CHAPTER ONE

DEFINITIONS AND HISTORICAL ROOTS OF STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

From the paternalistic faculty authority figure who supervised Harvard students in 1636 to the contemporary student affairs professional who uses developmental theory to understand and enhance students' personal growth and learning, student development has always existed in some form as a goal of educators. But what development consists of and factors that contribute to it have been contested topics throughout the course of history.

Some scholars argue that students, regardless of the era in which they lived and studied, are basically similar. For example, a scholar of medieval higher education (Haskins, 1957) believed that human development "remain[s] much the same from age to age and must so remain as long as human nature and physical environment continue what they have been. In his relations to life and learning the medieval student resembled his modern successor far more than is often supposed" (p. 93). Other writers would object vehemently to Haskins's position, arguing that rapidly changing conditions within society have created dramatically different circumstances for students across time and location and that student development must be considered in light of these changing scenarios (see Woodard, Love, & Komives, 2000). The expectations, needs, and developmental issues of a fifteen-year-old, upper-class white male student attending Harvard in the 1700s preparing for a clergy vocation were certainly different from those of a first-generation Laotian American woman attending a community college in the early twenty-first century and aspiring to become a dental hygienist. Many argue that to be considered "developed" in each instance looks vastly different. These differences are reflected in the assumptions of student development theorists,

based on the societal conditions and thinking of the periods in which they wrote and their own belief systems (McEwen, 2003a).

This chapter provides an overview of the ways in which student development has been defined in the literature and examines the origins and evolution of major student development theories created in the second half of the twentieth century and beginning of the twenty-first century. The chapter ends with a discussion of the influence of paradigms on student development theory and research.

Definitions of Student Development

Student development is a term that is used extensively in student affairs practice. Professionals talk about "facilitating student development," offices are titled "Student Development," and graduate students study "student development theories." Student development is almost universally viewed as a good thing. Parker (1974), however, criticized student affairs professionals for attaching vague and nonspecific meanings to this term and suggested that for many, it has become a catchphrase with no direct application to their work. What exactly is meant, then, by the phrase, "student development"?

In 1967, Sanford defined *development* as "the organization of increasing complexity" (p. 47). He saw development as a positive growth process in which the individual becomes increasingly able to integrate and act on many different experiences and influences. He distinguished development from *change*, which refers only to an altered condition that may be positive or negative, progressive or regressive; and from *growth*, which refers to expansion but may be either favorable or unfavorable to overall functioning. Rodgers (1990c) defined *student development* as "the ways that a student grows, progresses, or increases his or her developmental capabilities as a result of enrollment in an institution of higher education" (p. 27). This definition guides the discussion of student development in this book.

Student development, Rodgers (1990c) noted, is also a philosophy that has guided student affairs practice and served as the rationale for specific programs and services since the profession's inception. He summed up this philosophy as "concern for the development of the whole person" (p. 27).

A related application of the term *student development* is programmatic in nature. Rodgers (1990c) stated that it is what student affairs professionals do to encourage learning and student growth. In a frequently quoted definition that reflects this perspective, Miller and Prince (1976) suggested that student development is "the application of human development concepts in postsecondary settings so that everyone involved can master increasingly complex developmental tasks, achieve self-direction, and become interdependent" (p. 3).

Rodgers (1990c) also noted that the term *student development* has been used to categorize theory and research on adolescent and adult development. This body of literature includes psychosocial, cognitive-structural, integrative, and social identity perspectives discussed in this book. These theories expand Sanford's (1967) definition of *development* by identifying specific aspects of development and examining factors that influence its occurrence. Developmental theory should respond to four questions (Knefelkamp, Widick, & Parker, 1978):

1. What interpersonal and intrapersonal changes occur while the student is in college?
2. What factors lead to this development?
3. What aspects of the college environment encourage or retard growth?
4. What developmental outcomes should we strive to achieve in college?

Student development theory provides the basis for the practice of student development. Knowledge of student development theory enables student affairs professionals to identify and address student needs, design programs, develop policies, and create healthy college environments that encourage positive growth in students. Because student development theories focus on intellectual growth as well as affective and behavioral changes during the college years, they also encourage partnerships between student affairs professionals and faculty to enhance student learning and maximize positive student outcomes.

A Brief History of the Student Development Movement

Early in the twentieth century, the relevance of the newly organized disciplines of psychology and sociology to the collegiate environment became apparent. Psychological theorists such as Freud, Jung, and later Skinner examined human behavior through a lens different from the theologians who earlier espoused the fostering of Christian moral character as a goal for educators in the colleges of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Upcraft & Moore, 1990). As the scientific study of human development evolved, the academy responded by hiring student personnel workers who were viewed as human development specialists (Nuss, 2003). At first, they focused on vocational guidance; however, the tumultuous events of the mid-twentieth century prompted significant changes in the student personnel profession and how the profession viewed student development. Influences that contributed to this renewed focus on students were an embryonic student affairs field, the psychology of individual differences, and the need for institutions, particularly during the Great Depression of the 1930s, to place students in the world of work (Nuss; Rhatigan, 2000).

The 1920s Guidance Movement

In the 1920s, the vocational guidance movement began in earnest as colleges and universities graduated students who increasingly sought occupational security in business and industry. Credited with initiating the vocational guidance movement (Rhatigan, 2000), Frank Parsons (1909) was the first to articulate a "match" between personal characteristics and particular occupations to determine the "best fit" for individuals in the work environment. For the next forty years, vocational guidance in higher education (and elsewhere) rested on this premise.

Taking more interest in vocational preparation than developing themselves in a holistic way (Arbuckle, 1953), students in the early 1920s sought practical knowledge to propel them into the work world. At the same time, higher education and industry joined to create new knowledge and train new workers.

In reaction to student demand for work preparation and industry demand for applied research, an alarm was sounded by critics who believed that the economic ties between industry and higher education had to be severed in order to preserve academic freedom and integrity (Veblen, 1918/1946). At the same time, pragmatic philosophers, who asserted that optimal learning occurs when students' rational and emotional selves are integrated (see Carpenter, 1996; Rhatigan, 2000), alerted educators to the need to make education more than just vocational preparation. Combined, these latter two forces created a moral imperative for higher education to address students' multidimensional needs rather than focusing exclusively on vocational preparation.

The Student Personnel Point of View: 1937 and 1949

In 1925, representatives from fourteen institutions of higher education met to discuss vocational guidance problems. World War I was over, and increased enrollments left educators scrambling for ways to evaluate students and their needs.

From 1925 to 1936, data concerning students were collected at numerous institutions. Several specialized assessment tools, such as personality rating scales, were developed to examine students' ability and performance (American Council on Education, 1937/1994a). The culmination of these efforts was the American Council on Education's 1937 statement, the "Student Personnel Point of View" (SPPV). This landmark report recognized the proud history of higher education's commitment to "the preservation, transmission, and enrichment of the important elements of culture" produced in the forms of "scholarship, research, creative imagination, and human experience" (p. 67.) The report went on to assert that educators must guide the "whole student" to reach his or her full potential and contribute to society's betterment. In short, the statement was a reminder to the

higher education community that in addition to the contributions of research and scholarship, the personal and professional development of students was (and remains) a worthy and noble goal.

In 1949, the American Council on Education (1949/1994b) revised the 1937 SPPV statement to include an expanded delineation of the objectives and goals of student affairs administration. Returning to the late nineteenth-century focus on the psychology of individual differences, the document called for faculty, administrators, and student personnel workers to encourage the development of students and recognize their "individual differences in backgrounds, abilities, interests and goals" (p. 110). Furthermore, the influence of World War II was reflected in the document's call for more attention to democratic processes and socially responsible graduates.

Early Student Development Theory and Research

The 1960s saw the beginning of significant changes in student affairs and higher education as the country faced nearly a decade of social turmoil brought on by the Vietnam War and the civil rights and women's movements. No longer were students primarily upper- and upper-middle-class white males. Women, veterans, and students of color from all social class backgrounds were enrolling in college in increasing numbers, and student affairs administrators sought information about their needs and perspectives. They first turned to psychologists (for example, Erikson, 1950, 1968; Piaget, 1952) for information about human development that would help them to understand the students with whom they were working. Social psychologists and sociologists, such as Kurt Lewin (1936), contributed knowledge of group dynamics and the effect of the environment on human interaction. In time, theorists such as Nevitt Sanford (1967), Douglas Heath (1968), Roy Heath (1964), and Kenneth Feldman and Theodore Newcomb (1969) began focusing specifically on the experiences of students in college.

Nevitt Sanford. Psychologist Nevitt Sanford was one of the first scholars to address the relationship between college environments and students' transition from late adolescence to young adulthood (Strange, 1994). He brought forth two insights about the process of development—cycles of differentiation and integration, and balancing support and challenge—that continue to be influential concepts when considering student development (Evans, 2003; P. King, 1994; Moore & Upcraft, 1990). Differentiation and integration are evident when students learn about their own personality characteristics and understand how these characteristics shape their individual identities (Sanford, 1962). Support and challenge are evident when students try to lessen the tension produced by the collegiate environment

and succeed to the extent that environmental support is available (Sanford, 1967). Sanford's concepts are discussed further in Chapter Two.

Douglas Heath. Douglas Heath's (1968) theory, based on his study of male undergraduates at Haverford College, focused on the concept of maturity and described factors that contribute to the maturation process. He identified characteristics of a mature person and described the path by which a person moves from "immature" to "mature" ways of functioning (Widick, Parker, & Knefelkamp, 1978a). D. Heath suggested that maturation occurs along five growth dimensions in four areas: intellect, values, self-concept, and interpersonal relationships. He identified the following growth dimensions: becoming better able to represent experience symbolically, becoming allocentric or other-centered, becoming integrated, becoming stable, and becoming autonomous (Widick et al., 1978a). D. Heath (1977) posited that the environment is influential in either facilitating or inhibiting development along these dimensions. Widick et al. (1978a) noted that while Heath's work is not specific enough to guide practice, it does suggest "outcomes of an ideal educational experience" (p. 90).

Roy Heath. Based on a longitudinal study of the experiences of undergraduate men at Princeton during the 1950s, Roy Heath (1964) introduced a typology theory that focused on how individual differences affect students' progress toward maturity. He suggested that two dimensions must be considered when examining development: ego functioning and individual style. He defined ego functioning as "the manner in which the self interacts with the world, achieves its satisfaction, and defends itself from threats to its survival" (1973, p. 59). Individuals are hypothesized to move through three levels of maturity as they progress to an idealized state that Heath called "a Reasonable Adventurer." Individual style or type refers to "the manner in which the individual regulates the 'dynamic tension' between the inner, instinctual, feeling self and the outer, more rational self" (Knefelkamp, Parker et al., 1978, p. 94). Individual style is posited to influence how the person proceeds through the levels of maturity to become a Reasonable Adventurer. While Heath's model is important in stressing individual difference as a factor to consider in development, it does not provide a clear picture of factors that contribute to movement through the levels of maturity (Knefelkamp, Parker, et al., 1978).

Kenneth Feldman and Theodore Newcomb. Sociologists during the 1960s also examined the impact of college on students (see Feldman & Newcomb, 1969). Recognizing how the environment shapes a student's development, some researchers focused on the interpersonal world of college students, specifically

the effects of peer groups (Newcomb & Wilson, 1966). In an exhaustive summary of research on college students, Feldman and Newcomb (1969) delineated the impact of peer group influence on individual students. They noted that peer groups help students accomplish family independence, facilitate the institution's intellectual goals, offer emotional support and meet needs not met by faculty, provide contact with and practice for interacting with others who are unlike the student, reinforce student change (or not), offer another source of gratification if the student is unsuccessful academically, affect a student's leaving or staying in college, and provide social training and personal ties that may assist students along their career paths.

Throughout the 1960s, sociologists and psychologists offered a fresh look at students and their interaction with the campus environment while student affairs professionals began promoting intentional student development within higher education institutions (Creamer, 1990; Nuss, 2003).

Formal Statements About Student Development

In the late 1960s and 1970s, professional associations, such as the Council of Student Personnel Associations (COSPA) and the American College Personnel Association (ACPA), and private groups, such as the Hazen Foundation, began to reconceptualize the role and mission of student affairs (see Evans, 2001b). The Hazen Foundation created the Committee on the Student in Higher Education (1968), which encouraged colleges and universities to "assume responsibility for the human development of [their] students" (p. 5), something never asked of higher education before. The Committee on the Student in Higher Education went on to proclaim that "our educational procedures rarely take cognizance of what we do know about human development" (p. 5).

At the same time, Tomorrow's Higher Education Project (T.H.E.), initiated by ACPA, explored the viability of student development as a philosophy of the profession (R. Brown, 1972) and specifically examined the student affairs profession's "commitment to student development—the theories of human development applied to the postsecondary education setting—as a guiding theory, and the continued attempt to ensure that the development of the whole student was an institutional priority" (Garland & Grace, 1993, p. 6).

In his influential monograph, *Student Development in Tomorrow's Higher Education—A Return to the Academy,* Brown (1972) challenged college administrators and student affairs professionals to "hold up the mirror" to each other in order to confront the incongruities between the stated goals of higher education and what was happening to students. He questioned whether student affairs professionals should be the only ones on campus concerned about student development

and, more important, whether student development can be nurtured without the support and influence of those in the academic domain. A forerunner of "The Student Learning Imperative" (1996) and *Learning Reconsidered* (Keeling, 2004), the T.H.E. project recommended that student affairs educators increasingly emphasize academic outcomes, teaching-learning experiences, reorganizing student affairs offices and functions, being accountable by conducting outcomes assessments, and developing new sets of competencies.

Soon thereafter, the Council of Student Personnel Associations (1975/1994) sought to define the role of the student development specialist and close the gap between theory and practice in the field. Miller and Prince (1976) carried the concept one step closer to implementation by highlighting the developmental tasks of college students and suggesting program options to help students reach their developmental goals.

Later, instruments that focused on measuring student development outcomes (Winston, Miller, & Prince, 1979) and assessing the effect of the institutional environment on students (Pace, 1984) were developed to seek empirical evidence of the student development concept. These statements of philosophy, along with the early research, provided impetus for the student affairs field to redefine itself in ways that helped professionals meet the challenges of intentional student growth.

Major Theories (1950–1970)

In the late 1960s, three major theories were introduced that became the basis for understanding student development for decades to come. Building on Erikson's (1959/1980) ideas about identity development, Arthur Chickering focused specifically on developmental issues facing students in college. His book, *Education and Identity* (1969), quickly became the mainstay for professionals interested in student development. In 1968, William Perry introduced the first theory examining the intellectual development of college students to be used extensively in student affairs practice. Building on Piaget's (1932/1977) study of the moral development of children, Lawrence Kohlberg's (1969, 1976) theory of moral reasoning also gained great popularity in the student affairs field. For several decades, student development educators based their practice largely on these three theories. Extensive discussion of each of these theories, which are still frequently used in student affairs work today, can be found in Part Two of this book.

Alternative Theoretical Perspectives (1970–1990)

Recognizing that development does not happen in a vacuum, counseling psychologists James Banning and Leland Kaiser introduced the campus ecology model in a 1974 article that Banning later expanded into a monograph (1978).

This approach was popularized by work and publications of the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education (WICHE) and its associates (see Aulepp & Delworth, 1976). Campus ecology focused on the interaction of the student and the campus setting (Banning, 1978). The cube model of Morrill, Oetting, and Hurst (1974), which encouraged counselors and other student affairs educators to consider the campus environment (in the form of primary groups, associational groups, and institutions or communities) as well as individual students as potential targets for interventions, is based on the campus ecology model. Although there is little mention of the campus ecology approach itself in current literature, the importance of considering the impact of the environment on student development is stressed in many current theories. (Ecological approaches are discussed in Chapter Nine.)

While not truly developmental in that they do not consist of stages through which individuals progress, a number of typology theories with implications for student learning and career development gained popularity during the 1980s. Building on the work of Carl Jung (1923/1971), Myers (1980) explored differences in personality type. Student affairs professionals, particularly those who work in the area of career development, also found Holland's (1985/1992) theory of vocational choice helpful. We discuss these two theories further in Chapter Two.

As student affairs educators took a more active role in academic intervention, they sought out theories of learning to assist them. Kolb's (1984) theory, which focused on learning styles, provided a useful way to conceptualize differences in how students learn. Chapter Eight offers an expanded discussion of Kolb's theory.

Later Developmental Theorists

The late 1980s and 1990s saw the introduction of a number of theories that built on earlier foundational psychosocial and cognitive-structural theories. Within the psychosocial tradition, Marcia (1966), using Erikson's (1959/1980) work as a foundation for his research, investigated identity development in adolescence. Josselson (1987a, 1996) then extended Marcia's work to women. The work of Erikson, Marcia, and Josselson is further discussed in Chapter Three. In 1993, to incorporate new research findings related to the order of his developmental vectors and their content, Chickering, in collaboration with Linda Reisser, revised his book, *Education and Identity.* In Chapter Four we cover Chickering and Reisser's revisions in detail.

Several theorists sought to expand Perry's cognitive structural theory. Suggesting that Perry had confused intellectual and psychosocial development

in his final stages, King and Kitchener (1994) examined cognitive development beyond relativism, a process they labeled reflective judgment. Also building on Perry's theory, Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986) were the first researchers to investigate the intellectual development of women. Marcia Baxter Magolda extended the work of Perry (1968) and Belenky and her colleagues (1986) by including both men and women in a longitudinal study of the epistemological development of individuals whom she originally interviewed when they were students at Miami University (Baxter Magolda, 1992). These three theories have each made a significant contribution to our understanding of student development and are discussed in more detail in Chapter Seven.

Based on twenty-five years of research, James Rest and his colleagues introduced a neo-Kohlbergian theory of moral development (Rest, Narvaez, Thoma, & Bebeau, 2000) that is less rigid and more concrete than Kohlberg's (1976). Gilligan's (1982/1993) identification of care-based rationales for moral decision making also advanced our understanding of moral reasoning. We discuss moral development theories in Chapter Six.

Integrative Approaches

Knefelkamp, Widick, and Parker (1978) argued that attempting to design one "comprehensive model of student development" (p. xi) was futile; nevertheless, current theorists appear to be moving in that direction. Arguing that it is not possible to separate cognitive and affective aspects of development, their theories explore both cognitive and psychosocial dimensions of identity and how these factors are interwoven throughout life.

Robert Kegan (1982, 1994) introduced a life span model of development that also took into account both affective and cognitive processes. Kegan (1982) focused on the evolution of the self and how individuals make sense of their world, particularly their relationships with others. An important outcome of development that Kegan identified is self-authorship—the ability to "internalize multiple points of view, reflect on them, and construct them into one's own theory about oneself and one's experience" (Ignelzi, 2000, p. 8). Following her former students into their adult lives, Baxter Magolda (1999a, 2001, 2007) used Kegan's concept of self-authorship to explain the shift she identified in young adulthood from an identity shaped by external forces and others' viewpoints to an internal identity created by individuals themselves. Theories of self-authorship are presented in Chapter Ten.

Another area receiving increasing attention is spiritual and faith development (Love & Talbot, 1999). Drawing on the ideas of both psychosocial (for example, Erikson, 1950; Levinson, 1978) and cognitive structural (for example, Kohlberg,

1976; Piaget, 1950) theorists, James Fowler (1981, 2000) began the discussion of faith from a developmental perspective. Parks (1986a, 2000) extended Fowler's theory to address faith development during college. Their work is reviewed in Chapter Eleven.

Generally considered a life events theorist within the larger umbrella of adult development theory, Schlossberg, who examined the process of negotiating transitions caused by life events (Schlossberg, 1984; Schlossberg, Waters, & Goodman, 1995; Goodman, Schlossberg, & Anderson, 2006), can also be considered an integrative theorist. We present her theory in Chapter Twelve.

Social Identity Theory

As U.S. society has become more diverse, understanding students from a variety of backgrounds has become increasingly important, and theories focusing on social identities are appearing with greater frequency in the literature. These theories, which are grounded in the sociohistorical context of the United States, in which some groups have privilege and some groups are oppressed, examine the development of both dominant and nondominant identities (McEwen, 2003a). While these identity models all focus on the process of self-definition, many of them also examine how individuals move through stages of increasing cognitive complexity with regard to their self-identification (Helms, 1993a). As such, they can be considered integrative, with qualities similar to theories discussed in the previous section. Helms defined (1993b) racial identity as "a sense of group or collective identity based on one's perception that he or she shares a common racial heritage with a particular racial group" (p. 3). Racial identity theories are predicated on the belief that race is not based in biology but rather is a social construction influenced by cultural norms and understandings about the relative merits of individuals from different heritages. Theories of African American identity development were the earliest theories of racial identity development to appear (see Cross, 1991; B. Jackson, 2001). White identity models, focusing on how white people view race and others from different racial backgrounds, followed (see Helms, 1995; Rowe, Bennett, & Atkinson, 1994). Models of Latino/a (Ferdman & Gallegos, 2001), Asian American (Kim, 2001), and American Indian (Horse, 2001) racial identity, as well as multiracial identity (Root, 1996; 2003a; Renn, 2004), have also been proposed. This body of scholarship is reviewed in Chapters Fourteen and Sixteen.

Ethnic identity has been defined as identification with "a segment of a larger society whose members are thought, by themselves and others, to have a common origin and to share segments of a common culture and who, in addition, participate in shared activities in which the common origin and culture are significant

ingredients" (Yinger, 1976, p. 200). Phinney (2003), basing her work on Marcia's (1966) approach to identity development, identified a general model of ethnic identity, while Sodowsky, Kwan, and Pannu (1995), studying Asian Americans, proposed a bidirectional model based on degree of adoption of whiteness and degree of retention of Asianness. Other scholars, such as Torres (1999), have explored the relationship of ethnic identity and acculturation, a concept defined as changes in cultural attitudes, values, and behaviors that result from contact between two cultures (Phinney, 1990). Ethnic identity is discussed in Chapter Fifteen.

Theories of gay, lesbian, and bisexual identity development began to appear in the literature about the same time as the gay liberation movement started in the late 1960s. Cass's (1979) model is probably the best known and most used of these theories. Newer approaches, such as those of Fassinger (1998a) and D'Augelli (1994a), have gained popularity in recent years. Heterosexual identity development has also been discussed recently (see Worthington, Savoy, Dillon, & Vernaglia, 2002). Theories examining the development of sexual identity can be found in Chapter Seventeen.

Gender identity development theories are based on the assumption that gender roles and understanding of what it means to be a gendered person in society are socially constructed rather than determined by one's biological sex. With increasing attention being given to the unique concerns of college students who identify as transgender (that is, individuals whose gender identity does not align with their biological sex; see Carter, 2000; Beemyn, 2005), understanding the role that gender plays in the lives of all students has been highlighted. Bem (1981b, 1983) was one of the first theorists to identify the various ways in which individuals viewed themselves in relation to masculine and feminine traits. More recently, a theory of transgender identity development based on D'Augelli's (1994a) lesbian and gay identity development model has been introduced by Bilodeau (2005, 2009). Gender identity is discussed in Chapter Eighteen.

Other social identities such as class, religion, and ability/disability status have also been studied, and theory in these areas is starting to appear (see McEwen, 2003a). In addition, Jones and McEwen (2000) and Abes, Jones, and McEwen (2007) have reminded us that social identities do not exist independently but rather are intertwined and of varying salience at different times and in different contexts. This work is the focus of Chapter Thirteen.

Specialized Theories of Student Development

A number of other areas of development have been studied and discussed in the literature, many of relevance for educators in their work with students. For example, career development, an early area of interest for student affairs professionals, has

an extensive body of theoretical literature (see Brown & Lent, 2005). Theories of learning, including newer approaches such as situated cognition, transformational learning, and critical and postmodern perspectives (see Merriam, 2008; Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007), are also relevant as they provide another view of how students grow and develop intellectually and gain new knowledge both in and out of the classroom. As an increasing number of college students are adults over the age of twenty-two, student affairs educators must also expand their thinking to consider development across the life span. Adult development theories, including life stage theories, life events theories, life course theories, and integrative adult development theories, are helpful in this process (see Clark & Caffarella, 1999; Hamrick, Evans, & Schuh, 2002). Unfortunately, space limitations preclude further discussion of these important theories.

The Influence of Paradigms

Guba (1990) defined a paradigm as an interpretive framework, a "basic set of beliefs that guides action" (p. 17). McEwen (2003a) noted that theory development can occur as a result of shifting paradigms. When a particular paradigm dominates thinking, its assumptions are unquestioned and implicitly undergird the understanding of phenomena. A paradigm consists of three components: ontology, epistemology, and methodology (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 99). Ontology explores questions about the nature of reality. Epistemology examines how the inquirer comes to understand the world. Methodology focuses on the process of how information is obtained. Guba and Lincoln (1994) pointed out that since paradigms represent basic beliefs, they cannot be proved; paradigms are human constructions, subject to human error. Guba and Lincoln cautioned that "no construction is or can be incontrovertibly right; advocates of any particular construction must rely on *persuasiveness* and *utility* rather than *proof* in arguing their position" (p. 108).

Paradigms guide both theory and research. New, and often competing, paradigms have emerged to better account for findings when research results cannot be explained within the context of the dominant, positivist paradigm (Kuhn, 1970) that has guided theory and research in psychology, as well as most other fields, for the past four hundred years (Crotty, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). A positivist interpretation of the world assumes an objective reality exists that is time and context free and can be stated in the form of cause-and-effect laws. A researcher is assumed to be independent of the object investigated and able to study a phenomenon without influencing the outcome or being influenced by the object of study. The methodology used to study

phenomena is experimental and manipulative. Hypotheses are formulated and subjected to empirical test for verification. Conditions that could interfere with the results are carefully controlled.

Much of the theory and research reviewed in this book has a positivist perspective. For instance, King and Kitchener (1994) presented stages of cognitive development that they believe are apparent in the thinking of individuals regardless of the situation in which the individuals find themselves. They studied cognitive development using a standardized set of interview questions and trained interviewers to present these questions in a similar manner to all research participants. They then outlined a program of research based on explicitly stated hypotheses, which were then tested in a predetermined manner. This research is used to verify the concepts associated with their theory. King and Kitchener's work is excellent within the context of the positivistic tradition. Others who create and test student development theory predominantly from a positivist perspective (which means the underlying assumptions mirror this perspective) include Perry (1968), Kohlberg (1976), Cross (1971), and Helms (1993a).

In the past decade or so, many researchers have begun to find a linear perspective constraining. Meaning in positivist research is often limited and generalizable findings difficult to apply to all categories (for example, all students in higher education). Student differences are too vast and college experiences too varied to look at developmental phenomena from the universal view of a positivist. Examination of human (and thus student) development in its many complex forms may be more successful if a multitude of paradigmatic lenses is used (Guido, Chávez, & Lincoln, in press). In an attempt to better explain the complexity that exists in the world today and give more meaning to what is found, a number of competing paradigms are emerging. The assumptions of critical cultural paradigms (Guido et al., 2003) and constructivism (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) are outlined here.

Critical paradigms reflect "theoretical foundations that promote the deconstruction and critique of institutions, laws, organizations, definitions and practices to screen for power inequities" (Guido et al., 2003, p. 14). Solidified over time, dominant perspectives are taken as "truth." Adherents of a critical perspective believe that research findings are inevitably influenced by the values of the inquirer. Inquiry is seen as transactional, requiring a dialogue between the researcher and researched. The purpose of inquiry is to raise consciousness and correct injustices resulting from ignorance and mistaken ideas by promoting fundamental social change. The work of many feminist and ethnic scholars can be situated within the critical paradigm. Critical race theory (CRT; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Solórzano, 1998), discussed further in Chapter Fourteen, is an excellent example of such an approach. Its goal is to challenge and shift the

normative structure with regard to race and racism. Tenets of CRT include a belief that our current understanding of race privileges white people and marginalizes people of color. In addition, because racial dynamics are so ingrained in U.S. culture, they are not recognized by most people. To address inequities experienced by people of color, critical race theorists believe that the unique stories of people of color must be recounted, and researchers must use their findings to create a more just society.

The underlying theoretical foundation of cultural paradigms is that truth is socially constructed based on "invisible gender, culture, sexuality, class, language, and even personality preferences" (Guido et al., in press), to name a few. Cultural paradigms look at the world in congruence with the cultures examined and have a purely descriptive and interpretive goal. Examining phenomena from an anthropological and sociological lens, cultural paradigms study the norms, values, assumptions, beliefs, and meanings undergirding an artifact, population, policy, or organization. Magolda's campus rituals ethnographies (2000, 2002) originated from a cultural paradigm and stand in contrast to Rhoads's (1994, 1997) studies on gay college students and students engaged in service-learning, which offer both cultural description and critical analysis.

One of the most widely used paradigms to emerge in recent decades combines aspects of critical and cultural paradigms (Guido et al., in press). Knowledge from this shared paradigm is subjective, experiential, and transactional. Tenets of this paradigm include emancipation of nondominant groups to alter their oppression, intersections of multiple critical and cultural views (for example, class, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and ability), and the high priority of ethical considerations. Racial/ethnic/border/liminal/postcolonial epistemologies (Beverley, 1999; Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008; Sandoval, 2000; L. Smith, 1999; Trinh, 1989), and feminist and gender theories, as well as embodied perspectives (Butler, 1993; Denzin et al., 2008), all possess tenets in concert with examination of students' intersecting social identities.

As a paradigm, constructivism is "based on a relative ontology, a subjectivist epistemology, and a hermeneutic (for instance, interpretive) and dialectical (for instance, critical) methodology" (Guido et al., in press). Reality is based on specific individual and group experiences and can change over time. Investigators and participants are viewed as linked, although the researcher carries the most weight in interpreting findings. Findings are created in the context of the investigation; the variable and personal nature of social constructions can be identified only through interaction between the researcher and participants involved in the research. Baxter Magolda's (1992, 1999a, 2001) work is constructivist in nature. She set out to discover how students at Miami University thought about their worlds. While guided by earlier work on cognitive development, she entered

her investigation without preconceived ideas about what she would find. Her findings were based on a series of in-depth interviews she conducted with 101 individuals over a period of many years. In the presentation of these research findings, Baxter Magolda allowed her participants to present their interpretations of the world around them in their own words. Other scholars conducting constructivist research include Torres and Hernandez (2007). As a component of a larger mixed-method study, qualitative data were gathered to add Latino student voices to the chorus of student development literature. In doing so, Torres and Hernandez were the first to link student development and racism.

New paradigm thinking is having a profound influence on all fields, including student affairs (Fried & Associates, 1995; Guido et al., in press; Guido-DiBrito et al., 2003; Kuh, Whitt, & Shedd, 1987). Student development is being reconceptualized within these new frameworks. Understanding the paradigmatic assumptions underlying a theory is crucial to using the theory appropriately. To give the reader a sense of the ontological, epistemological, and methodological bases of developmental research, throughout this book we present background about the theories and discuss the context in which they were developed. We also outline the populations and methods used in the construction of the theories reviewed. We offer this information to enhance understanding of student development theory creation, development, and application.

Conclusion

Student affairs professionals appear to be the strongest and most consistent voice in the academy articulating concern for the human growth and development of students. Development of the whole student is more complex than one theory or even a cluster of theories can explain. The rapidly expanding body of literature focusing on various aspects of student development underscores this point. Life was certainly much easier for student affairs professionals and faculty teaching student development when all we needed to learn and teach were the theories of Chickering, Perry, and Kohlberg. The sheer volume of theoretical literature currently being produced is daunting even for scholars in the field. Luckily, the new approaches and complexity of perspectives provides a much stronger foundation for understanding and working with today's diverse college students. The challenge of becoming familiar with and learning to apply student development theory in the twenty-first century is certainly worth the effort. Student affairs educators can know only in hindsight how history will shape the future of student development, but for the sake of students, they must help the academy recognize the value of the whole person concept and the theory that contributes to an

understanding of students' growth and change. Student development is far too important to be recognized only as a role for student affairs professionals. Faculty, administrators, and even students, parents, and families can benefit from more clearly understanding how students change over the course of their time in college and the factors that contribute to that process.