* or outlook through which one interprets experiences and makes meaning of them
- A *mature capacity* for knowing, being, and relating to others

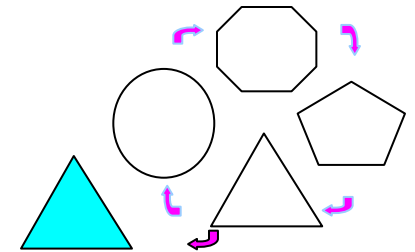
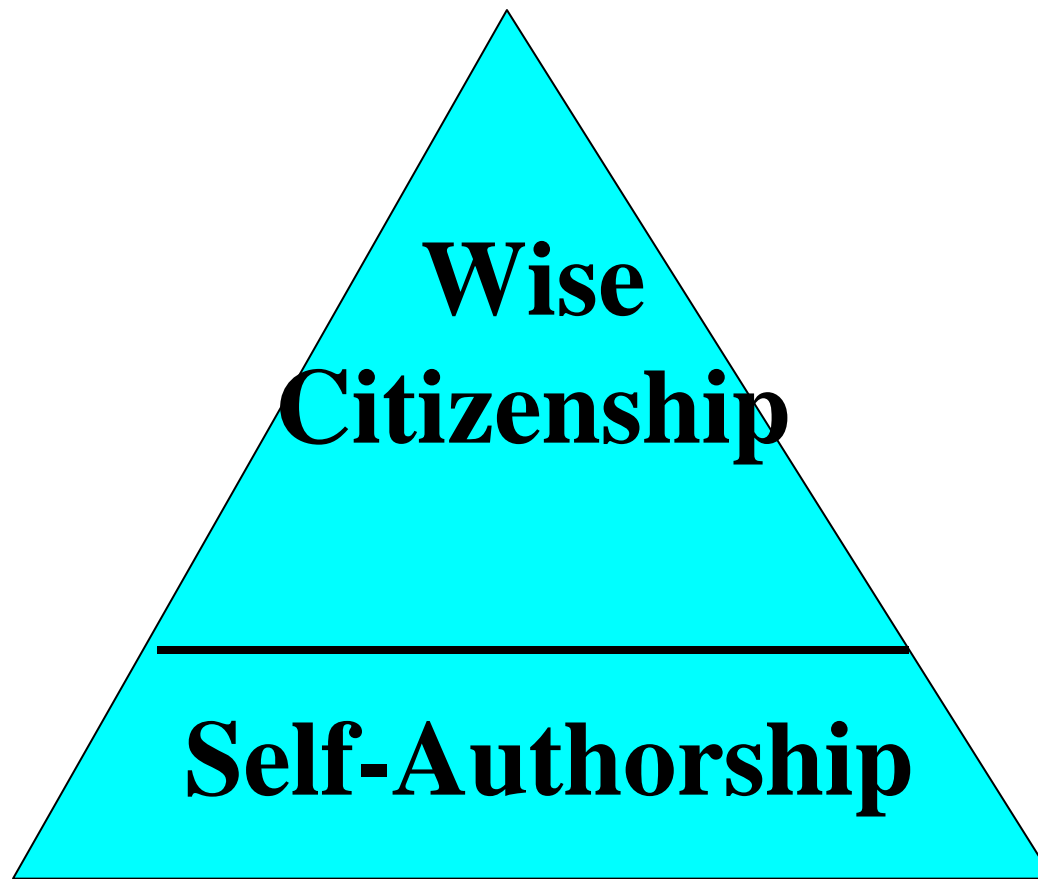
Kegan, R. (1994). *In over our heads: The mental demands of modern life*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Self-Authorship

- Being “the author of your life, not just the stage on which it is played”; literally, to “make up” your mind
- A foundation for the outcomes

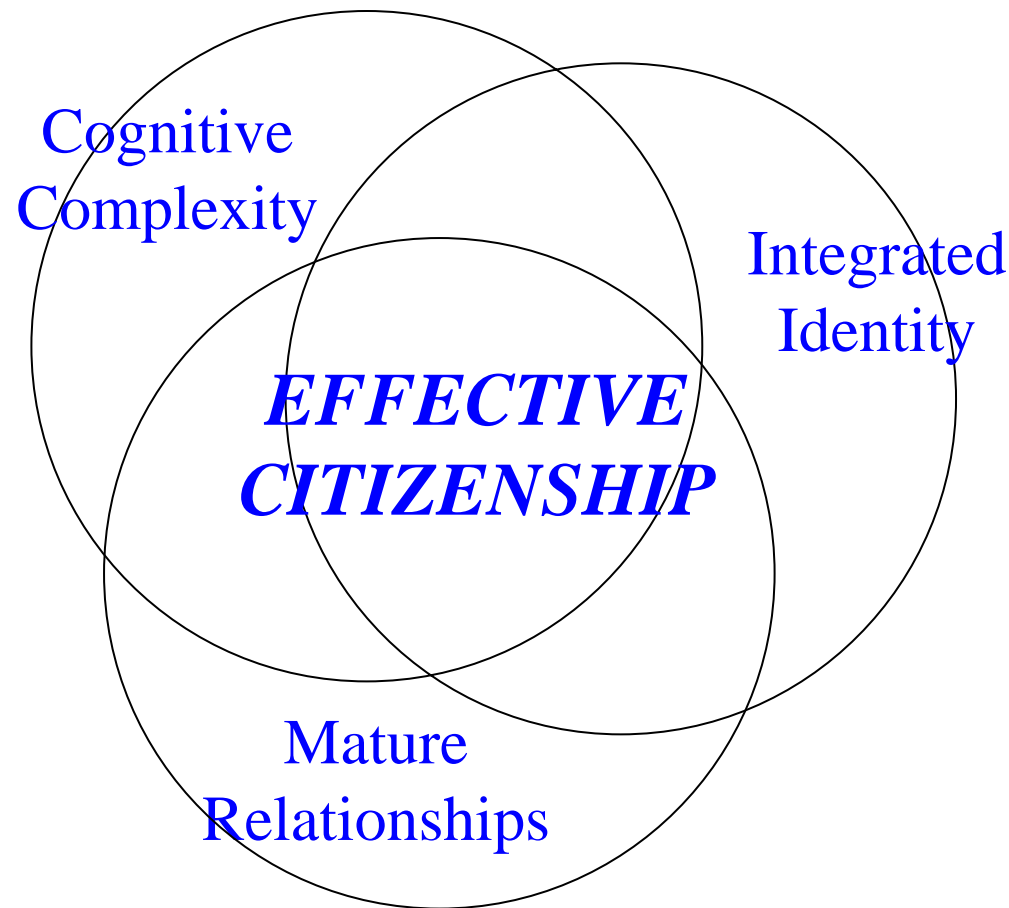
Overarching Liberal Arts Outcomes

Baxter Magolda (2004). Liberal Arts Project: In-Depth Campus Design



Integrated Model: Learning Outcomes that Enable Effective Citizenship

Adapted from: Baxter Magolda, M. (2004). Self-authorship as the common goals of 21st-century education. In M. B. Baxter Magolda and P. M. King, *Learning Partnerships* (pp. 1-35. Sterling, VA: Stylus.

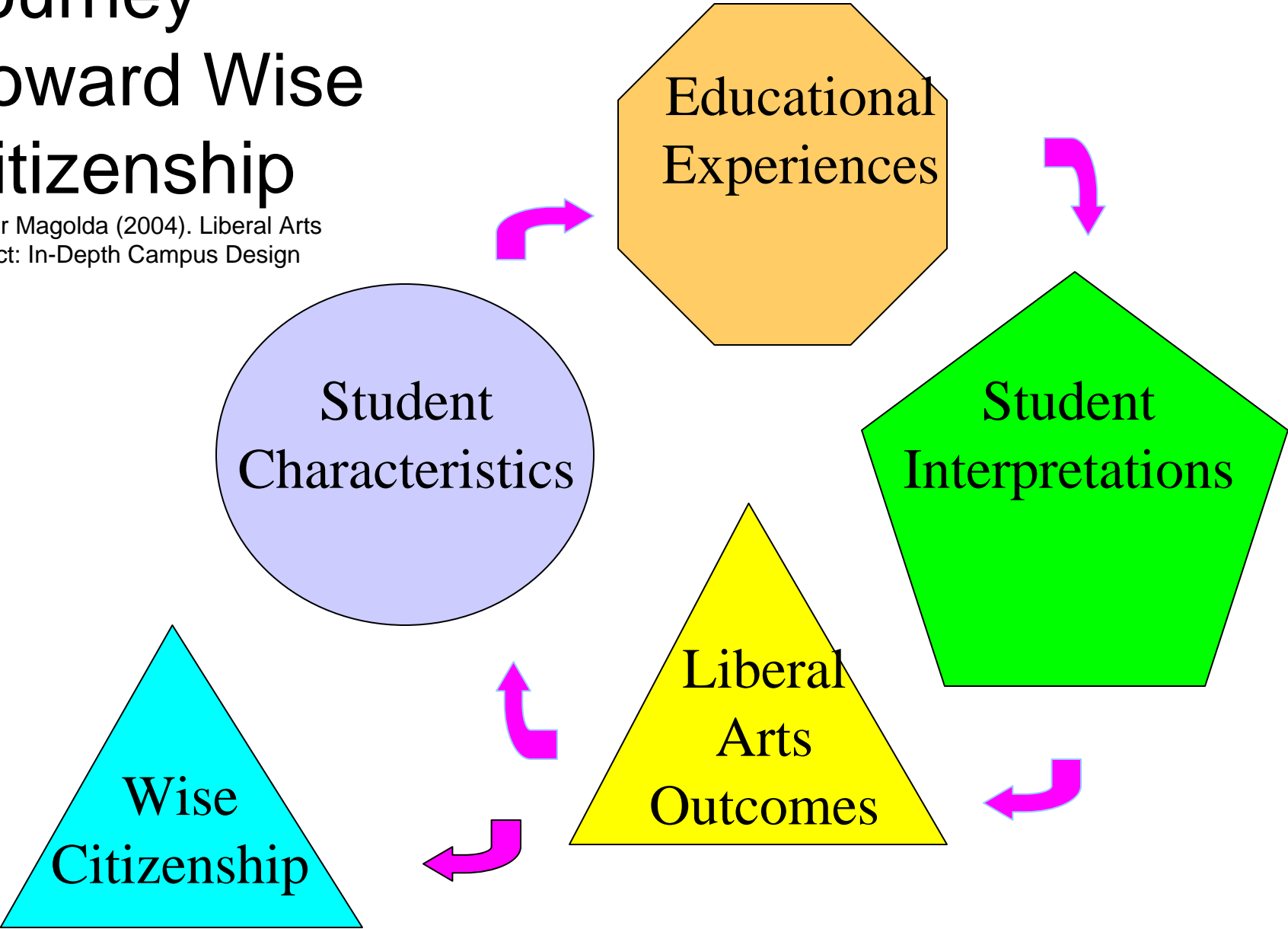


In-Depth Interview - Purposes

- Designed to discover the kinds of student experiences that are associated with the achievement of these outcomes.
- Emphasis on experiences *students* identify as relevant to their learning and development.

Journey Toward Wise Citizenship

Baxter Magolda (2004). Liberal Arts
Project: In-Depth Campus Design



Interview Protocol -- Areas of Focus

- 1. How do students' entering characteristics affect progress toward wise citizenship?
- 2. What educational experiences do students regard as key to this development? Why?

In-Depth Interview Protocol--Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education

Interview Protocol--Areas of Focus

- 3. How do students make meaning of (interpret) these experiences?

Interview Protocol-3 Segments

- 1. Expectations entering college and alignment with actual experiences
- 2. Meaningful experiences and how they affected students' learning and development

Interview Protocol Segments,cont

- 3. How students synthesized experiences to shape their beliefs, their identity, and social relations (self-authorship and integration of learning)

Interview Protocol Questions

Expectations

- What did you expect it to be like to be a college student here? ...
- How did the reality compare with your expectations?

Excerpt, In-Depth Interview Protocol--Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education

Interview Protocol Questions-2

- How would you describe the nature of your involvement in college life?
- What has been your most *significant* experience so far?
- Tell me about some of the *challenges* you've encountered.

Excerpt, In-Depth Interview Protocol--Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education

Interview Protocol Questions-3

- Who/what are your *support* systems?
- Have you had interactions with people you perceive as *different* than you?
- Have you had to face any *difficult* decisions?

Excerpt, In-Depth Interview Protocol--Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education

Interview Protocol Questions-4

- Has there been a time when what you wanted and what others wanted from you *conflicted*?
- Have you been in a situation where you struggled with doing the right thing?

Excerpt, In-Depth Interview Protocol--Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education

Interview Protocol Questions-5

- How do you think coming to college has affected you?
- Thinking about your overall experience, what did you gain from college this year?

Excerpt, In-Depth Interview Protocol--Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education

Interview Protocol Questions-6

- You've talked about some of your important experiences and what they've meant to you. How do these collective experiences and the way you've interpreted them, *shape who you are* right now?

Excerpt, In-Depth Interview Protocol--Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education

Interview Protocol Questions-7

- What are the consequences or implications of your first college year:
 - for how you think about things?
 - for how you see yourself?
 - for how you relate to others?

Excerpt, In-Depth Interview Protocol--Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education

Interview Protocol Questions-8

- How has your first year experience helped you with where you would like to be next year?

Excerpt, In-Depth Interview Protocol--Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education

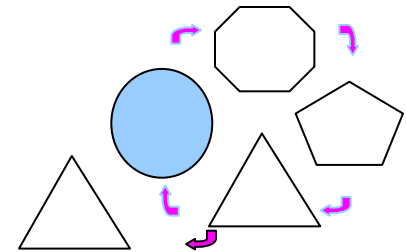
Interview Sample

- Conducted interviews with 176 students
- Interviews were at least 1 hour
- Half first-year, half seniors
- Four different types of institutions

Student Characteristics

Baxter Magolda (2004). Liberal Arts Project: In-Depth Campus Design

- Pre-college history
- Background characteristics
- Ways of understanding self, world, relationships
- Expectations for the year ahead



Student Characteristics

“My [high] school was an eclectic mix of cultures- a lot of Blacks, Asians, internationals. So this [the diversity] was easy for me.”

Source: Student Quotes, WNSLAE In-Depth Interview (05)

Student Characteristics

- My dad is an alcoholic, and he gets very abusive with us at home verbally... moving away from home really helped me deal with it...

Source: Student Quotes, WNSLAE In-Depth Interview (05)

Student Characteristics

- “For Indian parents, only four majors exist: pre-med, pre-business, pre-law, and engineering. So it’s like, “OK, daughter, you get to pick one of those four..... My parents were not about to pay that much money for me to do psychology or philosophy or whatever else I wanted to do.”

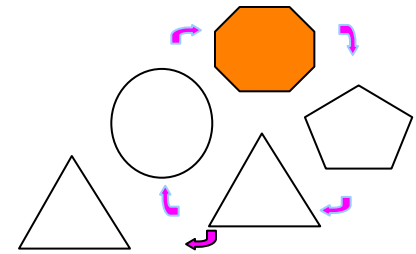
Source: Student Quotes, WNSLAE In-Depth Interview (05)

Educational Experiences

Baxter Magolda (2004). Liberal Arts Project: In-Depth Campus Design

.Curricular Experiences

- Co-curricular Experiences
- Personal Life Experiences



Student Experience

“But in World Religions, I met Muslims... It’s just different from what I would typically think about.”

Source: Student Quotes, WNSLAE In-Depth Interview (05)

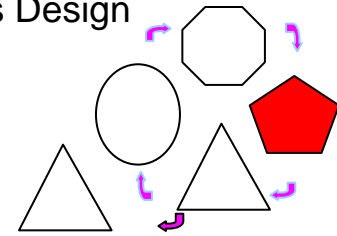
Student Experiences

- Many experiences students reported as particularly important to their learning occurred in co-curricular contexts (e.g., in student organizations).

Source: Student Quotes, WNSLAE In-Depth Interview (05)

Student Interpretations of Experiences

Baxter Magolda (2004). Liberal Arts Project: In-Depth Campus Design



- How students make sense of their experience; informs their understanding of the world, self, social relations
- Enables achievement of liberal arts outcomes

Meaning-Making

- Meaning is made in the space between an event and the person's reaction to it,
--the space in which the person privately composes and makes sense of the event.

Meaning-Making-2

- Reflects changes in the interpretive lens being used.
- Learners build -- then rebuild -- understanding and meaning-making processes.

Student Interpretations

- “My parents hate my B average, but I’m like, ‘Hey you forced me to do it, so this is what you’re going to get, cause I’m not motivated to study.’ It’s not like I’m going to work extra hard to get those A’s, you know.”

Source: Student Quotes, WNSLAE In-Depth Interview (05)

Student Interpretations

- “I feel more inclined to blame my parents... I mean [if they’d] hired me a tutor, or made me take courses over the summer at a community college, that would definitely help.”

Source: Student Quotes, WNSLAE In-Depth Interview (05)

Student Interpretations

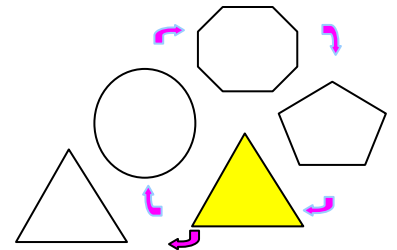
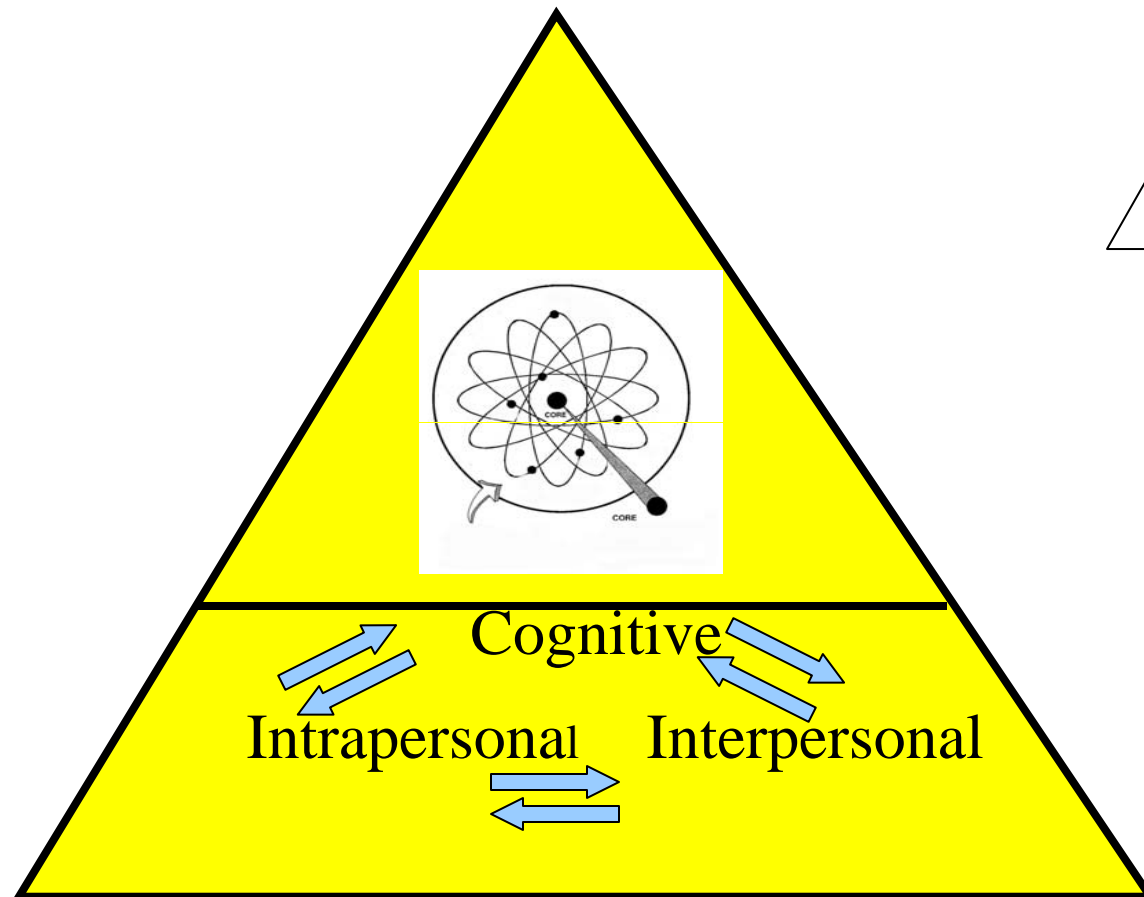
“I fell victim to my own
stereotypes. ...

[If I join the fraternity], these
stereotypes are going to be
put on me, too.”

Source: Student Quotes, WNSLAE In-Depth Interview (05)

Growth on Liberal Arts Outcomes

Baxter Magolda (2004). Liberal Arts Project: In-Depth Campus Design



Observations on the Process

- Self-authorship is not a household phrase (neither is liberal arts ed)
- Students enjoyed this kind of opportunity for structured reflection (and wanted to do it again)

Observations on the Process

- Many students found the process of “putting it all together” to be unfamiliar
- We were reminded of the huge variability among entering characteristics

Observations on the Process

- We were reminded of the huge variability among entering characteristics
- Much learning occurs in social/interpersonal contexts

Guiding Reflections⁻¹

- Offer opportunities to talk about significant experiences, challenges, joys, surprises, decisions
- Ask why these are important
- Ask how learner was affected by them

Guiding Reflections₋₂

Engage learners in interpreting reflections

- How have these reflections affected your values and beliefs?
- How have these reflections affected your relationships with others?

Guiding Reflections⁻³

- How have these reflections affected how you see yourself?
- What questions do they raise for you?

Shulman on Learning

“We seek understanding for the pleasure and confidence it brings, and we seek puzzlement for self-conscious ignorance for the mental itching and scratching it engenders. We want students who will leave our institutions deeply committed to values and

Shulman on Learning,^{cont'd}

civic and moral responsibility; yet we must never forget that they must also be committed to skepticism and doubt. We foster the transformation of thought into action, but we also strive to educate for delay, self-criticism, and reflection.”

Shulman, L. (2002). Making differences: A table of learning. *Change*, 34(6), 36-44.