Quick Reference Guide: Student Development Theories

Theory of Involvement, Alexander Astin (1984)

Summary
• Student involvement in college is critical to learning and development. Central proposition: "The greater the student's involvement in college, the greater will be the amount of student learning and personal development" (p. 307).

Advising Strategies
• During advising meetings informally assess students' academic and social involvement on campus, being aware of barriers imposed by students themselves or the institution

Programmatic Strategies:
• Actively seek racially diverse or first generation college student mentors, who are not international students, for buddy/mentor programs

Theory of Self-Authorship, Marcia Baxter-Magolda (2001)

Summary
• The process of thinking and making decisions independently, relying on one's own inner voice. Three Principles of Self-Authorship:
1. Validate learners as knowers
2. Situate learning in learners' experiences
3. Define learning as mutually constructing meaning

Advising Strategies
• Validate students' interest in a different major
• Help students see: (a) that they bring a unique perspective to any situation; (b) that only they know themselves; (c) the reasoning for their feelings or opinions; and (d) that they should be valued
• Help students understand that managing both cultural expectations and their needs (cognitive dissonance), is natural in intercultural circumstances
• When there is disagreement between students and parents, encourage students to find an acceptable path forward for themselves and parents
• Advise students to engage in self-reflection using methods such as journaling

Programmatic Strategies:
• Workshop on choosing or changing a major (hopefully partner with academic advising)
• Programs on self-confidence and knowing oneself and values
• Workshop on having "adult relationships" with parents
• Academic orientation session on the U.S. classroom (i.e. how to politely question authority or use critical thinking strategies in a discussion-based classroom)

References

Astin, A. W. (1984). Student involvement: A developmental theory for higher education. Journal of college student personnel, 25(4), 297-308.

Baxter Magolda, M. B., 1951. (1992). Knowing and reasoning in college: Gender-related patterns in students' intellectual development. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
See also Pizzolato's work (2003, 2005, and 2007).

Baxter Magolda, M. B. (2001). Making their own way: Narratives for transforming higher education to promote self-development. Sterling, Va: Stylus.

All theories can be found at:
Evans, N.J., Forney, D.S., & Guido-DiBrito, F. (1998) Student Development in College: Theory, Research, and Practice. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

References

Tinto, V. (1975). Dropout from higher education: A theoretical synthesis of recent research. Review of Educational Research, 45(1), 89-125. doi:10.2307/1170024
See also: 1993, 1982 and 1997 revisions of the theory.

Tinto V. (1993). Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition (2nd ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
(top)

Schlossberg, N. K. (2005). Counseling adults in transition: Linking practice with theory. New York: Springer.
(bottom)

Model of Institutional Departure, Vincent Tinto (1993)

Summary
• Retention and completion rates increase the more students academically and socially integrate into campus. Students need integration into:
• Academic systems: Formal (academic performance) and Informal (faculty/staff interactions)
• Social systems: Formal (co/extracurricular activities) and Informal (peer-group interactions)

Advising Strategies
• Help students connect with professors
• Encourage research opportunities with faculty
• Encourage study-groups
• Share their experiences and perspectives with student clubs and organizations
• Create opportunities to intern/volunteer with peers

Programmatic Strategies:
• Connect first year students with upperclassmen in the major in which they are interested
• Use a student ambassador program
• Encourage student involvement in residential life, living-learning communities, or student organizations
• Offer workshops on understanding the American classroom culture
• Include orientation session on adjusting to student/professor relationships in the U.S. higher education system (how to address a professor, office hours, email communications, etc.)

Transition Theory, Nancy Schlossberg (1995)

Summary
• There are 4 major factors that affect individuals coping during transition: Self, Situation, Support, Strategies

Advising Strategies
• Discuss with students how to effectively use their assets—and not focus on limitations—to cope with challenges while moving through anticipated and unanticipated transitions
• Introduce the need for self-examination using Schlossberg's "Four S" factors
• Provide students with a worksheet containing questions for self-reflection and discussion under each of the "Four S" factors

Programmatic Strategies:
• Plan a group session for students to discuss how to effectively use their assets—and not focus on limitations—to cope with challenges while moving through anticipated and unanticipated transitions
• Introduce the need for self-examination using Schlossberg's "Four S" factors
• Provide students with a worksheet containing questions for self-reflection and discussion under each of the "Four S" factors
• Follow-up with 1-on1 advising

Seven Vectors of Development, Arthur Chickering (1969)

Summary
• There are 7 tasks—vectors—that students face on their personal development path. The vectors build on each other, but are not to be considered sequential or linear; students develop in these areas at different rates, and development can occur among other vectors.
1. Developing Competence—intellectual, physical, and interpersonal competency
2. Managing Emotions—emotional growth
3. Developing Autonomy—a sense of independence
4. Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships—interpersonal and intercultural tolerance and healthy relationships with friends and family
5. Establishing Identity—understanding and acceptance of self: appearance, gender, sexual orientation, culture, social connections, etc.
6. Developing Purpose—understanding of what the student wants to do with their life
7. Establishing Integrity—establishing values, balancing self-interests with interests of others

Advising Strategies
• Encourage students to join university clubs, activities and organizations
• Advise students to seek a balance between in and out of classroom activities
• Encourage and help students to make independent decisions, providing guidance and support; help them set goals and point them to resources to help them succeed
• Roll play and/or discuss difficult conversations and/or situations

Progragrammatic Strategies:
• Work with Residence Life staff on programming for residence halls
• Include domestic students in programs and event
• Plan career sessions to help students explore career paths relative to majors and values
• Initiate International Friends/Family program, matching students with community members for cross-cultural exchange

References

Chickering, A. W. (1969). Education and identity. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Chickering, A. W., & Reisser, L. (1993). Education and identity (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

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International Student Identity (ISI) Model, Eunyoung Kim (2012)

Summary
• 6 stage psychosocial model of identity development. Most students are in the 3rd phase, Enclosure: Securing Self, in which the students withdraw from their environment, socialize only with those from their own culture, focus exclusively on academics, limit co/extra-curricular activities, are driven by routine, and believe that their English ability causes professors and other students to doubt their capabilities in the classroom. In the 4th phase, Emergence: Disclosing Self, they start to integrate their identities, break out of their routine, and engage with their environment by getting involved in co/extra-curricular activities and building relationships with diverse others.

Advising Strategies
• Informally assess students' identity development, paying particular attention to students in the Enclosure stage as this can affect success and retention
• Encourage students to get involved in activities outside of class and expand their friend circles beyond those from the same culture.

Programmatic Strategies:
• Encourage students to speak in English to people from different cultures, expose them to various cultures via programming, and solicit participation from students who normally don't engage in activities
• This theory is built on the principles of Astin's theory of involvement, and the importance of international student involvement in the co-curriculum cannot be overstated.

References

Kim, E. (2012). An alternative theoretical model: Examining psychosocial identity development of international students in the United States. College Student Journal, 46(1), 99-113. (top)

Sanford, N. (1966). Self and society: Social change and individual development. . New York: Atherton Press.

Sanford, N. (1967). Where Colleges Fail: A study of the student as a person. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. (bottom)

Challenge and Support Theory, Nevitt Sanford (1966)

Summary
• Students need a balance of challenge and support to learn and develop. Too much challenge and not enough support can lead to frustration and little to no development change; too much support without challenge can prevent students from growing and learning.

Advising Strategies
• Encourage students' participation in, and use of, support services and resources on campus—writing centers, academic advisors, recreation center, student clubs and organizations
• Recognize when a student is ready to be challenged versus needing support
• Work with academic advisors to identify challenges students face and devise strategies to support students

Programmatic Strategies:
• Work with Multicultural Affairs office to plan events
• Plan new student programs with current international students to address initial challenges and resources that help with academic, social and cultural adjustment
• Organize extended orientation program or workshops to address issues throughout the semester or year