Learning Across the Campus: How College Facilitates the Development of Wisdom

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This article provides a theoretical framework and model that explores: wisdom, a multidimensional construct that connects a number of desired learning outcomes; how wisdom develops; and, how college contributes to this process.

Higher education has been under increased scrutiny by many of its primary stakeholders—including legislators, parents, and students—who want to know how institutions are providing a return on their financial investment. Stakeholders generally want to know what students are getting out of their educational experiences, with a definite shift in emphasis from what is being taught to what is being learned. In response, various leaders within higher education have focused attention toward student learning (e.g., American Association for Higher Education, American College Personnel Association, & National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, 1999; Study Group on the Conditions of Excellence in American Higher Education, 1984; Wingspread Group on Higher Education, 1993). One clear result has been an increased emphasis on the overall undergraduate experience in its entirety and a desire to reconnect the fragmented nature of campuses, with educators calling for “seamless learning environments” that connect rather than segment the larger campus environment (American College Personnel Association, 1994). However, given that campuses are still characterized by fragmentation and divisions, the only seamless part of the campus may be the students themselves. Because there are few formal mechanisms to help students continually integrate and make meaning of their aggregate experiences, higher education planning for a more seamless environment would benefit from an understanding of how students transform the multiple inputs from college into meaningful thought and action.

In an increased effort to understand the complex, integrated nature of the collegiate learning experience, education researchers have sought to understand which learning outcomes can be attributed to various elements of the college environment or experience. Yet, there is little understanding of how students put it all together. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore: (a) the development of wisdom, a construct that encompasses and connects a number of learning outcomes, and represents the sum total of the integrative experiences individuals have as they mature; (b) how wisdom develops; and, (c) how college contributes to this process.

Literature Review

The research literature provided various insights into different aspects of how the integration of multiple college experiences might lead to the development of wisdom. The first area incorporated general developmental factors that impact the quality of the learning experience, particularly psychosocial factors (Chickering & Reisser, 1993;
Knefelkamp, Widick, & Parker, 1978) and cognitive factors (Baxter Magolda, 1992; Kegan, 1994; Perry, 1970). The second area clustered around the ways students approached learning, including: the quality of their orientations to learning (van Rossum & Schenk, 1984; Terenzini, Springer, Pascarella, & Nora, 1995); the variety of learning styles (Kolb, 1984); pertinent learning strategies (Marton & Säljö, 1976); and the amount of motivation to engage in course material (McMillan & Forsyth, 1991).

The third area focused on previous treatments of wisdom: the primarily cognitive aspects (Arlin, 1990); the explicit integration of affect-cognition relations (Kramer, 1990); or a wisdom prototype that was consistent among age groups and distinct from intelligence (Holliday & Chandler, 1986). Akin to wisdom, Moore used the term soul to describe the genuineness and authenticity in “attending to the details of everyday life as well as to major decisions and changes” (1992, p. 5). In the last area, researchers explored the environmental and organizational elements that influence learning outcomes, with particular emphasis on institution-wide factors such as learning communities (Barr & Tagg, 1995); and how much an organization emphasizes action and experience, allows faculty to model the learning process, emphasizes concept mapping or scaffolding, fosters interpersonal collaboration, emphasizes frequent feedback on performance, designs a curriculum that is coherent and consistently develops a relatively limited set of cross-disciplinary skills that are clearly identified and publicly held to be important, which is known as conscious vertical and horizontal integration (Ewell, 1997, pp. 11-13). Other key parts of the environment of the learning process are formal and informal educational experiences in and out of class (Kline, 1995; Kuh, 1993, 1995; Love & Goodsell Love, 1995; Terenzini, Pascarella, & Blimling, 1996); and agents of influence such as faculty and administrators (Gardiner, 1994; Love, 1995); and peers (Astin, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991).

The above researchers in higher education have often focused on specific learning outcomes in isolation, and did not explain how individuals developed a transcendent core outcome—such as wisdom. Wisdom seemed to be greater than the sum of the parts, growing out of an amalgamation of personal qualities, knowledge, skills, and insights put to use for a larger purpose. Additionally the professional and research literature primarily addresses the “what” and “where” of learning, but the “how” is largely ignored. No heuristic model was found to bring these areas together and explain the relationship and interplay between them, and detail how students reflect and integrate the lessons they learn, in and out of class, on and off campus, and apply them to their lives. Thus, this study was focused on ways that various aspects of the campus environment facilitates the process of integration leading to the development of wisdom.

**METHODOLOGY**

Ten recent graduates of a doctoral extensive institution in the mid-Atlantic were asked to reflect on the salient aspects of their undergraduate college experiences in several open-ended interviews. Campus administrators nominated participants who had actively participated in the life of the university, evidenced by strong academic engagement and achievement in and involvement in cocurricular offerings. Participants were included in the study based on their noted
ability to integrate their college experiences. The participants represented diversity on a number of dimensions, including major, ethnicity, gender, religion, and types of involvements in college.

Research Method

The integration of the college experience leading to students’ development of wisdom is a complex phenomenon that does not divide neatly into discrete variables. Due to the complexity of this phenomenon, qualitative methods of inquiry are the most well suited for this type of study (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). However, not every qualitative approach would have necessarily answered how the college environment facilitates the process of knowledge integration and wisdom development. Grounded theory was the most effective methodology for this study because it uses a systematic set of analytic procedures to develop an inductively derived theoretical conclusion from the actual data related to the phenomenon being examined (Brown, Stevens, Troiano, & Schneider, 2002; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Interview Plan

Each participant was interviewed 3 times using an in-depth interview format that employed a flexible outline of topics and questions. The focus of the first interview was to set a broad context for the study and revolved around the following questions:

1. What were some experiences (e.g., courses, people, programs, policies) which left the strongest impression on you? (Positive? Negative?)
2. In what ways are you different/same now from when you entered college?
3. What was your motivation for attending college? Taking specific courses?

The second round of interviews stimulated thinking around the concrete details associated with particular experiences and the integration and application of knowledge. Participants were also asked to describe how a difficult life problem provided them an opportunity to draw on what they had learned from college to solve it. The third interview focused on exploring wisdom:

1. Describe someone you believe is wise.
2. Given that definition, in what ways are you wiser because of college?
3. How did college facilitate this wisdom development?

In this third interview, redundancy in terms of themes and categories were reached.

Data Analysis

Grounded theory techniques were used to analyze the data compiled from 3 interviews with each of the 10 participants. Grounded theory is an inductive-deductive process, whereby “deductive work…is used to derive from induced codes conceptual guides as to where to go next for which comparative group or subgroup in order to sample for more data to generate the theory” (Glaser, 1978, p. 37-38). Open coding of the raw transcripts of the data yielded more than 1,000 individual concepts, combined in axial coding to create 54 more powerful, abstract categories, and finally aggregating into five main “key” categories and one “core” category in the final selective coding (Brown, 1999).

Categories were formed in open coding and fleshed out in terms of their given properties and dimensions. The properties are attributes or characteristics of a phenomenon (category) and dimensions illustrate how each property can vary along a continuum (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Theoretical saturation was achieved when no new data
emerged regarding a category, whereby they were dense enough to cover variations and process, and relationships between categories were also delineated satisfactorily.

Consistent with expectations of grounded theory research design, the trustworthiness of this qualitative research was achieved by the satisfactory attainment of four constructs that relate to credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Participants received and responded to verbatim transcripts of each of their individual interviews, drafts of the emerging concepts and categories, and a model explaining the process associated with the development of wisdom. At the end of the third round of individual interviews, 6 out of the 10 participants met together to comment upon the tentative themes of the emerging theory and to explore lingering questions. Participants remarks in the aggregate formed some of the final revisions to the model. Throughout the study, two peer debriefers reviewed each transcript and helped test emerging designs and hypotheses, assisting in clarifying and deepening aspects of data analysis that may have been missed by the researcher and remained in an inchoate form. A separate inquiry auditor ensured that grounded theory procedures were followed properly.

RESULTS

Grounded in the data, wisdom became defined as a construct comprised of six interrelated dimensions: (a) self-knowledge, (b) understanding of others, (c) judgment, (d) life knowledge, (e) life skills, and (f) a willingness to learn. Wisdom develops when students go through the core learning-from-life process, comprised of reflection, integration, and application. The conditions that facilitate the development of wisdom by directly or indirectly stimulating the learning-from-life process are the student’s (a) orientation to learning, (b) experiences, (c) interactions with others, and (d) environment. Depending on how deeply and how often students were stimulated to go through the learning-from-life process, they experienced growth on one or more of the six dimensions of wisdom listed above. The basic model of wisdom development is presented in Figure 1 and its elements are discussed below. Connections to the literature are detailed at the end of this section.

Wisdom

Wisdom is a construct comprised of six interrelating dimensions: self-knowledge, understanding of others, judgment, life knowledge, life skills, and willingness to learn.

Self-Knowledge. Self-knowledge is comprised of three main components: a conscious understanding of one’s own values, talents, multiple identities, interests, sense of purpose, morals and ethics; the development and reliance on an internal locus of success and the ability to maintain a personal authenticity in a variety of contexts; and personal confidence and self-efficacy. Self-knowledge can pertain to specific professional, physical, political, or spiritual matters, or multiple areas. Self-knowledge embodies the adage, “to thine own self be true.”

Understanding of Others. Understanding of others refers to a genuine interest in learning about others in varying contexts at individual, social, cultural, and systemic levels; a capacity to engage with them; and a willingness to use one’s spheres of influence for the common good. Advanced verbal and nonverbal communication skills enable
one to articulate thoughts in a way meaningful to another person.

**Judgment.** Judgment is the ability to effectively take in, process, and apply information to one’s life. Judgment is characterized by sagacity, acuteness of perception and discernment, demonstrated through an assessment of the situation and context, reflection on options, synthesis of multiple perspectives, consideration of consequences, and making good decisions. Judgment is seeing through the complexity of a situation and making sound decisions. A key aspect of judgment is the overall ability to learn from one’s own experience and mistakes, as well as to learn from others.

**Life Knowledge.** Life knowledge can be described in terms of the breadth and depth of one’s reservoir of knowledge, obtained from both books and the “street.” Life knowledge refers to a combination of an individual’s amount of common sense, insightfulness, perspicacity, circumspection, and understanding of the realities of life. Whereas judgment refers largely to the ability to process a situation, life knowledge provides the content engaged in the process. Life knowledge includes a capacity for thoughtful timing, answering difficult questions, understanding and appreciating life and its uncertainties, and knowing how to “pick one’s battles.”

**Life Skills.** Life skills are characterized by personal competence in life matters. Life skills refer to an expertise in balancing multiple roles, handling daily affairs, managing time, anticipating problems, possessing the practical tools and strategies for dealing with multiple contexts, effective use of available systems and supports,
establishing and managing competing priorities, and overcoming barriers.

**Willingness to Learn.** Willingness to learn is characterized by a confidence in what knowledge a person has, the humility to believe that he or she simply cannot ever know everything, an openness to and interest in learning more, and a willingness to stumble in the pursuit of more knowledge.

**How Wisdom Develops: Learning From Life**
For individuals to develop wisdom, they must go through the process of learning-from-life. Learning-from-life is comprised of reflection and integration and application—transforming one’s experiences into one or more of the six dimensions of wisdom discussed above, through taking in, processing, and using information.

**Reflection and Integration.** Reflection and integration are comprised of taking in and processing information. In a loose series of conscious or unconscious actions (e.g., writing, talking, or thinking), students process information gained from experiences and interactions and transform them into something more meaningful: analyzing (separating the information into parts, then considering the information in new ways); connecting (between new information and existing areas in one’s life); contextualizing (associating the similarities and dissimilarities between the new information and previous knowledge); and synthesizing (bringing the new information into the existing knowledge, creating a new whole).

**Application.** Once students have engaged the reflection and integration phase of obtaining and processing information, application can occur. Application in this context refers to any changes in a student’s attitudes, values, awareness, and/or behaviors. Increased wisdom results as this process evolves—if an individual does not engage in application there is no subsequent growth or change. Application might entail changing an opinion, considering options, making a judgment, formulating a plan, and/or implementing a decision. At certain junctures, students may experience a crossroads, representing a time when current ways of doing things do not work. The wisdom to apply lessons learned inspires some students to press on and change their way of thinking, while others may retreat.

**Conditions That Facilitate the Development of Wisdom**
Four conditions directly or indirectly impact the core learning-from-life process to the development of wisdom: orientation to learning, experiences, interactions with others, and the environment.

**Orientation to Learning.** The first condition, orientation to learning, refers to the attitudes, expectations, personal biographies, and motivations individuals bring to their interactions with people and situations. A person’s previous experiences affect not only the person’s approach to a situation, but also what he or she expects to get out of it, and how predisposed an individual is to maximize the whole experience. At the broadest level, there is a general orientation to life that includes the amount of thought an individual gives to his or her personal future, degree of optimism, amount of perseverance, and ability to capitalize on the rich array of experiences life affords them.

Another important aspect associated with orientation to learning is a student’s orientation to college specifically. Students bring with them a variety of feelings and attitudes regarding college including previous experiences, varying levels of confidence
and commitment to college, and how much energy they are willing to invest in their college education. For example, in a single lecture hall one student can be sitting in the front row, having read all of the assigned readings, while another student is in the back passing notes or glancing at a newspaper. Two students in the same time and place, but the orientation of each student will affect how much he or she will get out of the same situation.

**Experiences.** The second condition, experiences, refers to any activity or situation encountered, including the formal and structured (e.g., classes, internships, work), informal (e.g., recreation, organizations, travel), and even the unplanned (e.g., social interactions, living situations). Students participate in a variety of experiences, activities or involvements, during different points in their college career, with varying frequencies and durations. However, the depth of involvement varies. Experiences may include a critical incident, book, or decision regarding one’s relationships or career. Courses can be powerful facilitators of the development of wisdom, depending on how the course connects with various aspects of the student’s life in meaningful ways. Experiences also vary in terms of the degree in which they provided a doorway to other types of experiences or opportunities to learn from life. The resulting degree of impact can be influenced by the degree of congruency between a student’s core values and the activity and the perceived relevance to the student’s life.

**Interactions With Others.** The third condition, interactions with others, refers to how students encounter individuals similar and different from themselves in a variety of contexts, including their courses, co-curricular activities, and living situations. Interactions can vary in terms of quantity and quality. Students may move in one primary social circle or many, and interactions with others give them exposure to a variety of opinions, situations, perspectives, priorities, interests, and behaviors.

Particular individuals can have a specific, significant impact on a student’s development of wisdom. Influential people can include faculty; administrators; supervisors; advisors; counselors; graduate students; peers of an equal age or older; family; partners; and custodial, clerical, or food service staff. The impact of a person can affect professional, academic, personal, spiritual, and other life areas. Not all influential people are positive forces. Some people serve as negative examples, providing students opportunities to observe what they don’t want to be.

**Environment.** The fourth condition, institutional environment, incorporates the overall setting and provides the context where students’ orientation to learning, variety of experiences, and interactions with people come together in various combinations to produce wisdom. The unique ethos of the college environment purposefully influences each of these other conditions because its core function is to advance learning, as opposed to other settings (e.g., military, business) where learning can occur but is not the primary objective. In the collegiate environment, the people, policies, and resources that shape that institutional setting are directly and indirectly focused on the achievement of the student. The college environment provides numerous opportunities for formal, informal, and unplanned experiences and also provides exposure and interaction with a large number and variety of people as well as subcommunities; all of which are, depending upon one’s specific
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orientation to learning, important to facilitating the learning-from-life process associated with the development of wisdom.

Reading the Model

Each individual element’s placement within the model and how they relate to one another as a whole is represented by the arrows included in Figure 1. The institutional environment provides a setting where orientation to learning, experiences, and interactions with others influence the learning-from-life process, and the development of wisdom. As learning-from-life is influenced, there is subsequent impact on one or more of the six dimensions of wisdom (i.e., self-knowledge, understanding of others, judgment, life knowledge, life skills, and a willingness to learn), which in turn changes a student’s orientation to learning for a future experience or interaction with others. The arrows indicate that individuals can have interactions with others and/or participate in experiences that do not have an impact upon the learning-from-life process. Thus, a student’s orientation to learning will not have been altered in any way, and he or she will remain in the exact same spot when another situation or interaction is encountered. The frequency or ease with which the learning-from-life process is influenced varies for each person, which accounts for why some individuals seem to get more out of particular experiences or situations than others.

The dotted lines around the orientation to learning, experiences, interactions with others, learning-from-life and wisdom portions of the model indicate the permeable nature of each element of the college experience. The college environment itself provides one context where wisdom may be facilitated, but the model accommodates the impact of the non-college-related environment and that these experiences along with college-related experiences interact with each other to further enrich the learning experience. The model represents one slice of an ongoing process that is incremental and cumulative, and the individual dimensions of wisdom can develop at different levels at varying speeds. The learning-from-life process is like walking up a spiral staircase, both repetitive and progressive, allowing one to look down and see where one has been while continuing movement in light of what has gone before.

Connection to Existing Literature

The six dimensions of wisdom that emerged from this study and helped frame the model are reflected and therefore reinforced in the literature. Judgment, self-knowledge, and life knowledge were the most frequently associated with previous treatments of wisdom. Understanding of others, life skills, and willingness to learn were represented in less than half of the treatments. Moore (1992), Kramer (1990), and Holliday and Chandler (1986) are the scholars whose conceptions of wisdom connected most often with the wisdom model formulated by this study.

The learning-from-life process has many similarities to the processes described in the cognitive work of Piaget. Piaget (1964) described mental structures, ways individuals adapt to and organize the environment, as gradually becoming more complex through the process of problem solving and analysis. When current mental structures fail to be useful in problem solving activities, a period of confusion, discomfort, or disequilibrium occurs. At this point, an individual begins the process of restoring equilibrium by developing more complex mental pro-
cesses. Students may be seen as moving from simple to more complex mental processes, through equilibrium and disequilibrium stages. This can take two forms: assimilation or accommodation. In assimilation, there is an integration of new beliefs or events into existing patterns of behavior. In accommodation, there is a modification of old cognitive schemata or a creation of new structures. Equilibrium is the balance between accommodation and assimilation. This Piagetian process is similar to the learning from life core process reflected in the model and reflected by study participants as they discussed experiences that caused a change in their way of thinking.

The wisdom model also relates to self-authorship, a concept that Kegan (1994) developed, and Baxter Magolda (2002) treated at length. These authors asserted that students must be equipped to face the challenges of adult life, characterized by changing conditions and a need for critical and independent thought (Baxter Magolda, 2002; Kegan, 1994). Baxter Magolda described self-authorship as “a way of making meaning of one’s experiences from inside oneself” (Baxter Magolda, 1998b, p. 152). Self-authorship as a key aspect of contextual knowing, the highest level of epistemological development where an individual integrates one’s own and others’ ideas, and evaluates knowledge claims in light of a particular context or circumstance. A number of threads of self-authorship related closely to the definition and development of wisdom as used in this study. Most similar are the three themes: cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal. The cognitive aspect relates to judgment, because it describes how a person is able to take in, process, and make judgments based on information. The intrapersonal dimension relates to self-knowledge, an exploration of one’s own limitations and willingness to learn. Life knowledge is evident in a student’s understanding of what can or cannot be changed. Managing one’s life corresponds directly with the life skills dimension of wisdom.

Conditions That Impact the Development of Wisdom

Orientation to Learning. How a student approached life, college, and specific situations was important to the wisdom model, and was treated somewhat extensively in the professional literature. McMillan and Forsyth (1991) described motivation as a combination of student needs and expectations, relating to an individual’s amount of engagement in a given situation. Terenzini et al. (1995) found that students’ academic and nonacademic experiences separately and jointly shaped student learning, which reinforces the orientation to learning to experiences and their influence on learning from life elements of the model.

Several authors demonstrated that how students approach the reading of a text determines the quality of the learning outcome (Marton & Säljö, 1976; van Rossum & Schenk, 1984). Depth of engagement is an important aspect of orientation to learning, although these studies did not address how students’ orientation can change over time. Kolb’s (1984) conception of learning styles affected students’ orientation to learning. Although the wisdom model did not delineate specific learning styles, the different ways in which students engaged in the learning from life process were affected by the ways they incorporated knowledge.

Environmental and Organizational Factors That Influence Student Learning. A great variety of individuals influenced the development of wisdom. In the professional liter-
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ature, there were extensive treatments of faculty (Love & Goodsell Love, 1995; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991), peers (Astin, 1993; Love & Goodsell Love), student affairs administrators (Garland & Grace, 1993; Love, 1995), and advisors (Gardiner, 1994). As reflected by study participants, these people also played a very substantial part in the development of wisdom in students. Each group of individuals was effective if the members inspired students to reflect on their lives in some way.

Connections With Existing Theory

The elements included in the wisdom development model reflect existing theories of human development. Although an extensive treatment of this connection is beyond the scope of this discussion, cognitive and psychosocial parameters warrant brief discussion. Demonstrating wisdom corresponds to the higher levels of human development, with particularly salient connections to cognitive and psychosocial theories.

Wisdom and cognitive development are strongly connected. Cognitive theorists describe the increasing degrees of complexity that individuals exhibit when they make meaning of their experiences, focusing specifically on how meaning is structured and not on what they know or believe. Baxter Magolda (1998a) connected self-authorship with contextual knowing (integrating one’s own and others’ ideas) from her earlier work (Baxter Magolda, 1992), relativism in Perry’s (1970) scheme, constructed knowledge (an integration of the inner voice of subjective knowledge and the voice of reason of procedural knowledge) in Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986), and reflective judgment in King and Kitchener’s (1994) model. Wisdom, as corroborated by these cognitive theorists, relates to a student’s capacity to internally construct an interpretation of events, drawing on available evidence to render judgments in circumstances with no easy answers. The inclusion of judgment, self-knowledge, and life knowledge in the wisdom model is particularly reinforced by the work of these theorists.

Strong connections also exist between wisdom and psychosocial development. Psychosocial development focuses on the “what” (content) of development and refers to the issues, tasks, and events that occur throughout the life span, the given pattern or resolution of these issues and tasks, and the adaptation to these events. An individual with a heightened level of wisdom, particularly self-knowledge, life knowledge, and judgment, exhibits higher stages of psychosocial development, particularly in establishing identity, developing mature relationships, developing purpose, intellectual competence, managing emotions, and developing integrity (A. Chickering, personal communication, March 27, 2003; Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

In sum, the findings of this study not only connect the four major areas of the professional literature to the specific components of the wisdom development model (conditions, core process, and outcome), but they provide a much more expanded and detailed explanation of the process as well. Existing theories deeply enrich various aspects of the wisdom development model, though no one theory provides an understanding of the conditions, core process, and outcomes associated with the development of wisdom.

DISCUSSION

Colleges and universities are already doing
many things that facilitate learning, but what generally is missing is a way to make the seemingly disparate connections more visible and intentional for students. The wisdom development model presented here can be a useful tool for guiding educators when framing their work, formulating their policies and programs, and enriching their individual interactions with students to intentionally stimulate the learning-from-life process. The following recommendations illustrate how the wisdom model, and the salient professional literature that reinforces its design, can help educators seeking to improve the quality of the collegiate environment for students.

Orientation to Learning
To take full advantage of the collegiate environment, students must have a well-developed, positive orientation to learning. To help assure such readiness, educators should continually look for opportunities to increase a student’s investment and involvement in their college education (King & Baxter Magolda, 1996). First, educators can help clarify students’ motivations and goals by continually asking students to reflect on answers to questions such as “Why are you at college?” and “What do you want to get out of this experience?” Educators should provide opportunities for reflection in multiple contexts (e.g., courses, activities, and living situations), framing reflective questions around all experiences (e.g., “What have you learned from this experience that you can draw upon later?” “What parts of your collegiate experience enabled you to address this challenge/situation/decision?”). This can occur in a variety of situations, including advising, courses, internships, student employment, athletics, and organizations.

Second, educators can articulate and maintain high expectations to increase engagement, provide a focused picture of how students are to expend their time and energy, and a sound rationale for doing so (Chickering & Gamson, 1987). To complement higher expectations, educators should identify students’ preparedness to undertake a given activity, and provide supports for students who feel that they need assistance to thrive and meet established expectations. Educators should increase students’ metacognition by identifying learning preferences and styles so that they are better able to maximize the collegiate experience (Kolb, 1984).

Third, educators can increase the relevance of an experience or learning situation by more clearly connecting each to a student’s identified interests and goals and situating it in the students’ experiences (King & Baxter Magolda, 1996). Educators can continually provide opportunities for students to explore their multiple identities, values, and interests, and how those bear upon their decision making.

Experiences
Colleges offer a rich array of learning experiences for students, including courses, student employment, student leadership positions, study abroad, and internships, to name a few. In general, educators should deliberately provide synthesizing and cumulative experiences designed to bring together all aspects of the collegiate experience and encourage students to integrate and apply lessons learned (i.e., knowledge, skills, and personal qualities) to their lives (Gardner & Van der Veer, 1998). Examples of interventions that encourage students to continually reflect on their aggregate experiences are end-of-year reflection groups, guided
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writings, learning portfolios, and transitional and senior experience programs. Additionally, cross-boundary initiatives such as clustering courses, living-learning programs, first-year interest groups, and service learning experiences encourage regular reflection and integration, and provide opportunities for application (AAHE et al., 1999).

The classroom setting can be structured to foster specific learning experiences that promote the contextual application of knowledge. Educators should put students in the center of learning, using their experiences to mutually construct meaning (Baxter Magolda & Buckley, 1997). Also, instructors should explicitly describe their courses (what they do or do not cover), what counts as knowledge and why, and the particular place of their discipline in the knowledge system in relation to other disciplines (e.g., in the discipline of physics, students answer questions that are quite different than those answered in the discipline of sociology; Kline, 1995). Faculty can also increase the number of complex situations encountered by students by using problem-based pedagogies like case studies, by framing real situations as learning opportunities, and by applying coursework to life outside the classroom (King & Baxter Magolda, 1996). Lastly, course syllabi should be constructed to teach students “not only knowledge, but also how to use that knowledge well” (Sternberg, 2002, p. B20).

Interactions With Others

Encouraging interactions with others enables the institution to maximize all of its human resources towards the development of wisdom. Educators can help students explore who they are in terms of their individual identity and roles, how these affect the way they interpret the world around them, and how those dimensions change in certain situations and over time (Brown, 1998). Institutions can create circumstances where students have sustained contact with others working towards shared goals and can provide shared opportunities to learn about those different from themselves and enhance the skills, knowledge, and attitudes to engage effectively with a variety of people (Tatum, Calhoun, Brown, & Ayvazian, 2000).

Institutions can create opportunities for sustained, meaningful interactions with others in a variety of settings, enabling students to identify different worldviews, to contextualize them, and to discuss them. Students can be provided opportunities to assume different viewpoints and deepen understanding of others through case studies and role-plays that promote intergroup dialogue (Schoem & Hurtado, 2001). Students can be encouraged to capitalize on the rich diversity of peer groups, with particular emphasis on nontraditional students or others who have faced issues similar to younger students. Institutions must accept responsibility for increasing students’ understanding of the need to be able to work with people different from themselves to maximize their contributions in a global society, and to understand how their individual assumptions, biases, and personal styles impact these interactions (Tatum, 1997).

Lastly, steps should be taken to intentionally orient all agents of the institution who have direct contact with students to see themselves as important to the overall student learning experience (e.g., faculty, professional staff, paraprofessional staff, advisors, and custodial, clerical, and food service personnel), and to capitalize on their roles as meaning makers by being approachable and engaging (Brown, 2002).
Students should be encouraged to cultivate multiple mentors on and off campus and be provided with an understanding of how to do so.

Environment

As educators we must look for opportunities to enhance conditions within the campus environment that influence learning-from-life and in turn the development of wisdom. Using Kuh’s (1996) notion of the seamless campus we can generate opportunities for institutional renewal, design interventions to promote the development of wisdom, create a shared vision of wisdom and a common language to discuss it, form collaborative partnerships to better facilitate it, determine the impact student culture has on wisdom development, and strive to positively shape its influence. Further, educators can translate the institutional mission into campus-wide learning outcomes associated with wisdom and develop ways of measuring them, help institutional agencies and agents know what a wise student is, and identify how various elements can contribute to this process. We should audit our physical and virtual environments from our students’ perspective and determine explicitly how our signs, symbols, traditions, and mission articulate and reinforce the development of wisdom as a goal.

Implications for Further Study

The development of wisdom is a complex phenomenon that cannot be understood completely through a single study. Second, the results reflected here are from one large, public research institution, and should not necessarily be construed to speak of the experiences of students at institutions of a different size or mission. Third, the students in this study were highly involved with both the curricular and cocurricular aspects of the college and may differ from students less engaged with the overall collegiate experience. Fourth, students in this study are of traditional age, so some of education acquired through more extensive life experiences is not necessarily represented here. Fifth, a quantitative study to test this model (e.g., STEM analysis) would add to its strength. Lastly, the study provides one definition of wisdom bounded within the specific context of higher education; an historical, anthropological, or religious treatment of this phenomenon is beyond the scope of this study.

Conclusion

In higher education, much attention still is being directed towards the quality of student learning. Educators must answer the sophisticated questions being raised about the quality of learning, conceptualized in its broadest form by our primary stakeholders—parents, students, legislators, and accrediting agencies. Renewed emphasis on undergraduate education should increase our desire for turning our fragmented campuses into seamless learning environments. The model presented here provides a context for doing so. It is intended to provide educators with a framework for considering how to more purposefully influence the integrative nature of the educational experience to enhance the development of wisdom.

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