The Role of Psychosocial Factors in Predicting Student Success

Eric J McIntosh, PhD Strategic Partnerships Advisor, Civitas Learning
This session will explore thriving as a psychosocial characteristic predictive of student success measures (e.g. graduation, persistence, and GPA). We’ll discuss a recent study exploring the predictability of thriving among students in a first-year seminar, comparing the pathways to thriving for white and students of color.
A cohesive vision for student success should be guided by a theoretical framework.
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

ADDING COHERENCE AND ORDER

Frameworks for student success provide a lens through which we can add coherence and order to interrelated ideas.

– KEZAR

Adrianna Kezar
Professor of Higher Education,
Rossier School of Education,
University of Southern California
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Choosing a theory appropriate to your institution requires knowledge of possible frameworks and professional wisdom.

DALTON & BLIMLING
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

THE BEST CHOICE MAY BE OUTSIDE YOUR COMFORT ZONE

Choosing a theory that best fits our institutional context and culture is more important than choosing a framework with which we are most familiar and comfortable.

KEZAR
THRIVING AS A FRAMEWORK
THRIVING AS A FRAMEWORK

THRIVING AND STUDENTS OF COLOR

Historically underrepresented students of color in American higher education persist to graduation at a rate 15% lower than Asians and Caucasians students.
WHAT MAKES A THRIVING STUDENT?

- Grounded
- Socially-Integrated
- “Deep” Learner
- Globally-Minded
- Involved in Community
- Embraces Challenge
- Optimistic
- Achieving Goals
- Balaced
- Satisfied
- Embraces Diversity
- Motivated
- Relationally-Invested
THRIVING AS A FRAMEWORK

DEFINING STUDENT SUCCESS

• Graduation (i.e., persistence)
  – (Braxton, 2000; Tinto, 1975, 1993)

• Learning gains
  – (Tagg & Barr, 1995)

• Sense of belonging
  – (Hurtado & Carter, 1997)

• Engagement
  – (Kuh, 2001)

• Satisfaction
  – (Schreiner, 2004)
THRIVING AS A FRAMEWORK

EMPHASIS ON BEHAVIOR

• Quality of effort
  – (Pace, 1980)

• Involvement
  – (Astin, 1984)

• Institutional efforts (opportunities and services) to encourage students to become engaged
  – (Kuh, 2001)
THRIVING AS A FRAMEWORK

WHY THRIVING?

• Expand the definition of student success to incorporate psychological well-being and optimal functioning

• Explore student optimal functioning in academic, emotional, and social areas, or thriving
THRIVING AS A FRAMEWORK

WHY THRIVING?

Psychosocial Motivation

Attitudes

Behavior

Engagement

Learning Graduation

Student Success
DEFINING THRIVING

“Adults with complete mental health are *flourishing* in life with high levels of well-being. To be flourishing, then, is to be filled with positive emotion and to be functioning well psychologically and socially.”


**Flourishing** = Emotional Vitality + Positive Functioning

Thriving builds on the psychological well-being implied in flourishing, but also encompasses elements critical to college students’ success: academic engagement, effort regulation, citizenship, openness to diversity, goal-setting, optimism, and self-regulated learning. Thriving students are fully engaged intellectually, socially, and emotionally. This is a view of student success that reinforces the bedrock of holistic development on which many colleges and universities were founded.
ACADEMIC DETERMINATION

ENGAGED LEARNING

DIVERSE CITIZENSHIP

SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS

POSITIVE PERSPECTIVE
THRIVING AS A FRAMEWORK

THRIVING

• Academic Determination
  – Self-regulated learning, effort, time management, hope

• Engaged Learning
  – Meaningful processing and focused attention on learning process

• Positive Perspective
  – Optimism and subjective well-being

• Diverse Citizenship
  – Contribution to community, appreciation of diversity

• Social Connectedness
  – Positive relationships and connection to friends
THRIVING AS A FRAMEWORK

THRIVING

• Psychological Sense of Community
  – Membership
  – Influence
  – Integration & Fulfillment of Need
  – Shared Emotional Connection

(McMillan & Chavis, 1986)
THRIVING AS A FRAMEWORK

THRIVING

• Campus Involvement
  - Astin, Kuh, Pascarella & Terenzini

• Student-Faculty Interaction
  - Kuh & Hu, Cole, Lundberg & Schreiner, Pascarella & Terenzini

• Institutional Integrity
  - Braxton, Hirschy & McClendon

• Spirituality / Meaning-making
  - Astin, Astin & Lindholm
THRIVING AS A FRAMEWORK

RECENT THRIVING STUDY

• First-year students at a private university in the west with 50/50 students of color to White student incoming student demographic
• Structural modeling (SEM) was utilized to explore the predictability of end of term thriving among students to explore the pathways significant for students of color and White students
• Model fit was established for both groups utilizing SEM
Diverse Perspectives

Student/Faculty Interaction

Institutional Integrity

Campus Engagement

Spirituality/meaning-making

PSC

Thriving
THEORICAL FRAMEWORKS

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS HELP YOU

1. Think about the right message to use to intervene
2. Ground your work in the identity of your institution’s mission
3. Focus your efforts on the distinct pathways of each and every student
LEARN about our work with partner institutions on the Civitas Learning Space
JOIN our community on social media for news, updates, and content

civitaslearningspace.com
linkedin.com/company/Civitas-Learning
twitter.com/CivitasLearning
youtube.com/CivitasLearning
facebook/CivitasLearning