

Practice to Theory to Practice: Transfer Orientation

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Introduction

Our study group discussed numerous options for the Practice-to-Theory-to-Practice model application. We considered reviewing the alcohol policies in the residence halls, class attendance policies, the First-Year Experience mentors, student athlete development, and transfer orientation. We narrowed it down to alcohol policies and transfer orientation, and eventually settled on transfer orientation. We selected transfer orientation since it had a wide scope of theoretical applications and potential enhancement opportunities. We also felt that a revision of the transfer orientation program at Western Illinois University (WIU) was long overdue and this analysis would provide significant improvement to the current orientation program for transfer students.

Part 1 – Where Do We Begin?

Currently, transfer students are not encouraged to come to campus for any type of orientation program. The programming for transfer “orientation” to the university is focused on registration, not transfer orientation, reflected on the schedule. Transfer registration currently focuses on getting students to campus for math and English placement testing, rather than helping students acclimate to the university. Transfer registration days are optional to attend, leading many students to not visit campus until classes begin and consequently these students lack awareness of supports on campus for them, including services and opportunities they have for involvement. Their sole interaction with the university outside of official correspondence is with their academic adviser, who may not be aware or counsel students of the opportunities they have on campus before they arrive.

Students that do show up to the transfer registration and that also need to take math and English placement miss out on the residence life programming and commuting information

sessions due to the registration schedule. Even if students attend transfer registration, they are unlikely to be aware of campus support structures and mechanisms – only an optional student services fair is offered at the end of the registration process, which few students choose to attend. A majority of the people at the fair tend to be parents or partners of students while students are undergoing math and English placement testing.

Beyond these reasons, we also feel that the lack of purposeful identity development in transfer orientation does a disservice to students entering WIU. Given this, plus the current and expected to continue growth of veteran students, who would fall outside traditional freshman or first-year orientation boundaries, makes transfer orientation a critical site of development.

Part 2 – Goals and Outcomes

In revising the transfer orientation program, our group developed an extensive list of goals and outcomes. As part of this, we also anticipated a multi-tiered review system to ensure that we are meeting our outcomes. Students would be asked to complete an initial survey at the end of the transfer orientation session about overall satisfaction with the program in general and specific content areas. Students would then have a second survey to complete after their first week of classes to assess outcomes once students arrive on campus. A third survey will assess their engagement and comfort with campus 6 months after orientation.

Our goals for the transfer population's development are grouped under four main headings, with additional goals intended to be met by the transfer orientation program revision.

Our first goal was that **students should feel supported**. Transfer students should become more aware of the support systems available to them on campus, as measured by increased utilization of those services by transfer students. We also wanted to help transfer students feel supported, as measured by their varying needs being met, whatever they may be.

Our second goal was that **students should have multiple opportunities to socialize and build support networks**. Transfer students should have the opportunity to meet current students at Western Illinois University and to meet fellow transfer students. As an outcome, during orientation transfer students would meet peers and current students and develop friendships and social groups and feel a sense of belonging, as well as have a mentoring relationship established with current students. Also connected with this, we sought to introduce and link transfer students with faculty at WIU.

Our third primary goal was to **familiarize transfer students with their new, unique WIU culture**. As part of that, we would educate students about WIU culture and traditions, orient them to the technological services on the campus, teach students about the policies, rules, and procedures of WIU, and impart a sense of understanding of the WIU mission and values.

Finally, we want students to **reflect on their own personal development and identities**. As part of that, we would seek to make students aware of various learning styles and cultivate an awareness of their own personal learning style, and ease them into the transitional process through reflective and conversational opportunities.

We also had a set of goals specific to our transfer orientation program. We wanted to create an orientation-focused program as opposed to a registration focused one, for more students to utilize the revised transfer orientation program and make it more appealing for them to do so, to educate parents, partners, students, and families about the opportunities and culture here at WIU. Additionally, we wanted students to feel comfortable registering for courses that they see value in. And finally, we sought to emphasize evaluation and assessment and create opportunities for assessment to happen of and during our orientation transfer services.

Part 3 – Analysis of Theories

After setting our initial goals, we proceeded to analyze what theories would prove useful in our application of theory to practice, and what light they could shed on our revision of the transfer orientation program. After carefully evaluating every theory we covered this semester, we decided that all of them were applicable in a variety of ways to the transfer student orientation program and in achieving our goals. We will touch lightly on these theories here as they relate to our goals; as we analyzed student characteristics and environmental factors, we delve more deeply into the particulars of each theory as applied to transfer students in parts four and five.

Arthur Chickering's theory of identity development is an integral component to the development of students' competence along the seven vectors, and helps students develop a greater sense of purpose and identity as new students on the WIU campus. Chickering's theory helps transfer students feel they gain more by attending the orientation program on campus as it would be purposefully developmental. Chickering's theory supports all our primary goals for improving transfer orientation.

William Perry's theory of intellectual and ethical development was another highly relevant theory in how we could seek to structure developmental opportunities, and helping understand how students internalized meaning and made sense of their previous institution experiences and their future at WIU. Perry's theory most closely supported our second and third goals.

Among other cognitive-structural theories, Marcia Baxter Magolda's theory regarding epistemological reflection is essential for understanding how students view and internalize knowing, as well as accommodating students specifically based on their presence around others.

Finding ways to challenge and support students in developing their voice, learning from peer relationships, and developing appropriate relationships with faculty and staff based on mutual respect are important aspects of this model, and also extremely important supports for our transfer orientation. This theory supports all our primary goals.

Mostly specifically towards women, Mary Belenky, Blythe Clinchy, Nancy Goldberger and Jill Tarule's *Women's Ways of Knowing* was another integral part of transfer orientation. Although women were less than half of all transfer students, they still formed a significant portion of transfer students. Helping students recognize their particular voice and the way that they express and receive knowledge or perspectives is an integral part of student development, and most closely supports our first, second, and fourth primary goals.

David Kolb's theory of experiential learning most closely supported our first and fourth goals, as we would use it to help students gain an understanding of their own particular preferences in learning styles and the way they understood and preferred to receive knowledge. Since we could easily anticipate all four learning styles to be present at transfer orientation, it would be essential to build relevant program sections around Kolb's theory.

Under moral development, we considered both Carol Gilligan and Lawrence Kohlberg's theories, and considered both relevant to our work in transfer orientation. Gilligan's emphasis on women, such as Belenky, et al.,'s theory, demonstrates how we can understand the way female students orient themselves morally, and how important care and responsibility are. This emphasis on care and responsibility would have a strong impact on how women relate to others, and thus their perspective on moral action and development. Kohlberg's theory of moral development is also relevant; Kohlberg's emphasis on disequilibrium as a catalyst for moral development makes transfer orientation an ideal place for that development as students are

experiencing the new culture and environment of WIU. Transfer students may be at any variety of stages within these two perspectives but both theories can shed light on that moral development. These theories support most closely our third and fourth primary goals.

Schlossberg's theory of transition was another highly relevant theory for transfer orientation, and one of the most obviously and directly connected to the experiences of transfer students. Transition is defined as any "event or nonevent resulting in changed relationships, routines, assumptions, and/or roles" (Goodman as cited in Evans et. al, 2010, p. 215), which may not be disruptive for all transfer students, but it is likely that they will experience a significant amount of transition in some way. This theory is not only applicable to college students but also adults in general, making Schlossberg's theory especially helpful as not all transfer are traditional-aged college students. Using this theory, we can gain insight into understanding the varying challenges students may be facing as well as how their environment can be impacting these changes. Schlossberg's emphasis on helping students through transitions and coping methods or learning the strategies to support students is an essential guidepost in applying a theoretical lens to transfer orientation. In our goals, Schlossberg's theory most strongly supports our first three primary goals.

Vivienne Cass and Anthony D'Augelli provide models for understanding sexual identity formation that can be helpful in structuring an environment conducive to allowing students to explore their sexual identity, develop support systems, and feel comfortable coming out at Western Illinois University. In terms of racial identity development, Derald Sue & David Sue's model of racial and cultural identity development is integral to working with students of color, while W. Rowe, S. Bennett, and D. Atkinson's theory on white racial consciousness model can shed light on the perspectives of white students, some of whom may be encountering ethnic or

cultural minorities for the first time. All of these identity development models support our fourth goal of students reflecting on their personal development and identities.

Part 4 – Student Characteristics through Theory

As part of our efforts to apply theory to practice, we assessed a wide scope of theories and their applicability, as well as the varied demographics and by extension variety of identities of transfer students to the university. A transfer student could be a veteran, a member of lesbian, gay, or bisexual populations, first generation college students, white, a person of color, male, female, a nontraditional student with or without a family, or a person with a disability. With all that in mind, our knowledge of millennial student characteristics, and our personal experiences and interviews, we proceeded to examine each theory we had identified as relevant in terms of the characteristics of transfer students and how it would affect the development of those students during transfer orientation.

Psychosocial Development

Chickering's developmental theories and vectors (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010) was one of the most relevant theories to our work with transfer students, and all of the vectors could be applicable to transfer student development. Essential to understanding Chickering's theory is recognizing that vectors can support each other, and that students entering WIU can experience what Chickering (as cited in Evans, et al. 2010) called "cycling". Cycling leads to students who had previously established strengths or development in these vectors to struggle to develop them again. It is not unlikely that students transferring to WIU would experience cycling across all these major vectors as a result of their transition.

Developing competence would be a struggle for the students as they changed institutions from one they were acclimated to, to WIU and a new campus environment. With this, there

would be the additional challenge of adjusting time management skills to possibly living on-campus, as opposed to having living situations off-campus. To develop competence, transfer students need to get involved on campus as student leaders and connecting with similar peers.

Managing emotions is a challenge to all students, but transfer students could be additionally susceptible to this challenge without supports and by having to re-learn things they previously demonstrated competence in. Veteran students in particular could struggle with managing emotions as they re-learn civilian life and socialization. Students could be inhibited from expressing emotions because they feel that they should adapt easily to this new environment, considering their level of competence at their previous institution. On the positive side, students may feel better about transferring into WIU, considering it as a personal accomplishment and/or a better fit.

Moving through autonomy towards interdependence, among transfer students, could vary, from heavy parental involvement (as a hallmark of millennial students) to someone who has a family or significant partner. The transfer to WIU may result in a shift in the student's role within that family, no longer living at home or managing new responsibilities within their family, respectively. Any one of these situations signals a significant shift within their relationships and what form interdependence takes.

Students may have already set career goals or may still be searching for a major; additionally their choice of vocation may be dependent on their parental influence on appropriate careers. Students experiencing that will struggle to express their independent opinions, even when it is clear that they would benefit developmentally from making their own decisions. Transfer students will be especially challenged as they may feel more independent or "on their

own” without being connected to appropriate resources on campus that would aid in their transition or development.

With the vector of developing mature interpersonal relationships, transfer students may already have well-established relationships in their personal lives. They would, however, benefit greatly by connecting with other transfer students on campus so they can build a better support network. This is an area where students could be struggling as they may not retain the relationships they had established in their previous institution into WIU. As part of the development of mature interpersonal relationships, it is integral that students become comfortable with their environment.

Establishing identity is another important part of the experience of transfer students. It is not an unusual struggle for students to find a new identity on campus; this would be exacerbated among transfer students who had previously established an identity tied to their former institution. A shift in lifestyle (perhaps living away from home for the first time) combined with an arena of development (academic competence, such as time management skills) that is cycling may result in significant identity struggles for transfer students. LGB students in particular could struggle to disclose their sexual orientation, if they had done so at their previous institution. Conversely, they could decide to come out for the first time at WIU, thus leading to a different sort of developmental challenge for them as highlighted by Cass and D’Augelli.

Developing purpose is one of the primary needs of transfer students, especially for students who have earned an associate’s degree. Most likely their transfer was done as a result of furthering their career goals, and making commitments that support those career goals is of utmost importance to them. This could be highly developed in some individuals who had carefully plotted their academic career through a community college and ending up in a four-year

institution, yet may also be a struggle for those same students who lacked a vocational orientation at the end of their time in community college. Familial influence is a key influence here, and students with families of their own would experience a sense of vocational identity as tied to their own support for their family, which may be different than for the student who has been guided by their parent towards selecting a career path.

Developing integrity was the last major vector discussed by Chickering as an area for development. This can be an area where a transfer orientation can impart a sense of pride in the civic and academic culture at WIU. This vector also deals with students appreciating the differences of others, while also cultivating their own personal values. This can result in incongruence between disparate areas such as self-interest versus the needs of the many. Balancing between these two identities may be something already developed in transfer students based on their familial obligations, but it may also be an area for development depending on the students first time assuming a role where there may be greater needs put upon them than had been in the past, such as their role on a residence hall floor or in a group project.

Cognitive-Structural Theories

Perry's (as cited in Evans, et al., 2010) theory of intellectual and ethical development, like Chickering, is a highly applicable theory to the development of transfer students. As you will see throughout this project, transfer students arrive at the university at a multiplicity of stages; students coming to WIU could be, depending on previous experiences, in dualistic, multiplistic, or relativistic thinking, or committed in their relativism. Different acculturation, such as veterans or minority students, could have a marked impact on their developmental perspectives, as well as life experiences.

It is highly possible that students, as they transition into the university, experience Chickering's concept of cycling and approach knowledge, delivered by the university, in a dualistic manner, referring to the referent sources of authority. This is especially applicable to veteran students, as they re-acclurate to civilian life and have to adapt to multiplistic perspectives, as opposed to the directly authoritarian nature of the military and social hierarchy there, and first-generation college students who are most likely experiencing their first time on a four-year campus. Finally, minority students, depending on previous experiences, such as an emphasis on familial perspectives leading to dualism, or having to work in a white-dominated culture leading to multiplicity, could be anywhere across that development spectrum.

Transfer orientation, then, is essential to cultivating a positive environment for cognitive dissonance. By helping students make choices themselves and creating an awareness that their environment operates under relativistic principles, we are actively helping their development. Working solely with an adviser, in the current orientation mode, encourages dualistic thinking by establishing that advisor in a position of authority who gives the student the appropriate knowledge they should receive. In this way, the advisor knows the "correct" answers for that particular student; students aren't encouraged to explore their own options for themselves. For multiplistic and relativistic students, this could be frustrating, and it is important that their development be supported and encouraged through appropriate activities, such as career exploration and reflection, so that students feel supported and challenged to retain their multiplistic and relativistic mindsets.

The significant challenge of Perry's theory, however, is through cognitive dissonance as a catalyst for development. At orientation, cognitive dissonance can happen, but it can be difficult for students who are in a new environment and without adequate supports and a well-constructed

transfer orientation environment to support those developmental shifts, cognitive dissonance could cause deflections from development. Therefore the environment should be supportive when working with students and challenging them to move beyond dualistic or multiplistic reasoning.

Baxter Magolda's model of epistemological reflection (Evans, et al., 2010) is another major cognitive-structural theory applicable to the transfer students, as it allows us to gender and thus more effectively apply ways students perceive knowledge. Women may be more likely to build interpersonal relationships with their peers when constructing knowledge, and interact with them to gain knowledge and share ideas. Baxter Magolda's theory suggests that women may favor less interaction with their professors, preferring to receive knowledge and to feel comfortable in a learning environment that gives opportunities to demonstrate knowledge. In contrast, men will more likely prefer to be public in terms of their expression of knowledge, and more critical of their instructors. There is a distinct emphasis on logic and what could be termed a competitive style in the way male students interact. Both of these indicate the importance of having multiple avenues of expression and internalization of knowledge for transfer students.

In general, Baxter Magolda's theory suggests that students are still learning self-confidence in their own opinions. Most students seem to be uncertain of their own grasp of knowledge, and it is relatively rare that students can take knowledge contextually and recognize the importance of knowledge to be supported by evidence of some kind. Like much of our theories, students could be anywhere in this spectrum based on their previous experiences. It is more likely that students will recognize contextual knowledge depending on their life experiences and age.

An important aspect of Baxter Magolda's theory lies with the concept of dominant subordination and socialization and how these factors can affect student voice. This is especially applicable to minority students, who are already under hegemonic pressure to conform to dominant cultural perceptions and notions of identity. Students feeling those pressures will likely feel less inclined to speak their own voice. This places an increased emphasis on familial and community support systems for minority students, and the importance of providing alternate structures for those students to utilize.

Along with Perry and Baxter Magolda's theories, we have Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule's cognitive-structural theory (Evans, et al. 2010) as applied to "women's ways of knowing." Belenky et al. posit that women in our society have a gendered way of understanding knowledge, where women assume certain perspectives on knowledge and how it is internalized. As stated previously, depending on life experiences women may be any variety of perspectives on knowledge.

Students in the "voiceless" or "received" knowledge stages are at a particular development hurdle during orientation, and it is not unlikely that especially underprivileged groups of women, such as first-generation or minority women would be in this category. If students have attended college or their transfer is due to a significant failing of a male figure in their life, they could be in the subjective knowing stage, recognizing that knowledge depends on them. Students in this stage could be less receptive towards orientation knowledge of the university, preferring to find it out for themselves or referring to their own knowledge base regarding university life, such as their previous institutional experiences.

Students in the procedural knowing perspectives could benefit greatly from a structured orientation session. If they were highly involved in their previous institution they could be

struggling to learn the new ways that knowledge is delivered through WIU, whereas students favoring the constructed perspective would seek to integrate subjective and objective experiences. Depending on previous life experience, it is quite possibly that some students may be in that constructed perspective.

Like Gilligan, discussed in great detail in our paper later, it is important to note that the primary mode of research has been done with women, and that this theory may be applicable to men as well in terms of their cognitive structures.

Moral Development Theories

Kohlberg's theory of moral development (Evans, et al. (2010) points to eight developmental stages, and transfer students potentially occupying many of them, depending on life experiences. Kohlberg's note that students living on campus have more an opportunity to develop internalized moral codes than students living off-campus, suggesting that transfer students, who might primarily live at home if they attended a community college, and transfer students in general, who are unlikely or in fewer number to live in the residence halls, could experience less opportunities for moral development.

First generation college students may be struggling with the pre-conventional level, due to their lack of experience in collegiate culture. Veterans may be struggling more with their moral development in civilian society. Minority students may be struggling with the interpersonally normative morality systems, showing concern about the social role within the family is of high importance to their identity and this stage of development. Concern for the rights of humanity may be a key concern for veterans, seeing themselves as protectors. But it is unlikely that this stage would be highly represented during transfer orientation; the social construction of the university culture is not usually of high importance to them at the entrance of

their time here. This stage, however, could be heavily represented by nontraditional students, who are adept at balancing the multiple responsibilities they have with their families and adult life. Students in this stage could find it frustrating to work with less morally developed peers who have not had the same life experiences.

Gilligan's theory of moral development (Evans, et al., 2010) serves as an important method to understanding how moral development is gendered in our society. With the notion that women identify care and responsibility as their moral compass, we can look at the variety of female transfer students and attempt to understand their moral development.

Women students may be in any one of the three levels described by Gilligan, or in one of the two transitional periods between those levels. The model describes a student's relationship between themselves and others as the main conceptual framework for moral development, with care, justice, and responsibility as the primary way that female students map out their lives. If students are oriented towards individual survival, which is a likely position to take considering their transition into a new environment, they will be struggling to distinguish between what they want and what they need at that time. There may be an effort to shut down and isolate one's self against forming new friendships and support structures as a means of protection.

Students who are in the transition from selfishness to responsibility may be more inclined to form connections with other individuals during orientation, or if in a stage of goodness as self-sacrifice – a highly likely stage for individuals with families or familial obligations, such as minority students – would have an emphasis on being reliant on others, and on consensus-building and not hurting others. These women would value the kind of support networks available during orientation, and benefit greatly from collaborative experiences. Similarly, women in the transition from goodness to truth would also benefit from collaborative

experiences, as they would put others first before themselves. Again, this perspective would likely be highly prevalent among nontraditional students.

Students who recognize the morality of nonviolence would be well-equipped to choose between competing or conflicting choices and make decisions in an effective way for herself. This is another likely position for women during transfer orientation, as students coming in to the university most likely made this choice as part of their own needs balanced with the needs of others.

An important distinction with Gilligan's theory is that, though primary research and applicability is emphasized on women, men can have the "caring voice" that Gilligan describes. It is not necessarily so that male moral development will follow along Kohlberg's lines, just as it is not necessarily so that female moral development will follow along Gilligan's theoretical lens. Ethnic consideration is another variable in perspectives on moral development; women or men with an ethnic culture or background emphasizing care would contrast with individuals whose ethnic background emphasizes justice as a perspective of moral development.

Learning Styles

Kolb's theory (as cited in Evans, et al., 2010) is an important part of understanding how students learn and consequently an important part of understanding how we should structure programmatic options in orientation. We could project to encounter all variety of learning styles during transfer orientation. Noting, as Kolb did, that learning styles can change over time, we should anticipate that students may have to struggle with a new learning style or changes in the preferences they have for particular learning modes as they transition into WIU. Also, that their learning styles can be different depending on major – for students searching to declare a major and finding clashes with their learning styles, this may pose a significant challenge.

Based on the four major learning styles (converging, diverging, accommodating, assimilating), students could prefer to learn through any variety of different ways, with variations across all sorts of identity development.

Convergers are usually found in the physical sciences and engineering. Assimilators are usually found in the basic sciences and mathematics. Accommodators are usually found in practical fields such as business. Divergers are usually found in the humanities and liberal arts. This information will be particularly useful in transfer class registration appointments. As students are learning how to register, how to choose classes, and how to work with professors, they should recognize their preferred learning style. Advisors should also realize what type of student they might be working with and cater to the appropriate learning style when helping them register for classes and understanding their current degree progress.

Understanding what the various learning styles and which styles are generally found in each discipline is important in working with undecided students as well. Learning styles inventory questionnaires can be used to help students understand their learning style and figure out what major or profession they may excel in. While this should not be the deciding factor for a student's chosen major, it can play a large role in student success in the classroom.

An important part of understanding learning styles is the recognition is that student affairs personnel are by and large accommodators, with the learning style of assimilators being least represented. When programming for orientation, we need to be aware of the preferences by student affairs professionals to present information in an accommodator style, and that other populations may struggle with that preference, especially assimilators.

It's important to note – especially for transfer orientation, where many ethnic minorities may be present – that research on using Kolb's theory has found that race may play a role in

preferred learning styles among various cultures. Anderson and Adams (1992), as cited in Evans et al (2010), addressed the variations in learning styles among races. They found that African American, Hispanic, and Native American students generally “demonstrate competence in social interactions and peer cooperation, performance, visual perceptions, symbolic expression, and narrative, and therefore are less comfortable with tasks that require independence, competition, or verbal skills” (p. 149). Also, white females and African American, Native American, and Hispanic males and females tend to prefer a relational rather than analytical style. These differences are important to consider when working with specific racial groups or when mixing races in discussions and group work.

Integrative Theory

Schlossberg’s transition model (Evans, et al., 2010) is a crucial part of our analysis of transfer students. The theoretical framework offered by Schlossberg provides an understanding of the transition experience of transfer students. As part of this, we need to understand the three major meanings of transition, and the four S’s, or factors, that can significantly influence transfer students in their transition.

The types of transition that are experienced by students transferring into WIU may be anticipated or unanticipated. Some examples of anticipated transitions would be a student who is transferring from a community college to WIU, a veteran student from overseas to complete their degree, or a student who took time off and returned to finish their degree. An example of an unanticipated transition would be students who ended up transferring from their initial choice of college to come to WIU.

The context is equally important; if students are “swirling” (transferring from one institution to another to another, multiple times) then their transition may be easier. The setting

and environment of orientation is extremely important to all kinds of transfer students, as well as their relation to previous orientations (or lack thereof) at their previous institution. Having a negative or positive orienting to institutions of higher learning can have a profound effect on their transition and how they manage it.

Impact is the third major aspect of transition identified by Schlossberg, and it can be viewed as a positive or negative factor for students in transition, depending on how much the transition to WIU plays a role in altering their daily routine and relationships. The impact on some students, who may be moving away from home for the first time may be extremely significant, feeling intense stress and excitement as they experience a new situation but also see the possibilities in their transition. Other students who have had to commute to college for whatever reason, such as nontraditional students, may find it less of an impact and an easier aspect of transition to manage. However, those nontraditional students who are returning to college or seeking to enhance their current job skills may find the transitional impact on their life significant. Students who are transitioning from full-time to part-time jobs or balancing work and school would find there to be a large impact on their transition. Students who left a four-year institution to come to WIU may be struggling with this impact on their life-plans, as they most likely didn't anticipate transferring to another four-year institution.

The first major factor in how well students handle their transition is the situation. Was there a trigger that led to the transfer (and thus transition) of the student, such as a divorce, wanting to complete a degree, job lay-off, or other significant factor? Situational timing is important. Some students may have anticipate the situation of transferring to a four-year institution to complete their education, others may not have anticipated transferring to another four-year institution. Generally, we can say that transfer students most likely have made the best

choice that they can under their circumstances and the timing of their transfer is appropriate for them.

Control is another factor in the situation. Students have chosen to transfer here; while they may react differently, they were generally in control of the decision to transfer to this particular place. Other aspects of control may be that they do not feel in control of their own life, if pressured to get a degree by external sources, such as economic or social. Role change is another factor; depending on their role in their family that may be altered as a result of their decision to back to school. Previous student leadership roles now vacated may influence their transition, prompting them to seek involvement elsewhere or feel less connected to the university.

The time spent by transfer students at a previous institution, if at a community college for example, may prompt positive perspectives on their situation transferring now. Their previous experiences at community college could also play a significant role in shaping how they interpret and adapt to WIU; if they were counseled well or poorly, for example, or if few of their courses transferred successfully.

It is important to note that students may be feeling concurrent levels of stress from outside situational factors. These factors and the student's perspective on their decision to transfer play significant roles in their situational factors, through validating their choice of transferring here, and how important their time here as it relates to outside factors such as family, work, relationships, or other things influencing their transition.

The second major factor identified by Schlossberg is the self. Traditional students may feel pressured to achieve at their new institution, especially if they did well at their former one, or they have parental pressures to succeed. Socioeconomic factors as they relate to self are an

important aspect of transfer students; many transfer students will likely be coming from underprivileged socioeconomic status backgrounds and will be financing college differently than the traditional student. With this also comes their age; nontraditional students will have vastly different experience in college than their younger peers, and their relationships and maturity in terms of relating to others has a significant impact. Lastly among demographic features is ethnicity or race; it is important to note that ethnic minority students transfer less successfully than their white peers.

Psychological resources are another major part of the self. Millennial or traditional-aged students, as sheltered, may be struggling significantly with not being sheltered for the first time (Coomes & Debard, 2004) and how to reorient support networks without that. If students do not have adequate support in their transition, they may expect things to be laid out for them more easily. If students have had previously firm values and established commitments, they may be struggling as college may prompt them to reconsider those values. If they were previously self-sufficient as nontraditional or veteran students most likely are, that may serve as an aid in their transition. It may also hinder them, as they may not know how to seek appropriate help throughout their developmental struggles. Lastly, their spirituality may serve as a source of resilience and meaning-making, helping students find purpose in their transition.

The third major factor in transition is support. Environmental supports are extremely important for students, and it is critical that they are aware of the institutional support structures available for them. Currently at WIU there is limited transfer student support, with academic advisers being the only resource they have contact with in campus. As millennials, students may be leaving their environmental support of home for the first time (Coomes & Debard, 2010).

Their previous environmental support at a community college or their old institution will be gone, thus leading to a necessarily supportive environment to help aid their transition.

Last of the factors influenced transition is the strategies employed by students in their transition. Students may have different perspectives on how to deal with stress. This range makes sense, however, because individuals define their own transition. A transfer to a new school may be much less stressful depending on students' efficacy and ability to handle transitions; if they've been through them before they may have developed ways to work through that transition. Here, the millennial trait of confidence could serve useful and detrimental at the same time. Students who expect rewards and high challenges may struggle when they do not receive those awards or feel challenged enough by their particular circumstances.

Identity Development Theory

As we have discussed before, transfer students come from a variety of backgrounds, and thus, have a wide variety of identities. Sue & Sue's Racial and Cultural Identity Development model (Evans, et al., 2010) is helpful for examining the experiences of students of color. These minority transfer students may find themselves anywhere across the developmental spectrum. Lack of intentional development of that identity may encourage students to continue conformity if they are in that stage. If students are experiencing dissonance as they transfer into WIU, it is important that their identity development be recognized and supported. Students undergoing resistance and immersion will most likely reject voices of authority in the dominant white culture, leading to students missing out on vital information for their adaptation to the WIU campus. Additionally, students experiencing multiple intersections of identity, such as LGB students of color, may feel forced to choose between identities depending on what supports they

seek out in the community, and veteran students may struggle adapting to an environment where race is recognized, as opposed to their service in the armed forces.

For white-identified students, there is a significant lack of education on campus for white racial consciousness; it remains an “invisible” trait and unacknowledged privilege for much of the white student body. Students could find themselves anywhere within the spectrum described by Rowe, Bennett, and Atkinson in their White Racial Consciousness Model, but it is likely that as they come to WIU and transfer orientation, they will encounter racial and ethnic minorities that will challenge their particular racial perspective.

Research has shown that up to 10 percent of college students identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (as cited in Evans, et al., 2010). Undoubtedly LGB students would enter WIU in multiple stages of their identity development, depending on previous experiences. Cass’s theory of Sexual Identity Formation points conclusively to the need of a supportive environment for exploring and establishing LGB identity. Students may find themselves on any level of the various stages under Cass’s theory, depending on previous experiences. This theory points to the need of varying needs of LGB students, depending on their developmental placement. Cass’s theory also points to the importance of multiple identities as influencing the overall identity construction of the individual. For students from varying class, racial, ethnic, cultural, spiritual identity, and other backgrounds, this complicates the manifestation of LGB identity.

D’Augelli’s theory of LGB identity development (Evans, et al., 2010) points to the influence of support groups in the development of those particular identities, and the positive or negative effects that can result from that. In lieu of other supports, such as a family unit that disapproves of a student’s sexual orientation, a supportive campus environment is essential to LGB students. As students transfer into WIU, it is highly likely that those support structures will

change, and students may start exploring their sexual identity for the first time as they develop alternate support networks that may have hindered their development before. For students that have already assumed an LGB identity, they face a different challenge in seeking out new support structures in their new environment. D'Augelli's emphasizes the plasticity of sexual identity development; students may enter and exit their LGB identity depending on social contexts and their own personal history.

Part 5 – Environmental Issues

The next part of our analysis delves into the environmental factors, under that can play a role in affecting student development and the theories we will be utilizing in our transfer orientation.

Psychosocial Theory

In terms of Chickering's vectors, starting with developing competence, transfer students by and large do not take advantage of learning about the organizations available on campus to get involved in. The current transfer orientation program also does not have a component that allows students to explore different major choices to find the correct fit. The orientation program does not attempt to offer opportunities for students to develop their reasoning and critical thinking skills. As a result of this, transfer students may not know the resources on campus that allow them to cope with situations that arise, and transfer orientation does not provide opportunities for students to reflect on their goals and the ways they can achieve those goals.

In managing emotions, transfer students may not be provided with programs that allow them to express their feelings on transferring to a new institution, positive or negative. Since orientation is not mandatory for students, those who do not participate may have trouble managing their emotions the first time they arrive on campus for classes. The current orientation

program does not allow students to use their problem solving abilities except on placement tests. Transfer orientation can allow students to feel more acclimated with the campus and improve their self-confidence in their ability to be successful college students.

In moving through autonomy towards interdependence, orientation allows students to gain more agency as students and feel more independent. A better sense of connectedness to the campus and others can stem from an orientation session specific to transfer students. By implementing a career or major exploratory session in orientation, students can feel a better sense of self-direction and control of their vocational path. By feeling more well-connected with the campus through an intentional, developmental transfer orientation, transfer students can feel more like mature adults. This is an issue where students may also feel challenged by dissonance with their families in transferring to a new school and possibly moving away from home for the first time.

In developing mature interpersonal relationships, the current orientation program doesn't allow students time to have group discussions or social activities that facilitate forming new friendships, or discuss much about diversity on campus and the way that students relate to each other. As supports, however, students can develop tolerance and appreciation for that diversity through campus activities – if students are connected to those activities. Attached to this, family impact on student relationships can play a key role, either positive or negative.

For establishing identity, the current transfer program again doesn't have opportunities for students to develop their identity as WIU students. Students may struggle to internalize the identity of a WIU student if they are not aware of campus resources and feel connected to the campus. By adding a small group discussion as a support, and guided work through the student activities fair, students can come to recognize the importance of their identity as WIU students.

Another key aspect of identity is that current transfer orientation programming does not offer opportunities for students to discuss and reflect upon their identities

For developing purpose, the current orientation does not make it mandatory for students attend the activities fair to find organizations that will help them make meaning in their time spent at WIU. Career exploration can better help students in making informed decisions about their particular major choices and give them an educational or vocational direction to their studies.

Under developing integrity, current transfer orientation doesn't emphasize the development of identity or integrity as a WIU student; there is no transmission of values inherent to WIU. Giving more time to transfer orientation would show transfer students that faculty and staff are dedicated to supporting all students, not just first-year students. Students would also feel a sense of responsibility to the campus, and feel integrated into the community.

Chickering also identified seven "key influences" (Evans, et al., 2010) that played decisive roles in student development. The first of these he identified as institutional objectives. WIU has established clear values and mission statements for itself; whether or not they are espoused vs. enacted is of prime importance to this question, and whether they are followed through by all individuals.

The second key influence is institutional size; WIU is a smaller campus than many large research institutions. However, it is not small enough that students could not conceivably fall through the cracks and not receive the help they need.

The third through fifth key influences could be discussed as the pedagogy and learning environment, through student-faculty relationships, curriculum, and teaching. Student-faculty relationships at WIU depend largely on the class and major. Macomb is a small enough location

that students can see their professors outside the classroom. Depending on special projects, students may work very closely with faculty, but by and large research opportunities and the like are not available for students to take advantage of to build closer relationships with their faculty. In curriculum, professors tend to develop their own coursework; the First-Year Experience program is not structured around a central book reading emphasized in classwork or shared First-Year Experiences, rather professors select their own FYE experiences for their classes. Additionally, FYE is not offered to transfer students; the only comparable program is the Transfer-Year Experience which is run exclusively through the University Housing and Dining Services. And in teaching, students struggle with some majors who may not emphasize engaged pedagogical methods and “teach to the Powerpoint”, as one student described it.

In terms of friendships and student communities, WIU has many opportunities for students to participate in peer learning, at least in common living areas like the residence halls or student organizations. For students not involved in those areas, engagement is less likely.

Finally, in terms of student development programs and services, perspectives on intentional student development can vary widely across and between departments. Some services focus extensively on providing services and less on developmental focus, while others are very intentional about the student development they foster. Different perspectives are emphasized even within specific departments, such as housing or the Office of Student Activities.

Cognitive-Structural Theory

Perry’s work offers a Developmental Instructional (DI) model that focuses on four variables that emphasize challenge and support. These four variables tend to play out in how

heavily they are emphasized; some variables are highly emphasized on campus environments and some, less so.

The first variable, structure, is solely given in orientation through their academic adviser in terms of development. If students elect to not attend transfer orientation, they receive absolutely no guidance outside of phone registration with their adviser, and never see the campus. In contrast to this, first-year students receive an extensive amount of structure over their two-day orientation process. Once students arrive on campus, they experience a medium level of structure; university policies and procedures guide action but there is little change between different developmental levels where more or less structure is offered after arriving on campus. Generally, the most structure is offered during orientation – except during transfer orientation.

In terms of diversity, the WIU campus is reasonably diverse considering its location, yet still is dominated by white-identified students and staff, especially in the student affairs departments, where racial minorities are not highly visible. Students may struggle with the amount of visible diversity on campus, and the emphasis on it, when failing to recognize the quality of the diversity of experiences. The transfer student population, however, is more diverse than the average student population, leading to some developmental advantages that transfer orientation could offer in terms of the students it works with.

Experiential learning right now is not offered in orientation except through students registering for courses. There is no modeling of the classroom behavior for those students. As mentioned before, their only connection to learning is working with their academic adviser. Likewise with personalism; transfer orientation now solely revolves around their academic

adviser as a personal contact, and whatever orientation staff they come in contact with if they come to campus for transfer orientation, which few students do.

Baxter Magolda's theory can also be used to analyze environmental factors, even though the theory doesn't explicitly focus on the environment. Based on transfer student demographics, we can presume that Magolda's stage of "absolute knowing" would be less prevalent than "transitional knowing", based on the research done in students of varying progress through college. The greater portion of minority students in the transfer population as opposed to the first-year population points to the importance of understanding, analyzing, and looking at domination, subordination, and socialization that could affect and limit the voice of those students. Yet their greater number in transfer orientation allows us to possibly develop those voices more than if they were in an even more prevalently white orientation program.

This is the converse with women and Belenky, et al.'s theory of women's ways of knowing. Women are a minority in the transfer student population. The emphasis on lecturing as a preferred mode of delivering knowledge could hinder the development of those women's voices. Student interaction and peer group work could be a support for that development.

Moral Development Theory

Kohlberg's theory of moral development points to disequilibrium or cognitive conflict as when students have to struggle with internal contradictions in their moral reasoning, or when their moral reasoning conflicts with others. This exposure to conflict becomes developmental. Some students may clash with the authoritative nature of transfer orientation, which, if properly facilitated, could prove beneficial. However, plus-one staging would be unlikely to be helpful here, since the campus environment rarely provides answers to students developmentally.

Gilligan's theory poses more environmental problems for the student affairs professional. How do we treat students with different backgrounds or perspectives, such as justice versus caring, differently based on that knowledge? This is an opportunity for self-reflection on the part of the student affairs professional and senior student affairs officers to recognize that different does not mean deficient, and different approaches to moral development can students understand issues of invisibility and misrepresentation. The transfer registration now also does not emphasize challenging moral development on Kohlberg's theory by excluding resources on campus such as Alcohol and Other Drugs Resource Center, which could serve as development for students to make mindful decisions and be aware of their consequences both to themselves and others.

Learning Styles

As noted previously, Kolb's learning styles theoretical perspectives recognizes various aspects of an environment that play into an individual's learning style. Heredity, life experiences, the demands of the immediate environment, and one's undergraduate major, career choice, or job (Evans et al., 2010). A learning style can also change depending on certain aspects of the environment and students may operate different learning styles depending on the situation they're in. Individuals need to demonstrate flexibility in order for the competencies needed to succeed.

This flexibility is extremely important for transfer students as they enter a new environment. Specifically at transfer orientation, they may need to attend various sessions and programs, and work with individuals from a variety of learning styles preferences. Because of this, they will need to learn to adapt to the situation and use the style most appropriate for the contextual environment.

After transfer orientation, students will need to learn the skills to adapt to different learning styles they may encounter in the classroom. Different professors under different disciplines demonstrate various learning style preferences in their pedagogy that students will need to adapt to from class to class.

As mentioned in step 4 of the PTP model, students from various disciplines tend to display common learning styles within those majors. Students choosing to pursue a specific major may prefer a different learning style than what is the norm for that major. These students may struggle more with class content and need to rely on the resources of tutoring, study groups, and one-on-one interaction with instructors to achieve success in the classroom. Students should be aware of the resources available to them if they are struggling with the different learning styles emphasized within their field of study.

Integrative Theory

Under Schlossberg's theory of transition, we look at two major aspects of the environmental factors in the transition, both in the relation to the student and in the relation to the campus environment.

In relation to the student, during the transition process transfer students need to feel supported. Currently orientation does not support students or their guests in their transition because the current emphasis is on registration. There is little support for the wide range of emotions students may be experiencing when they arrive on campus. Their previous orientation may also play a role in how they receive orientation knowledge. Transfer students, as widely disparate in experiences as they are, have the support of their nontraditional families or families as traditional students. The environment that they perceive at WIU will be viewed positively or negatively contingent on their supports and previous personal historical experiences.

In relation to the environment itself, students are rushed through their current orientation experience and discouraged from coming to campus for transfer orientation unless they need to do testing. Additionally, there is a disparity in the administrative support for transfer students; it is rare that the vice-president for student services or president of the university speak at transfer orientation, but they frequently speak during freshman orientation. The specific aspects of Schlossberg's "moving in, moving through, moving out" are especially neglected through the transfer registration process. There is also no follow-up supports for transfer students after orientation.

Identity Development Theory

In terms of Rowe, Bennett, and Atkinson's white racial consciousness model, it should be noted that a majority of the students at WIU are white, and that it is unlikely most white transfer students have received much education on critical racial consciousness. There is little support for that consciousness or development on campus; the only major programmatic opportunities are the Dealing with Differences conference (when students aren't in school) and the White Privilege Conference, sponsored through the Office of Student Activities, which is not advertised in an effective manner to the entire student body. This could conceivably be the first time that students are entering as highly diverse an environment as the WIU campus, and thus some students may gain a racial awareness they lacked before.

Sue & Sue's model of racial identity development suggests that an environment where minority cultures are not supported or represented would hinder development for students. Students who may be searching for racial identity development need peers and institutional support to help transition and find a community within the university structure.

Cass, in terms of LGB development, points to the environmental factors of the presence of an LGB community, programs for LGB students, and safe spaces. Providing an opportunity for LGB students to interact is essential for LGB development; though WIU does not have an especially visible gay community, one does exist. Students should be made aware of UNITY as a student organization option, and as UNITY offers much of the LGB-friendly programming on campus. Safe Space training sporadic on the WIU campus.

D'Augelli's theory suggests that LGB identity is complicated in terms of analyzing environmental factors for, as LGB identity is largely "invisible", and students may have difficulty recognizing a non-visible LGB community. LGB visibility also is a growing factor at WIU, but is by no means a mainstream centerpiece of the university. LGB students also have to worry about the environmental impact of living in close quarters, such as a residence hall floor, with residents who are not friendly to LGB orientation. Resident assistants can be a source of support for these students, but there still remains the struggle for students who may have lived at home without having to worry about their sexual identity and how it would be received by a living community.

Part 6 – Challenge and Support

Regarding both the implementation of our program and the particular theories as applied to WIU's transfer orientation, we foresaw a variety of aspects developmentally and environmentally that could play a role in terms of challenging or supporting students.

Regarding Chickering's theory, students who do not attend the transfer orientation program will have a difficult time developing their identity as a WIU student, compared to students who still only rely on their academic adviser to plot our courses and not attend orientation. As a whole, the University Advising and Academic Support Center and Student

Development and Orientation department recognize this challenge, including the fact that few students attend transfer orientation, and fewer students take advantage of the activities fair included in the transfer registration.

We hope that by adding small group discussion, we can facilitate student interactions and that students will learn from each other, and that by adding a more guided and integrated approach to the student activities and services fair that we can better support students through Chickering's developmental vectors.

Under cognitive-structural theories, Perry's theory points to students not being supported by developing their own guidance in career paths, due to academic adviser "support". The emphasis on received knowledge from professionals hinders student development by not challenging students on their particular perspectives. Related to this, Baxter Magolda's emphasis on situating the learning within the students own knowledge is discarded due to the lack of learning emphasized throughout transfer orientation. As has been noted before, transfer orientation is primarily registration orientation.

Currently, transfer orientation does not include any sort of programming or discussion of moral reasoning, under with Kohlberg's or Gilligan's theoretical bases. The Women's Center does serve as a support for women finding their voice, per Belenky, but does not occupy an advocate role in the community.

Integrative theory offered the most analysis to us, under Schlossberg's purview. Politics is an integral challenge to the WIU campus; many academic affairs professionals express a lack of interest in attending programs outside of their scheduled work. Student Development and Orientation staff likewise have expressed that they do not want to alter their programmatic

emphasis. Getting both of these groups' buy-in on a revision and updating of the transfer orientation program would require significant political finesse.

Past historical precedent was viewed as unsuccessful, hence the lack of mandatory transfer orientation. This has unsurprisingly led to a dearth of transfer interest, and a subsequent downward spiral of services offered to transfer students. This is reflected now in the way that transfer orientation is viewed; it is viewed simply as registration, and thus not overly supportive of transfer students nor seen as important to support transfer students just by its definition.

It is important to note that transfer students come from all varieties of backgrounds, and demographics, and it is a challenge to attempt to meet the myriad needs of those students. While we are attempting to meet those needs, we are also under financial exigency that could lead WIU administration to cut services and programs; designing a program that would enhance and expand services and implementing it at this time would be difficult.

This difficulty is exacerbated by the fact that after transfer orientation completes, there are no major supports for them besides their academic adviser and previously established support structures; there are no transfer centers or services catering specifically to transfer students, despite their large presence on campus.

In terms of identity development, under Sue & Sue's theory, minority students may not see their culture validated during transfer orientation, and thus not feel comfortable or supported in their time at the university. They may not feel part of the university if they do not see representation of their particular culture, seeing that their cultural absence marks a lack of integration into the university. Representation by ethnic or racial minority groups could prove a helpful support.

Parallel to minority identity development, white identity development is rarely programmed for on campus, which is especially problematic as this supports whiteness as an invisible social construct. Student affairs professionals and faculty rarely emphasize it as an identity outside the classroom or in, respectively, and white students who are not in integrated racial consciousness perspectives may have trouble integrating with students of color.

Under Cass and D'Augelli's theories, it should be noted that the LGB community does not have a unique cultural space of their own, even in the Multicultural Center. This results in a decrease of visibility on campus, especially for students who are newly arriving on campus. To exacerbate this, professors generally do not discuss sexual identity in the classroom, and it is not seen as a potential source of learning. In terms of support, Safe Space training and UNITY are good sources of support for transfer students.

As for environmental and developmental supports that are in place as the transfer orientation stands now there are several. WIU gives students outlets on campus to explore interests and leadership during college through over 250 student driven organizations. WIU also appreciates student input on search and selection committees which helps student feel important and valued on who is employed at WIU. Through the theories of Baxter Magolda and Belenky et al., both of these forms of student engagement help students recognize their particular voice and the way that they express and receive knowledge or perspectives. WIU also has resources for racial and cultural exploration; although not abundant, WIU does have racial and cultural resources at conventional summer orientation that can be used to plug students into to support their exploration at orientation as well as on campus. In particular, the Multicultural Center has opened up access and increased centralization for that type of support. In terms of Sue & Sue & Baxter Magolda, this support can validate voice as well as identity for the students who may be

part of the minority at WIU. In addition, WIU already has a transfer orientation in place and several other programs designed for transfer students, which creates less of an issue for both students and administration when implementing a larger, more comprehensive transfer orientation program. Regarding Schlossberg, the existent program can ease the transition for all involved. Lastly in regards to environment, WIU has a good relationship with many institutions including Black Hawk Community College whom aligns credit-bearing classes with WIU's similar courses. Under Schlossberg and Gilligan, the seamless articulation agreements can aid in creating fewer problems between the student and both schools. This can lend itself to a smoother for both parties and a feeling of care from the institution toward the student.

Developmentally, there are also several supportive features that WIU possess for our enhancement. One support is that transfer student orientation leaders get to share knowledge. Having student staff available, in general, will be supportive when it comes to integrating them into the new transfer orientation. In terms of Perry and Baxter Magolda student leaders will be able to give much needed knowledge to the new students which will help legitimize the experiences of both student staff and new students. It also helps students understand how others internalized meaning as well as find peer support if there is cognitive dissonance when transitioning. In addition, there is currently space provided for students to ask questions as well as there is numerous staff members present during the day. Under Perry, students have the opportunity to gain knowledge, explore confusion, and discover resources.

Part 7 – Reviewing Goals and Outcomes

After reviewing the environment, student characteristics, and sources of challenge and support, we felt that all our goals were appropriately selected for what we were trying to accomplish. Nevertheless, we felt that some goals that could help support our theoretical bases

were missing from our discussion. To wit, we added several sub-goals to our four primary goals, which we retained. We added subordinate goals to the first and fourth primary goals we had developed.

Under our first goal, of students feeling supported, we added the goal of providing space and opportunities for minority or ethnic students of color to discuss their role and identity on a predominantly white campus and to recognize their particular supports on campus. Linked to this is providing opportunities for LGB students to find support at WIU.

Under our fourth goal, of students reflecting on their personal development and identities, we added the goal of providing informational or programmatic sessions to meet the various specialized identities, such as race, sexual orientation, nontraditional, veteran, etc. We also added the goal of empower students to construct their own educational experience here, thus giving making them active self-authors. Finally, we added that we wanted to provide opportunities for students to discuss moral situations and analyze their values according to the context of those situations.

Part 8 – Our Transfer Orientation Design

With these in mind, we present out re-designed transfer orientation. We have designed the environment, sessions, and components of Transfer Orientation to provide support to transfer students, using many different theoretical knowledge bases. For instance, in our orientation, transfer students have been given many opportunities to interact one-on-one with other new students, current students, staff, and faculty members so they can work to establish identity, under Chickering's model of psychosocial development. Students who belong to a minority student population, such as LGB students or African-American students, will have opportunities to interact with students similar to themselves and find supportive individuals that may assist

them in their transition. These, and other theoretical lenses, were the guiding imperative to our re-designed transfer orientation. What follows is our projected timeline for Transfer Orientation:

- 9:30am - Students may begin to check in/ if testing for both English and Math, picture ID may be taken
- 10am - 11am English Placement
- 11am - 12 Math Placement
- 11-12pm General Check in for students not taking placement testing/ picture ID's done in the Student & Parent Assistance Center
- 12pm - 12:30pm Welcome (whoever closes the welcome session will introduce the student leaders and let everyone know they will be bringing box lunch to the tables - panel comes on stage and begins their short blurbs)
- 12:30pm - 1:15 Lunch/ Fair (after Student orientation staff introduce themselves, the tables eat and listen to the panel speakers to see what other supports are available to them and what tables they want to pick up additional information from)
- 1:30 - 2:10pm Peer small group Sessions
- 1:30 - 4:05pm Parent and Family Session
 - Parent panel
 - Financial aid
 - Safety / health
 - Interactive session (help families understand what the transfer process feels like)
 - Informational - mom/dad's weekend (parent/family resource center)
- Conference Style Sessions/advising & registration 2:15pm - 4:30pm
- 2:15-2:45pm Session 1

- 2:55 - 3:25pm Session 2
- 3:35 - 4:05pm Session 3
- 4:05 - 4:15 Break
- 4:15- 4:30 Closing
- 4:30-5pm Optional Tours

Testing and Check-in

Within the current transfer registration program, the main focus is English and math placement testing. In addition, student who need to take testing are potentially unable to attend the residence life and commuting program sessions due to these sessions being simultaneously scheduled.

Due to this, we propose that transfer orientation will continue to include English and math placement testing, however, students will not miss out on any sessions due to their need to test. The testing time will be moved to the beginning of the day prior to the opening session, English placement will be from 10:00 – 10:40 a.m. (scattered when they finish due to how the math COMPASS test is structured) and Math testing will go from 11:00am – 11:50 a.m. English placement will be earlier because generally less students take English placement. Our goal here by doing this is to inconvenience fewer transfer students and their families if they are driving in that morning. If a student is taking both math and English testing, they will need to arrive at 9:30 a.m. to check-in, get their materials (which include a folder with a copy of their academic transcript, their conference schedule, and a WARD report). If a student is only coming for English placement testing and does not need to take the math test they may meet their guests in the Prairie Lounge and/or get their ID picture taken and wait in the Grand Ballroom for Opening Session. If a student is only coming for English placement testing and does not need to take the

math test they may either meet their guests in the Prairie Lounge and/or get their ID picture taken or wait in the Grand Ballroom for Opening Session. For a student who is taking only the math test they will check in at 10:30-10:45am and will be escorted by a summer orientation staff over to the testing area in Stipes Hall. Due to the staggered nature of completion for the math test, students will be guided by summer orientation staff from Stipes Hall and from around the Union to the Grand Ballroom for the opening sessions. If a student is only coming for math testing, they will be able to check in and take their student ID picture from 9:30 – 10:45 a.m.

At 10:45 a.m., all students who have checked in that are only taking math placement test will need to return to where they checked in at the Gallery to be escorted to Stipes Hall by a member of the summer orientation staff.

Students who are taking neither English nor math placement testing will be able to check in from 11:00am – 12:00 p.m. to collect their registration materials and enter the Grand Ballroom where the Opening Session will begin at 12:00 p.m. Students who have not yet taken their ID picture may do so during this hour.

Based on student situations in regard to testing and what time they arrive, guests who come with a student have several different options. For those with students that need to take both math and English placement testing; they will have the option to go into the Prairie Lounge and have coffee and donuts (already provided in the current transfer registration budget). Guests will be able to ask questions of academic advisors from University Advising and Academic Services Center or Admissions Counselors that will be circling the room, doing what is presently termed “schmoozing”. This will go on from 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. At 11:00 a.m., guests coming with students who are taking only the English placement test will be filtering into the Prairie Lounge after checking in, and an admissions counselor will announce

that they will be giving two tours, one at 11:05 a.m. and the other at 11:15 a.m. Guests and students who wish to go on the first tour will be directed to follow an admissions counselor. As the first group leaves, the remaining attendees can continue to and ask their questions (staff will remain available until 11:45 a.m.). The orientation staff members facilitating this session will encourage people to take the tour according to their arrival date, first group; first tour, second group; second tour. People are not required to attend the campus tour and may stay in the Prairie Lounge until 11:45 a.m., at that time they will be directed to the Grand Ballroom. People on campus tours will be escorted back to the Grand Ballroom prior to opening session at 12 p.m.

For those students who do not have to take either the English or math placement testing, they as well as their guests will be directed into the Grand Ballroom to wait for the opening session. While it is rare, some students may need to take the math but not English placement and will have free time from 11 a.m. – 12 p.m. These students will be directed to either the Prairie Lounge to ask questions and/or take a walking tour and/or get their student ID picture.

Schlossberg's theory serves us well here, as it is not only a theory of student development but is applicable to adult development as well. Giving parents, families, significant others, or other guests transfer the opportunity to ask questions, take campus tours, and/or mingle with admissions counselors supports their transition process as well. Often it can be very difficult for individuals heavily involved in a student's life to cope with the student transition to a new location. This is especially applicable for nontraditional and/or married students transitioning into college or first generation students leaving home. Offering guidance and encouraging questions or conversations will assist coping with the transition.

This one-on-one time, (a.k.a. “schmoozing”) with faculty, staff, and students caters especially to the accommodating and diverging learning styles, who prefer to learn through interaction with others and may not find their needs met in a lecture-based welcome.

This time also offers an opportunity for students to see the diversity of the WIU campus in faculty, staff, and students. For LGB or minority students, having some sort of representation during the social and seeing the integration of those identities into the community could have a profound effect on their security and in terms of modeling what those relationships could look like for those students. Students who may feel uncomfortable with their minority status can look to those leaders and representatives as models for how to interact and integrate with the white-dominated campus.

Welcome

Currently transfer student orientation includes a brief welcome for the students lead by the Director of the UAASC. The President of WIU and Vice President of Student Services are not in attendance to welcome the new students. The current orientation involves a very brief overview of what events will take place during the day. In addition, the current welcome is accompanied by a slide show showing the different services on campus along with a slide stating that there are academic advisors walking around to answer questions.

The new transfer student orientation welcome would include a brief welcome by the Director of the UAASC followed by detailed welcomes by the President of WIU and the Vice President for Student Services. The welcome by the President would entail what new students can expect from WIU along with an introduction to the campus and an explanation of the university theme for the current year. In addition the President would explain the importance for students to get involved on campus in increasing their growth and development. The President

would wrap up by talking about the statistics of transfer students on campus. These statistics would include how many transfers are present on campus, what the graduation rate is for this student population and the outstanding areas in which these transfer students are involved.

The welcome would continue with the Vice President for Student Services talking about the traditions of WIU. These traditions would entail the historical information on Rocky and what is meant by being a “Fighting Leatherneck.” The Vice President for Student Services would also talk about Homecoming and how important it is for our campus to have our alumni come back to celebrate the education they received from WIU and their time spent here. In addition, there would be an explanation about the Department Of Student Services and the roles that are played within the office to support and better assist the needs of students. The Vice President for Student Services would wrap up by briefly explaining how the rest of the orientation day will look for the students and their guests.

This area of transfer student orientation will allow the students to gain a better understanding of WIU and develop a sense of pride in their new institution before classes begin in the fall. The welcome will also give the new students an outline of the structure that will be put into place for the upcoming events and how it will better assist in their transition into WIU.

Chickering’s theory of identity development was used to design the welcome by giving the students a sense of identity as a new WIU student. In addition, students are able to develop a sense of pride and belonging to Western through the explanation of traditions. Students will also gain a sense of competence by being aware of the traditions of WIU along with the different programs that take place within Student Services and how the transfer students can be supported. The transfer students will also become aware of the environment for WIU in terms of the sheer amount of transfer students on campus.

In relation to Schlossberg, guests all participate in the Welcome social which is supportive by design. Welcoming people to the institution and showing how all functional areas will be involved and care about the transfer student success show *institutional support*. Feeling pride in your institution appeals to the *Self* within the 4s, students valuing the institution can provide support they need. Also, for guests to see how involved all aspects of the institution are in assisting with transfer success will instill a sense of pride in them as well as a sense that the student they are with will be supported by the university.

Student orientation staff

As part of our recommendation, we sought to propose a change in the search process for the Student orientation staff staff, where Student Development and Orientation more purposefully recruits transfer students to be a part of the Student orientation staff for the summer sessions, since this is where we'll be recommending the changes in orientation. Including more transfer students on student orientation staff would increase the diversity on the orientation team. The Student orientation staff would be responsible for meeting with student groups, assigned by folder color during the lunch panel and information fair section (described in detail later). The O-team would also guide students through a variety of networking and facilitation sections, as well as preliminary discussions of possible major choices and options and tracks within majors, especially for majors entering without full knowledge of their prospective academic paths.

Student orientation staff members would also be responsible for facilitating small group discussion (again, referenced later), and giving transfer students an opportunity to meet with a peer with shared or similar experiences.

This update and training objectives for student leaders was developed using Chickering, and will enhance the transfer students in developing interpersonal relationships by engaging

students during lunch. The student leaders will also facilitate the development of identity and purpose at Western by answering questions that go with the traditions and inter-working of the campus. In addition, the student leaders can foster a sense of integrity by sharing their personal values and help the students vocalize their own values to become balanced with the campus environment. By helping with the transfer orientation session, the student leaders will also become gain competence by making an influence in the lives of new students to Western.

The small group discussions with student leaders cater to a variety of learning styles. Divergers and Accommodators will be supported by having the ability to interact with other individuals and develop interpersonal relationships. Accommodators will be able to share their knowledge of WIU with other students and allow them to take action in developing their identity or cultivating their educational experience. Convergers will be able to gather information from student leaders in order to make wise decisions during their collegiate career. While many students, particularly assimilators, prefer not to discuss knowledge with others, the small group discussions will allow assimilators the opportunity to reflect on various topics and develop a personal philosophy for their time at WIU.

Simply by having a diversified, in terms of visible and invisible identities, orientation team, students will have the opportunity to interact with a variety of current students. Hopefully, within this group of orientation leaders, there will be a number of student leaders from historically oppressed or underprivileged groups. These student leaders will be integral in shaping the identity development of incoming LGB and racial minority students. Table discussions and small group discussions will allow these students the opportunity to self-disclose their identity, or to recognize supports within the student leaders group. In discussion about social norms at WIU, students can also learn how WIU fosters an environment of support for

LGB students and minority students, and whatever services that are available specifically for this population of students.

The student leader presence is a large support for students to help them through their transition. Having transfer students as supports will give these students some context and a someone to relate their experiences to. Also, this will give incoming transfer students the opportunity to ask questions of their peers. This peer interaction can assist in transfer students developing strategies that relate to student success by hearing struggles/challenges or success stories of current transfer students.

Lunch and Student Services Panel

Currently, there no lunch is a part of transfer registration. Under our program, lunch will be available as the students enter the fair location (Grand Ballroom). One Student orientation staff member will be paired with five to six students and they will sit with students and guests at a round table. The orientation staff will then introduce themselves as they head to the table and solicit introductions from those at the table. The tables will be made for ten people to accommodate guests as well as the students. Therefore there will be nine people to one student staff member. There will be approximately 30-32 tables (based on total attendance), covered in linens, with a purple and gold centerpiece. Box lunches will be delivered by the student staff members after the students and guest are seated. Student lunches will be included in the price of the orientation fee. Guests will pay \$10.00 to cover lunch for the day as well as materials from the sessions. Box lunches will consist of a sandwich, cookie, apple, chips, and drink. There will also be a vegetarian option for the people who indicate the need on their registration form

This lunch encourages many theoretical aspects of our program. Eating at round tables set up in the grand ballroom creates a group setting that can support great conversation and a

more intimate relationship for the students and the orientation staff., and possibly create positive group dynamics and lasting friendships. It also allows for us to expose students more intimately to students who are different from them or come from different experiences. Student Success in College reports that “Students are more likely to flourish in small settings where they are known and valued as individuals than in settings in which they feel anonymous” (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2005). Lunch can give students the opportunity for casual chatting and can break up the long day. This talkative atmosphere can make an environment feel livelier and help students feel more comfortable to share whatever is on their mind. Typically this would be a perfect environment for extroverts, however, this also may be a sensory overload for introverts or make people uncomfortable with the pressure to share about themselves. The transfer orientation staff will have to judge how to negotiate the two types of personality. Lunch will be one of the only common experiences that the students will all share. It will be a time that students may be able to find someone to become roommates with or a friend for life. At best, this will be a time that students can reflect on the positive experiences of their transition and allow students to level the playing ground for all in attendance. According to the book Student Success in College, transfer students “have little by way of common academic and social experiences with their peers who started at the institution and cannot easily connect with other transfer students. Thus, they feel disconnected from the institution” (Kuh et al. 2005, pp.255).

In terms of student development theory, starting with Baxter Magolda, having intimate small group casual time will allow for all students to start on equal ground with each other and allow for all voices to be heard in their early time at the university. Women, men, minority students will be placed strategically so that there is not an imbalance of voice that may be dominated. Students will be able to intake knowledge during this time at different rates and they

will have an orientation member to answer questions if confused. This is also a point in the day that students can share their knowledge with other people which can validate their voice. Perry's theory also suggests that this time could be a time to learn from peers and move beyond dualistic thinking to consider multiple perspectives and their validity on the campus.

The lunch can reveal through conversation where students are in their moral development by how they relate to/create other relationships. Gilligan's theory reports that students, women specifically, use care and responsibility as their moral compass.

The lunch will allow for student of all races and cultural backgrounds to interact with each other and gain exposure to peers who are different than themselves, which can support white racial consciousness and integrative aspects of racial identity development.

For Schlossberg, the lunch opportunity also gives students the opportunity to feel supported in regard to the *context* within their transition. If students are building relationships with student leaders or other transfer students their environment is more pleasing. Also the *types* of support they receive are important to a successful transition process. Students need to feel institutionally supported, which the student leaders offer, and other students need support to aid in *moving through* their transition.

For Kolb, the small group discussions cater to a variety of learning styles. Divergers and Accommodators will be supported by having the ability to interact with other individuals and develop interpersonal relationships. Accommodators will be able to share their knowledge of WIU with other students and allow them to take action in developing their identity or cultivating their educational experience. Convergers will be able to gather information from peer mentors in order to make wise decisions during their collegiate career. While many students, particularly assimilators, prefer not to discuss knowledge with others, the small group discussions will allow

assimilators the opportunity to reflect on various topics and develop a personal philosophy for their time at WIU.

As part of our program, we would also invite the student services fair participants to announce their services at the start of lunch to briefly explain some of their services. We believe this will cater to those who prefer auditory learning as well as give direction to student on where to go if they want more information about the area. This enhancement is in place because it provides more intentional direction to students. It also is a way for the university to cater to the different learning styles. Currently there is written instruction in regard to the fair but having it heard and be prompted through a speaker could encourage the students to be more intentional about the resources they will immediately need as well as be more comfortable talking with that student services representative.

By being a part of luncheon, the students are going to develop a sense of purpose on campus based on the information presented to them on the different student services areas. This directly supports development along Chickering's vectors. In addition, the students are going to get a feel for the environment of WIU and be able to make a connection to their new campus.

For Baxter Magolda, the blurbs can provide for the students' visibility of persons of authorities. Since transfer students are in typically in transitional knowing according to research, the blurbs can serve as an introduction to the authority figures in the different resource areas. Authorities are not all-knowing and are expected to provide more information regarding knowledge. Students in this stage are focused on understanding knowledge rather than simply acquiring knowledge and have found a more confident voice in expressing their knowledge. Therefore students can then seek them out on their own terms and discuss more about the resource if the students choose too.

These blurbs allow for students to make choices about how they will initially shape their experience at WIU and to make decisions how they see themselves interacting on campus and in the community, linking up with Gilligan. Connected to that, it may help female students under Belenky et al.'s theory to help develop a voice and voice some of their needs through seeking out specific services or experiences.

For identity development, with short presentations led by Unity and other programs in support of LGB students, LGB students and their allies will overtly recognize specific supports through these groups and the environment created by the institution. Likewise, presence by multicultural or ethnic student groups will allow students to find a place on campus for their specific racial identity to be supported, as per Sue & Sue.

From Schlossberg's integrative perspective, supporting varying student needs aid in *institutional* support that students feel. By having representatives from offices briefly explain their services and invite/encourage students to come and speak to them may assist in *coping methods/strategies* for a happy/successful transition to the institution.

Student Services Fair

The student fair is currently designed as an afterthought to the transfer registration. It is at the end of the day and many students choose to leave at that point because all the necessary events are completed.

The student services fair will now be in the middle of the day over the lunch hour. The fair will be surrounding the Grand Ballroom and as the students are finishing their lunch they will listen to a brief blurb from student service panel participants. This will allow transfer students to be informed about the services that are provided before they are let go to visit the booths. For a few of the services we would like them to make more of a presence at the fair.

The enhancement would be for the Office of Student Activities, Veterans & Military Personnel, and Campus Ministries to be at the fair. We would like the OSA to present more information on the student's access to LGBT and minority student organization opportunities such as African Student Association, Chinese Student Association, Association of bilingual bicultural students, Unity, etc. We would like the Veterans & Military Personnel to bring representatives and have information pamphlets for students to take away. We would also like Campus Ministries to present all of the religious and spiritual options that Western Illinois University and the community of Macomb have to offer. In recent research, the trends are pointing to a more diverse and specialized student population attending our higher education institutions therefore, our orientation needs to be in tune with the meeting those student needs. We also would like Student Judicial Services and the Alcohol and Other Drugs office to be in attendance because student do and will have these issues and we believe the university should be making it known that not only do we have these services if you are needing help with substance use but also that we are judicative for concerns of this nature as well as others.

The fair, in Chickering's perspective, can aid in intellectual competence because it involves acquisition of knowledge and skills related to a particular subject matter, building identity because students will be exposed to peer to peer differences, opportunities with offices that can help student acknowledge and progress through gender and sexual identity orientation and social and cultural heritage such as Casa Latina Cultural Center, Women's Center, and Student Activities. Students can also develop purpose by being exposed to the Career Center. The Career Center can help student develop clear vocational goals. Other student services can help student move from dualism all the way through possibly relativism through student organizations, student judicial programs, and many other offices. All student services should be

able to provide pathways for students to succeed as opposed to giving them the answer, which connects to Perry's plus-one staging model.

For Baxter Magolda, the fair encourages student validation a by offering co-curricular opportunities for students to legitimize their experiences and knowledge and gives students a stronger voice on campus. For Perry, this fair encourages students to recognize the value in multiple perspectives and not simply joining a student organization because they were told to do so, or because they were directed to by their parents; seeing the multiplicity of choices should help them move beyond the direct kind of authority referencing common to dualistic thinking.

With tables displaying Unity and other programs in support of LGB students, LGB students and their allies will overtly recognize specific supports through these groups and the environment created by the institution. Likewise, involving Casa Latina and the Gwendolyn Brooks Cultural Center can be recognized for identity development in those particular ethnic communities, linking up with Sue & Sue's theory of racial identity development. When white students see these organizations, this can raise consciousness about the different services and resources WIU provides for "people of color" as well as those resources for student that have cultural backgrounds that are different than a white student's background.

For Schlossberg, the fair encourages students to ask questions and get involved in organizations that they see value in. Student engagement and success is enhanced when students are involved, partly due to the support structure these organizations provide for students.

Student Sessions

Currently in the transfer registration program, the only sessions offered to provide transfer students with the tools and support to succeed is a Housing and Commuting session as well as the Student Services Fair, which is optional. After analyzing the various theories, it is

important to provide transfer students with support, strategies for coping with the transition, awareness of learning styles, and support for the various identities.

In our design of a Transfer Orientation Program, conference style sessions will be offered during three blocks of times. Students will be provided a list of sessions being offered along with descriptions during online registration. Depending on the popularity of each session during registration, Student Development and Orientation staff will determine how many times each session is offered, or if it needs to be offered at all. One session, the exploratory session for undecided majors will definitely be offered so undecided students, or students questioning their choice of major, have the opportunity to explore other majors before registering for classes.

These conference style sessions were developed with many theories in mind. For instance, many of the topics covered will provide support, strategies, knowledge of the self, and discussion of individuals' situations as outlined by Schlossberg. During registration, students will also choose session preferences from a list of session titles and descriptions. This will require them to look within themselves and develop competence to make decisions, develop purpose in what they wish to learn about in these sessions, and develop identity as they may choose to attend sessions that relate specifically to their identity, which relates to Chickering's developmental vectors and Perry's plus-one staging in terms of students moving from dualism to multiplistic perspectives. While some sessions will be facilitated by various departments, organizations, and offices, we were very intentional in providing recommendations to presenters to make sure that various learning styles (relating to Kolb) were covered in these sessions.

The exploratory sessions for students assists with their *moving in, moving through, moving out process*. Students have the opportunity to select sessions that they see value in which allows them to create a strategy (an effective tool in coping with transitions). Additionally,

the *Self* component as discussed by Schlossberg focuses on socioeconomic status (financial aid may assist with anxiety if a student has a low SES) ethnicity/culture (potentially addressed by the minority session) health (addressed by Beu Health Center) Spirituality (addressed by religious session) which are all ways of supporting students. *Role change* can also be a large part of some of transfer student experiences, especially if a student is nontraditional. The Nontraditional Session addresses these needs and further supports the decision to complete their degree by offering valuable information as to what their new experience may be like.

All of the sessions show support for varying student needs which is prevalent within the transfer population. These sessions let student know how their roles and experiences will be changing and how the institution will be supporting them. For more details on these sessions, please see appendix G.

Guest Sessions

While students are taken away for small group sessions by the student orientation staff at 1:30 p.m., transfer student guests will have a session from 1:30 to 4 p.m. At 4 p.m. there will be a break until the closing session.

Schlossberg's Counseling Adults in Transition Model indicates that the goals of helping are to explore, understand and cope, see Appendix J(Schlossberg, 1984). Assisting parent, family and/or significant others in these areas will assist the transfer student as well as their support systems. This two hour session will include from the Office of Public Safety in regard to emergency alert system, Beu Health Center for student health, a previous transfer student/ parent panel, and an activity that will introduce them to some of the stresses transfer students may be experiencing and how they can best support the students. Each session will have thirty minutes

blocked off, they will go in the aforementioned order. This session will take place in the Grand Ball Room.

From 1:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m., the Office of Public Safety will give guests the opportunity to learn about the Emergency Alert System here at WIU for ensuring student safety. This interactive session allows questions and uses a case study example to connect the audience with the steps that would occur if there was an emergency; OPS creates a scenario and then engages the audience throughout the session to make sure they understand the support system in place. OPS will discuss the Emergency Alert System and how both students and emergency contacts will be alerted through various modes of communication.

From 2:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m., Beu Health Center will be present on student health and health safety. With the “Swine Flu” and other pandemic outbreaks on college campuses across the nation, the issue of health safety has become more prevalent. The Beau Health Center will have a representative that discusses precautions that WIU takes to avoid outbreak of swine flu or similar issues, and what happens if outbreak does occur. Student health insurance will also be discussed.

From 2:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., a panel of transfer students will share their relevant experiences that contributed to their success as a student. Student Development and Orientation will coordinate the volunteer guest speakers and facilitate the panel discussions where transfer students discuss their greatest struggles and how they got through them. Transfer students will also discuss misconceptions they may have held about life at WIU, things they would’ve liked to know, and advice to transfer student guests who will be supporting transfer students.

From 3:00 p.m. to 4 p.m., there will be an interactive session facilitated by the director of University Advising and Academic Support Center. While instructions for the activity are being

explained, UAASC advisors will be passing out maps of the campus to all audience members. The audience will learn that they are going to be experiencing some of the same experiences a transfer student new to campus may encounter in their transition. Not all groups will have the same experience, a group will be assigned to one professional staff member based on rows (around 10-15 people in each group). The staff member will tell the group what building and room they need to find, three groups will head to the library, three will stay in the union and three will head to a varying bus routes. The groups that go to the library will take the COMPASS math placement test, the groups that stay in the Union will take a mini English Placement Exam, and the groups that find bus routes will have to navigate around campus on the bus system. Test anxiety, being in a new place, being uncertain of where things are and feeling unsure of yourself are all stresses transfer students might experience. After each group has gotten a chance to experience some of these anxieties they will be brought back to the Grand Ball Room for an explanation of the activities they participated in. Discussion will be encouraged followed by a brief overview of some of the supports on campus that could assist a student experiencing some of those transitional issues (i.e. counseling center, academic advisor/ tutoring or writing center).

In terms of Kolb's theory, a large amount of information will be covered during the guest orientation. In order to cater to all learning styles, provide variety, and allow for interaction, the many presentations will cover all of the four learning styles described by Kolb. For instance, the panel presentation will cater to the diverging and accommodating styles which prefer interaction with people. The "understanding transfer stress" presentation will present options for various learning styles. Mock test taking caters most to converging and assimilating styles which prefer tasks and ideas rather than interaction with people.

For Baxter Magolda, these sessions will allow for guests to have instruction and open dialogue about WIU and the resource we have to offer. This will lead to validating the guests as “knowers” of what the college experience looks like which will encourage them to have a voice in the student’s experience. This will also allow for guests to build relationships with the other guests.

For Chickering, these guest sessions allow these individuals to manage their emotions based on knowing their student is safe on campus and have support. These individuals will also better understand the environment of campus and how their student will grow and develop.

In terms of Gilligan’s theory, these sessions can help guests understand the care and justice within WIU’s institutional policies. This enhancement can also be an indicator of where guests are in relation to the students and at what level they are in their moral development.

While more often than not, guests, using Schlossberg’s theoretical perspective, may have *anticipated* the student transitioning into WIU, it is important to assist with their guests *moving in, moving through, moving out process*, as described by Schlossberg. Giving guests important information will help them help their student. By offering support for not only the student but guests, the institution can create more of a seamless transition for all parties. Some of the parents may be experiencing a minor role change in relation to their student, where if they were the major support/care person for the student as many helicopter parents are, they may have trouble “letting go”. Likewise, a spouse or partner could be struggling with how they will deal with a new division of domestic labor or responsibilities. These informational sessions can create a sense of understanding and assist with them with *moving through* the transition of having their student entering WIU.

Registration

Currently, transfer orientation is focused on registration, which is held for one student at a time, in one room due to the low number of students that attend transfer orientation now (e.g., around 100 students for the Spring 2010 sessions). Students are assisted by an adviser from the department they wish to major in, or by one of the General Orientation advisers who work with undecided students. There are multiple issues with the current set-up; first, if there are many students interested in a particular major, which is common, the adviser is only able to assist one student at a time, making the registration process potentially stressful and long. Second, all transfer students and advisers are in one room when registering so the environment is extremely chaotic. Third, registration is at the end of the day and students are able to leave directly after they register, which spurs some students to rush through the process.

Due to these issues, we propose that all students who come to transfer orientation will register for their classes during one of the three conference style sessions from 2:15-4:30 p.m. Prior to arriving on campus students will have filled out what conference sessions they were interested in attending. Once Admissions is in possession of this information, they deliver the students specified interest in both conference sessions and major to Student Development and Orientation to put together each student's agenda. This will allow majors that have many students to be divided into three different sections, thus giving advisers more one-on-one time with each student as well as a less chaotic environment for registration.

This is supported by Chickering's vector of developing competence (selecting both major and conference style sessions) by selecting their own major and conference sessions the students will become more involved in their sessions and feel more connected to the material. The students also develop purpose in being able to decide what sessions might be of most benefit to

them at orientation. In meeting with an adviser one-on-one, Kolb suggests that students will get the more intentional support of their particular learning style. Advisers working with students obviously struggling with particular learning styles may suggest different majors or specific courses to help those students.

Giving students the more intentional, individualized attention will also be a more appropriate form of support, per Schlossberg's theory. Students are often confused about articulation agreements and what courses transfer. Student degree progress reports (called WARD reports) are often confusing for students, and providing that one-on-one contact will enhance their understanding of WIU, therefore allowing them to develop strategies for course completion which can assist with the transitional process.

This individualized relationship with the adviser supports many other theoretical aspects of development, allowing the adviser to better serve as a support if the student is struggling with identity development (such as racial identity under Sue & Sue or Rowe, Bennett, and Atkinson, or sexual orientation, under Cass and D'Augelli). This relationship also supports the self-authorship of the individual under Baxter Magolda's theory by allowing individuals to seek counseling, and the development of the internal voice of Belenky et al., as advisers can challenge students to identify and voice their needs or concerns. This individual focus also allows advisers to challenge dualistic or multiplistic thinking in students, if students fall into those stages under Perry's theory.

Review and Conclusion

We came to several conclusions about the pros and cons of the PTP model, regarding the use of the model and how it helped or made this redesign more difficult to do.

In terms of pros, the PTP model gives you significant leverage when presenting enhancement opportunities to administrators. Having research and a theoretical background when proposing a new program or revision of a program increases the likelihood that administration will approve the program or revision for follow-through. And the PTP model is exhaustive in its comprehensiveness; each theoretical angle is examined when designing or re-designing student services.

In terms of cons, the PTP model must (or should) be followed explicitly when using it as a method for analysis and design. One of the things that most significantly slowed down our group's process was that we skimmed the model, identified what we wanted to work on, and then presumed that we would have to dig into the meat of the project (the re-design) immediately since that would take the most time and it was important for us to start on that, as opposed to letting theory guide our practice. When this happened, we ran into the usual disagreements on recommendations or revisions, but became entrenched in our various positions based on different perspectives on what was important for orientation and what possibilities existed. We ended up losing sight of the end project; once we re-oriented ourselves and follow the PTP model step by step, the project almost fell effortlessly into line.

The second major weakness of the PTP model relates to who we are presenting and/or using the PTP model for. If administrators are not student affairs personnel or do not see the value of using theory in student interactions, it is doubtful that they will find the recommendations of the PTP-guided project as particularly insightful or valuable.

The third major struggle or disadvantage of the PTP model is that it is extremely time consuming, considering the range of theoretical possibilities one is working with. Confined

solely to our textbook, we still covered an extensive range of theories. If you introduced other theoretical perspectives, the final project could be dozens upon dozens of pages long.

Overall, however, we found the PTP project to be a solid capstone for first year as graduate students, and a strong practice exercise for the preparation of project proposals that would be necessary for us to do in the future.

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