Erikson's theory of psychosocial development offers a way of thinking against which we, as educators, can measure who our students are and how the college environment may inhibit or enhance their development.

Erik Erikson and psychosocial development

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To understand Erik Erikson's work we must examine his purposes and orientations. He found his initial professional identity in the Vienna psychoanalytic circle surrounding Sigmund Freud. In his approach to development he subscribes to many of the assumptions of the psychoanalytic viewpoint. However, Erikson has departed from, or at least redefined, the psychoanalytic view of personality development in two major ways.

In the first place, an understanding of individual development requires consideration of the external environment as well as of the internal dynamics. Erikson's is undoubtedly a psychosocial view; he places the developing person in a social context, emphasizing the fact that movement through life occurs in interaction with parents, family, social institutions and a particular culture, all of which are bounded by a particular historical period. In contrast to most other theorists, Erikson is an interdisciplinary thinker who draws upon diverse areas such as biology, anthropology, and history in his attempt to explain the social dimension of individual development.

A second departure from the psychoanalytic view occurs in the tone and thrust of Erikson's writing. Stated succinctly, he is a psychological humanist who looks toward the positive and adaptive capacity of individuals. He focuses on qualities such as competence, identity, love, and wisdom, and highlights factors which encourage their emergence in the individual's life. In his more speculative statements, Erikson uses an evolutionary perspective. He suggests that human strengths and the social institutions which encourage those strengths are both grounded in universal developmental stages.

Undoubtedly, his theoretical ideas are a seminal contribution to our understanding of the individual life cycle. The journey from birth to death passes through "seasons." Erikson's model of psychosocial development helps us to chart them; even more, it describes an underlying psychological principle which makes their sequence understandable.

the psychosocial model of development

Ego Epigenesis. When Erikson describes psychosocial development, he is essentially focusing on the emergence and development of the ego, a selective, integrating coherent agency "which bridges one's inner life and social roles (Erikson, 1964, p. 148). Erikson's description of the ego eludes easy definition; in general, it is that part of the personality—a rational-intuitive core—which brings order and clarity out of varied experiences. Probably the most recognizable part of the ego is conveyed by the term *identity,* the organized set of images, the sense of self, which express who and what we *really* are. For Erikson, the development of the ego and a sense of identity follows the epigenetic principle. Using the developing embryo as a model, he suggests: "Anything that grows has a ground plan . . . and out of this ground plan the parts arise, each part having its time of special ascendancy, until all parts have arisen to form a functioning whole" (Erikson, 1959, p. 52). Thus, Erikson postulates that the ego emerges part by part in a sequence which is dictated by a "master plan."

To clarify what Erikson means by an epigenetic principle we need to examine three domains: (1) a person's physical stage; (2) his encounter with society and the social roles he plays; and (3) his internal ordering of those experiences, his ego functioning. For Erikson, ego development emerges from the interaction of the person's internal growth with external societal demands. Physical growth and cognitive maturation follow a biological timetable. A two-year-old child is manifestly different from an eighteen-year-old young adult. Moreover, and most crucial to our understanding of the epigenetic idea, Erikson argues that we have evolved social institutions with roles and demands

which parallel the different growth phases. Since each maturational phase occurs within a particular social and socializing context, the life cycle can be seen as a sequence of "biological-social" phases, or more properly *psycho*-social. For example, a two-year-old who is achieving greater muscle control, can walk, and has a rudimentary language, will be impelled by his inner drives to explore the world; simultaneously, his social environment (through his parents) will demand that he learn to master certain tasks and confine his exploration. This conjunction of abilities and demands requires mastery of certain tasks which contribute a part to his ego development. Obviously, the social roles and demands confronting a young adult will be substantially different; his ego development will center on those psychosocial issues which are ascendant at his place in the life cycle. The epigenetic principle simply suggests that the inherent pattern of human growth and its parallel social climate create a universal sequence of psychosocial phases. Erikson sees an ordered pattern in our lives because of these regularities in psychosocial experiences which dictate the form and sequence of personality development.

Psychosocial Stages, Crises, Polar Attitudes, and Virtues. Erikson has described eight stages in psychosocial development; as stated, each stage can be seen as a particular time in the life sequence when physical growth, cognitive maturation, and certain social demands converge to create a particular developmental task. For example, the typical six-year-old is acquiring increased muscle coordination and capacity to think about the concrete world; at the same time he enters school and must contend with demands for performance . . . can he hit a ball, learn to read, and play cooperatively with others? The convergence of his inner and outer world poses a basic question about his identity—can he produce? In much the same manner, each of Erikson's stages poses a particular dilemma with its own unique set of issues. In each stage, the individual will assume a "psychosocial" attitude which ultimately marks his evaluation of himself as a social being and contributes another facet to his identity.

Erikson defines the basic attitudes that emerge from each stage as polar orientations. In each stage the individual can achieve a sense of himself as a person who has positive personal and social capacities, or he may emerge with a sense of himself that is ultimately debilitating. Erikson discusses these polar orientations as "nuclear conflicts" during which an individual wavers between contradictory evaluations of himself. For example, our six-year-old probably shifts back and forth between feelings of mastery and inferiority. Obviously, the balance undergoes continual change; but eventually there will be a crisis point when a decision must be made. A crisis is not a time of panic or disruption: It is a decision point—that moment when one reaches an inter-

section and must turn one way or the other. Thus, as our hypothetical six-year-old moves through his elementary school years collecting experiences and reactions, there will come a time when he will have to define himself as a producer or non-producer. The crisis may be posed by so innocuous a task as speaking in a school program, or it may be created by a major problem such as being held back a year in school.

In *Insight and Responsibility* (1964) Erikson adds another "outcome" to the resolution of each stage. "Ego-strengths" have their roots in the developmental sequence. A relatively positive resolution of a stage carries with it a basic virtue, an acquired ego-strength to sustain life's jolts. When these virtues are carried into adulthood, they create a foundation which enables the adult generation to care for the young in all of the forms (making laws, teaching, parenting, creating new institutions) that such caring can take.

While an exhaustive examination of each of Erikson's stages exceeds our purpose, it is important to touch briefly on the childhood stages since they set the foundations for adolescent and adult development.

During Stage I (basic trust vs. mistrust), which spans the first year of life, the infant and caregiver relationship raises the issue of trust. At this point the child will have to "decide" if the world is basically a trustworthy place or not. In the next two stages (autonomy vs. shame and doubt, initiative vs. guilt) the child's growth impels him to explore his world first physically, then conceptually. His tasks center on learning that he can "master his own body" and that he can pursue his curiosity without fear of trampling on sacred territory. During the fourth stage (industry vs. inferiority) the child's maturing capacities in the context of the school environment require that he come to an evaluation of himself as a worker. According to Erikson, these childhood stages create images which the individual adds up to form a rudimentary identity. If these stages are positively resolved, one can see the child as a collector of basic building blocks, a self that is essentially trusting, basically autonomous, able to act and strive toward goals without excessive fear, and able to achieve capacities and attitudes which seem necessary prerequisites to establishing an identity.

Stage V: Adolescence (Young Adulthood). Erikson is noted for his attention to the process of identity resolution which becomes central in the adolescent years. Other theorists (Chickering, 1969; Keniston, 1971) have elaborated and refined Erikson's identity stage, extending it to the traditional college years. From our perspective, an understanding of the identity task is crucial to college practitioners; therefore our discussion will emphasize the tasks and themes central to this stage: the role of the environment in identity formation and the meaning of ego-identity. In addition to summarizing Erikson's thought, we

will discuss Kenneth Keniston's work which helps us understand identity issues in the light of changing social-historical conditions.

Certainly our struggles to find or define an identity span the whole life cycle, yet Erikson notes that the task of establishing a workable self-definition is preeminent during the adolescent/young adult years. At this transitional life phase, the individual, beset with a changing body, is developing a mind capable of abstract, reflective thought which allows him to conceptualize ideas ranging from his life ten years ahead to the purpose of existence. He is simultaneously confronted by a society which is unwilling to continue nurturance without a return on its investment. At age eighteen, the individual can no longer just stay home without being considered a bit out of place. Through various agents from parents to college admissions counselors, society pressures the individual to make concrete decisions—particularly educational and vocational choices, which will in effect move him into adulthood. The epigenetic scheme suggests that the convergences of these particular internal changes and external demands create a central psychosocial task: The individual must ask and answer the questions, "Who am I?", "What will I be?"

In the psychological sense, the adolescent/young adult is a "marginal man." He is still the child of his parents; but he no longer looks or thinks like a child. He has impulses, skills, interests, and social experiences which are qualitatively different from those of his childhood and perhaps those of his parents. Yet he is not an adult; an adolescent exists in what Erikson calls a "natural period of uprootedness" (Erikson, 1964, p. 90); he must pause, reflect, and make sense of himself if he is to manage the complexities of adulthood effectively. The individual must take his childhood self-images, assess his present assets and liabilities, define his future hopes, and actively synthesize an identity, a core self-concept which provides a sense of sameness and continuity. If the person fails to undertake the identity task or is unable to find his way, he risks role confusion, a pervasive sense of alienation or diffusion in which he is unsure of the meaning in his life and drifts along on the path of least resistance.

Erikson's phrase "the identity crisis" has frequently been interpreted to mean a time of pervasive emotional turmoil or massive personality disorganization. While true in certain cases, this view is generally a misinterpretation: Erikson means to suggest a time of motivating uncertainty. The nature of an identity crisis comes into focus if we turn to the central identity question, "Who are you?" Typical eight-year-olds would simply answer by giving their name, sex, religion, family or the like. College freshmen often have moments of hesitation and give tentative answers such as "I'm not sure, well I'm so-and-so's son or daughter, maybe a pre-med, but I don't really know; I'm trying to find

out." They look at themselves and see a complex collage of bits and pieces which do not quite fit together; they have to create some coherence in that collage.

In a sense, this life phase is dominated by the search for personal feedback and perfect solutions. Relationships become most important as a source of information and validation; as Erikson notes, individuals are "sometimes morbidly, often curiously, preoccupied with what they appear to be in the eyes of others as compared to what they feel they are" (Erikson, 1959, p. 89). Vocational direction is often a source of role confusion; young people search for the "right" career which will clarify their identity. Ideological issues take on importance, and the individual hopes to find a set of beliefs which will organize life and world. In many ways, the individual tries to collect ready-made frameworks which provide self-definition and direction; yet ultimately he realizes that his identity must be tailormade by his own creative, introspective efforts. Paralleling the search for "truth" is a certain egocentrism or narcissism. Erikson notes that these elements of the identity search derive from the shift into formal operational thought in addition to the "physiological revolution." We must recognize that a certain self-centeredness and the search for perfect answers are logical and necessary aspects of this life stage.

Erikson argues that coming to a sense of identity is most often tied to the making of vocational and ideological commitments. To participate in society, the young adult must establish a vocational direction and value orientation. These more concrete or visible aspects of identity both derive from and contribute to the "sense of identity" which Erikson emphasizes as the central outcome of this life stage. The issue of vocational choice often appears to be the focal point of the broader identity resolution task for men. Erikson is less clear about the nature of identity resolution for women. Douvan and Adelson (1966) suggest that it is substantially different. They argue that the issue of intimacy is intertwined or concurrent with self-definition and suggest women tend to establish identity around central relationships. Certainly with changing women's roles the issue of identity resolution may alter in form; in fact, the integration of vocational and family roles may be the focus of the identity task for some young women. Certainly this area needs further clarification as new roles for men and women emerge.

Factors Facilitative of Identity Resolution. One's identity is more than the sum of childhood identifications and involves the integration of a more complex and differentiated identity. The process seems to require (1) experiences which help the individual clarify his interests, skills, and attitudes, and (2) experiences which aid the individual in making commitments. The formation of identity is fostered

by an environment which allows for (1) experimentation with varied roles; (2) the experiencing of choice; (3) meaningful achievement; (4) freedom from excessive anxiety; and (5) time for reflection and introspection. College can provide such a "psychological moratorium" which will allow the student to experiment and reflect in an environment that exists, at least in part, to foster such development.

The Meaning of Ego-Identity. In synthesizing the essence of Erikson's thought, a positive resolution of the identity stage results in a "sense of identity" which is experienced personally, validated interpersonally, and formed in the context of cultural norms. The person has a subjective core self-image which provides continuity and sameness; put simply, he knows who he is and can envision those qualities which are most central to his existence. With a subjective sense of self, the person can look back and recognize himself in the child he was ten years ago, or look forward and fairly accurately predict what he will be like in the future. Identity, however, is an interpersonal phenomenon as well. A positive sense of identity is reality-based in that others view the individual much as he views himself. Thus one's identity is manifest behaviorally and can be confirmed and validated by others. A positive sense of identity will be seen in a willingness to take on culturally-prescribed roles of adulthood and participation in the various rites of passage of the society such as personal or occupational commitments. The virtue which emerges from this phase is fidelity; a capacity to sustain loyalty to people and ideas in spite of contradictions.

The Social-Historical Context. We need to emphasize that it is the social context of the individual in interaction with his inner capacities which brings the identity issue to the foreground. The nature of a particular cultural-historical period influences the form or tone of the identity search. A stable agricultural society may mark the entrance to adulthood and specify available roles quite clearly. For example, for a woman growing up in the Kansas of the 1920s, the identity task was primarily a choice between two options: marriage or teaching. In contrast, the highly industrialized, fluid American society of the 1970s provides a broad panorama of possibilities: There are a multitude of available and acceptable life styles, and career options seem nearly unlimited.

Individuals who work with college students often comment on the changes from one generation to the next. Each generation of college students will reflect the broader societal milieu in the way it addresses the task of identity resolution. Kenneth Keniston (1971) has refined Erikson's identity stage by focusing on the psychosocial effect of a changing society.

Keniston is a primary interpreter of the psychosocial development of college students in the 1960s. He suggests that society under-

went a substantial change; college attendance became the normative social experience for young adults, creating a "new stage" of development which he labeled "Youth." He suggests that college attendance is so distinct a social experience that it has created a new psychosocial task and the potential for additional growth.

This period of development is marked by a central psychosocial theme: the tension between self and society. During this stage, the identity task shifts from the individual's preoccupation with who he is to the dynamic tension between what he wants and what the society demands. For example, most college students must deal with externally-established requirements for getting into certain majors, certain graduate and professional schools, and so on. In so doing, they must contend with factors which shape them in directions they may not want to go. In various forms, the college years provide a testing ground for sorting through how one will reconcile individual needs and societal norms.

Keniston's research focuses on different ways that students managed the tension between self and society in the late 60s and early 70s, especially on the influence of the broader society in shaping the identity quest. The late 60s and early 70s were marked by societal turbulence; American society was compelled to examine the value-laden assumptions which marked its commitments. By concentrating on students who had taken either an alienated or an activist stance toward society, he illuminated the identity task as a reflection of its conflicts.

In a sense, he put a magnifying glass on the "final task" of Erikson's identity stage. His major contribution lies in his delineation of the changes in society and the impact those changes have on the tone of the identity stage. Since Keniston's primary research the pressure of the American society on college students has altered again, and it is likely that these changes are reflected in student approaches to identity. As many have commented, the student of the late 70s is vocationally-oriented and primarily concerned with access to a "place" in society. This fact does not mean that the psychosocial theme of the "tension between self and society" is no longer valid; it means that the "tension" is now being experienced differently. The altered set of social circumstances does not diminish Keniston's contribution; we still need to understand and acknowledge the influence of changing cultural norms.

Adult Stages. As the childhood stages seem to produce the basic building blocks of identity, the stage of identity resolution is a time of preparation and rehearsal during which the individual defines who he is (and who he will not be) and makes initial commitments that circumscribe his identity. However, identity is not fully established until adulthood. The adult years are marked by turning the sense of identity

outward to engage the common demands of adult life, to choose someone with whom to live and love, to select and to work within a career, and to more clearly shape and live out one's values. Erikson divides adulthood into three stages, each of which has attendant tasks.

Young adulthood poses the task of creating a relationship characterized by mutual devotion and chosen, active love. The young adult must decide whether to fuse some parts of his identity with those of another to create shared commitments. Erikson expresses the psychosocial attitudes that derive from this experience as intimacy vs. isolation and their attendant virtue is love, the capacity for devotion which survives conflict and sustains the bonds between individuals.

The middle adult years are characterized by the conflict between the polar attitudes of generativity vs. stagnation. Erikson suggests that adult man needs to be needed, needs to teach; his task is to find a way to direct those needs outward to create a society which sustains its members. A generative orientation may be expressed in many forms: the rearing of children, the production of ideas, or civic participation. In essence, the generative person actively invests in the society of which he is a part. The alternative attitude, stagnation, springs from self-absorption: The adult turns his nurturant capacities inward, focusing on his own needs rather than caring for the welfare of others. The virtue of this stage is "care," an evolutionary strength that allows man to overcome his ambivalence and actively nurture that which has been created—children, places, ideas, institutions.

The final stage encompasses the years of old age. The individual is confronted with changes (always physical and often cognitive) which suggest diminishing powers. Simultaneously, society turns people from work roles to nebulous and often empty retirement roles. Erikson suggests that this phase poses the task of coming to terms with one's life—of attempting to affirm that one's own existence (and existence in general) is worthwhile, even in the face of death. If one's psychosocial history is positive, if social relationships are available, and if one's actions continue to have impact, then it is likely that the individual will develop a sense of integrity; if these conditions are not met, despair may follow. The virtue associated with a positive resolution of this stage is wisdom—the capacity to understand, to put things in perspective and to convey that understanding to the younger generations. Time does not permit an extended discussion of the factors in our society which may inhibit development of integrity; suffice it to say that our society has not developed adequate institutions or perspectives to sustain its older members.

Much as Keniston has focused on the college years as an identity stage, other theorists (Gould, 1972; Levinson, 1978; Neugarten, 1964, 1974; Vaillant and McArthur, 1972) have concerned themselves with

psychosocial development in adulthood. These theoretical writings chart a sequence of developmental periods with their attendant tasks which reinterpret and add to Erikson's general map of the adult years.

As Erikson suggests, adulthood is marked by phases which add certain components to the individual's identity, such as, I am whom I love, I am what I contribute, and I am the values I have lived. Present theorists dealing with adulthood more specifically point out the focal self-concerns at different ages and link those concerns to changing role patterns created by normative sequences in family life, the structure of careers, and the aging process.

It is not our intention to summarize the work of these theorists, but rather to point to the existence of models which delineate the psychosocial pattern of adulthood. Hodgkinson (1974) has argued that knowledge of such phases is crucial to the design of administrative and staff development efforts. As this knowledge base becomes less tentative and more coherent, it will help us understand the needs of older students and provide developmental environments for staff members.

The Interrelatedness of the Life Stages. Erikson often stresses the cumulative and related nature of life stages. The resolution of each stage creates the foundation for the next crisis and defines the likelihood of coping with it. Continuing development may shed light on early experiences and allow the individual to reformulate and synthesize prior stage resolutions in a more positive way. Regressing to a prior stage is possible. Erikson points out that physical uprootedness or loss of psychological moorings can shake one's foundation and cause a return to such basic concerns as trust and autonomy. It is likely that entrance to college, while calculated to bring forth identity issues, also re-raises the earlier issues of trust, autonomy, initiative, and industry. At the same time as the college student is toying with the question "who am I?", he is probably wondering if his new world is a safe place where his needs can be met, if he really can do it on his own, and if, indeed, he is as able as his high school GPA would indicate. It is quite possible that an older, returning student in encountering an environment with new and different demands will also be pressed to reexamine the identity issue; in fact, it could be argued that the return to college is a reflection of societal changes which unsettle the self-definitions of adults, re-raising identity questions for further examination and new synthesis.

research

Erikson's work is highly descriptive and provides important insights into the pattern of personality development. However, he is a clinician rather than an experimental psychologist; his constructs do

not lend themselves readily to empirical study and validation. For our purposes, a more specific understanding of the adult stages, environmental factors which affect mastery of those stages, and more objective descriptions of the "outcomes" of each stage are necessary.

Few researchers have undertaken the work involved in applying Erikson's concepts to empirical study. However, a line of research initiated by James Marcia (1966, 1976) serves as a major contribution both as an elaboration of the identity resolution process and as a prototype of needed empirical study.

Marcia postulates the existence of different ego-identity statuses which represent styles of coping with the identity task. From these criteria, Marcia derives four possible identity statuses: the *foreclosed student,* the *identity diffuse* student, the *moratorium* student, and the *achieved identity* student. They might be summarized as follows:

Foreclosed	*Identity Diffuse*	*Moratorium*	*Achieved Identity*
No Crisis	No Crisis/Past Crisis	Crisis Experienced	Crisis Experienced
Commitments	No Commitments	No Commitments	Commitments

Starting with a semistructured interview to identify college student status, Marcia and his colleagues attempted to define the particular characteristics of each identity status in a series of construct validation studies. Their work has involved 800 students over a ten year period. Generally, their findings suggest that the *moratorium* and *achieved identity* students are more "mature" in many aspects of their lives than the *foreclosed* and *diffuse* students.

In interpersonal relationships, *achieved identity* and *moratorium* students indicate a capacity for intimacy and a moral posture of awareness of the complexity of moral viewpoints, respect for individual rights, and reliance on universal principles of justice. In contrast, *foreclosed* students tend to be more involved in superficial or stereotyped relationships; they are also more likely to be conforming and legalistic in their approach to moral issues (Podd, Marcia, and Rubin, 1970; Orlofsky, Marcia, and Lesser, 1973). The active, conscious attempts to come to terms with one's identity seem related to a more complex, flexible, and autonomous orientation to others.

Individuals in different identity statuses seem to experience and respond to the college environment in rather different ways. In a preliminary report, Henry and Renaud (1972) suggested that moratorium students were able to effectively *use* the college experience in coming to terms with identity question, whereas foreclosed students remained "closed off" from self-exploration and limited their contact with chal-

lenging individuals or courses. Interestingly, one research study found foreclosed students to be the group most satisfied with their college experience (Waterman and Waterman, 1970). In terms of performance, however, achieved identity students attain significantly higher grade point averages than any other status group (Cross and Allen, 1970). Possibly the foreclosed students may come to college without the expectation or desire to undertake reexamination of their commitments. They may appear to invest little personal meaning in their studies. They demand little and may be satisfied with what the college offers; but their academic performance may be limited by their rather superficial orientation to learning. In contrast, the moratorium students actively involved in self-examination may find a wealth of stimuli in the college environment; for them, the college, in both its curricular and extracurricular domains, may continually open doors to greater complexity, making the task of self-definition more difficult. These students are aware of the possibilities *and* their own needs; they may demand more from the environment. With resolution of identity and identification of a vocational direction, the achieved identity student is likely to be less occupied by internal struggles and ready to turn his energy toward effective study; in essence, he is able to make the academic experience meaningful.

Thus students who enter college in various ego-identity statuses will be substantially different in their approach to themselves, other persons, and ideas. But ego-identity statuses are not stable personality traits; they appear to be a sequence of stopping points along the identity resolution path. Some research (Waterman, Geary, and Waterman, 1974) shows the freshman year to be characterized by change; many students who enter college with unexamined occupational commitments end their freshman year in moratorium status, unsure of a vocational identity and reappraising their goals. In fact, from freshman to senior year the most common progression involved movement from "lower" statuses to achieved identity.

It would be convenient to assume a developmental sequence: Starting with a foreclosed identity, students encounter challenge and complexity which throw them into a period of confusion (identity diffusion); as time passes and they become more self-assured, they begin an active search to clarify who they are and where they are going (moratorium); and finally, they are able to make those commitments which solidify their identity (achieved identity). Yet Marcia's research (1976) does not support such a clearcut picture. Some students stay foreclosed through college, others stay diffuse; some achieved identity individuals stay in that status while other inexplicably retreat into a foreclosed posture. These varied changes are probably a reflection of numerous

factors, such as the individual's past history and the types of stimulus provided by the environment.

Marcia's work emphasizes description rather than explanation. We do not know the necessary and useful environmental factors which encourage movement from the foreclosed status or the shift from moratorium into achieved identity status. Despite these gaps, Marcia's work serves to make the identity task more concrete and understandable. For practitioners, the identity statuses provide a useful way of thinking about "where students are"; moreover, Marcia's assessment method seems amenable to small-scale action-oriented research which personnel practice must employ. Most important, these developmentally different ways of coping with the identity stage suggest that we need to adapt our programs to such differences if we are to take a developmental orientation.

implications

As is true of many developmental theories, Erikson's delineation of psychosocial growth does not include specific prescriptions for practice. His theory, however, is descriptively rich; it gives us a vivid and understandable picture of the individual's movement through life and of the sociocultural institutions which frame that movement. Erikson's theory offers us a way of thinking, a template against which we can measure who our students are and how the college environment may inhibit or enhance their development.

Using Erikson's perspective of the life cycle as a framework for encouraging student development, leads us to consider (1) the meaning of age-related stages; (2) the nature of an environment which enhances positive psychosocial development; and (3) the individual differences in coping with a particular life stage.

The Meaning of Age-Related Stages. In most college populations, the task of adolescence, young and middle adulthood will be in the forefront: resolution of identity, development of intimacy, and the establishment of a generative mentality. Given Keniston's discussion of the prolonged identity stage and the belief that older returning students will most often be in the throes of personal change, it is likely that the identity issue will be central for the vast majority of college students. James Marcia most cogently argued the central implication of Erikson's model, stating that "college curricula, procedures, in fact, a total environment should be set up to maximize the occurrence of the identity crisis (periods of actual search) and to provide support for their resolution. Identity formation will take place in college whether faculty or administration think it appropriate or not" (1976, p. 128).

It is important that a college encourage a readiness for the later adult stages. Don S. Browning in *Generative Man* (1973) suggests that a generative mentality is central to the strength of society and the health of subsequent generations. He argues that "modern man appears to be generative because he creates so much; in reality his problem is his nongenerative mentality which is seen in the fact that he cares so poorly for that which he creates" (p. 164). Adults in our society often seem absorbed in their own lives rather than invested in "giving back" to society. In a recent column, George F. Will (1978) listed some current best sellers, *Kicking the Fear Habit, How to be Your Own Best Friend,* and *The Strategy of Self Esteem,* suggesting a large market of readers who "watch their moods and feelings as they watch the bathroom scales." The current self-fulfillment mania gives testimony to Browning's point; many adults in our society appear stuck in the narcissism of young adulthood. A college environment, while encouraging the self-examination necessary for identity formation, ought to point out what "being mature" *means;* an adult turns outward to care for and sustain the society so as to enhance the growth of all generations.

The Facilitative Environment. For us, the five elements (experimentation with varied roles, the experiencing of choice, meaningful achievement, freedom from excessive anxiety, and time for reflection and introspection which Erikson suggests are needed to encourage identity resolution) provide a framework which a student personnel program can use to examine its functioning and define needed changes. If we take three of the five environmental elements and simply ask to what extent we make those experiences available to our students, we may begin to conceptualize the nature of an environment which supports identity resolution. How well does a student personnel program encourage experimentation with varied roles?

How well do academic programs encourage experimentation? Are courses designed and structured so that students actually experience being an historian, a psychologist, or an engineer? Is the college sufficiently flexible to allow all students the experience of teaching or tutoring? How well do academic advisors encourage experimentation with roles? Are work-study programs available and if so, to whom? If role experimentation were granted an important function, when would students select majors? How would graduate and professional school admission policies be designed?

How do financial aids programs function to encourage or block student experimentation? Is it possible for students to take "time-out" to work while on scholarship, to cut course loads in order to concentrate on a special project?

What roles are available in the college environment apart from the student role? How well does the residence hall program encourage

role experimentation? Can students become designers of environments? Counselors? Administrators? Entrepreneurs, i.e., student-run bookstores, snack shops, other small businesses? How well do student activities, orientation functions, or volunteer programs allow students a full "real" participation? What roles are available for whom?

Do we structure our environments and offer programming opportunities which allow students to make real contributions? For example, are disciplinary boards constituted so that they actually attempt to deal with violence, residence hall damage and academic misconduct problems? Do fraternity/sorority advisors effectively work with student groups so that they can identify house financial and interpersonal problems and design problem-solving approaches? How effectively do student personnel staffs involve students as coparticipants in their attempts to study and resolve various campus issues, e.g., drug abuse, roommate conflict, or if meaningful achievement was a criterion, how would courses be designed and how would student performance be evaluated? How well does a student counseling staff encourage student reflection and introspection? How effectively are residence halls designed to encourage private, thoughtful interaction? How well are our programs designed to encourage reflection? For example, do programs actively involve students in thinking about themselves? When students participate in governance, is time spent in evaluation and feedback? In essence, do student personnel staffs spend as much time helping students make sense of their experiences as they do in designing those experiences?

We need to continually assess how a college can increase opportunities for students to actually try out roles that are "real," to produce in performance of those roles, and then to reflect upon the experience. The cycle is somewhat sequential; experimentation is followed by analysis/introspection leading to choices and commitments. Often our current practices reverse that sequence and we may run the risk of premature foreclosure in many areas of student lives.

Individual Differences. The guidelines above present an oversimplified view of a developmental environment. Marcia's presentation of ego-identity statuses suggest that those five conditions will be effective for students at certain identity statuses and not for others.

For moratorium students, college entrance may be a jolting experience, but one which they are competent to handle. They are sufficiently autonomous to actively use this environment for self-definition purposes. They will likely be drawn to a diversity of peer relationships; they will probably be able to perceive coursework as a means to try out different modes of thinking, to seek out the complexity of social realities. An environment which makes possible wide ranging experimentation, achievement and time for reflection should provide the basic con-

ditions for identity resolution. Given the moratorium students' active search, a career advising program which points out vocational options and the means to explore them, or an orientation program which lays out available activities, will be "developmental." As these students compile a range of learning experiences, the task of integrating the aspects of self into a coherent whole is a major undertaking. "They need help in learning to critically assess and reassess their energy on to longer-lasting, more demanding tasks" (Henry and Renaud, 1972, p. 8). Programs which teach basic problem-solving or decision-making skills may be useful and important.

In contrast, the foreclosed student may need qualitatively different experiences in order to move toward a conscious self-definition. For this student, an identity crisis is necessary. The student counseling program will have to provide more than a smorgasboard of opportunities; it may need to offer a "special invitation" before this student can begin to undertake the self-exploration and experimentation necessary. As Henry and Renaud suggest, "These students need to be taught that their feelings, emotions and desires are valuable and valid, that the abstractions governing their lives are not ones they actively and consciously chose. And when (their stable world) starts to crumble, they need encouragement to actively enter into finding, experimenting with and critically thinking about new ways of being in the world" (1972, p. 8). For these students, programs need to be designed in ways which allow them to assess their needs, identify feelings, and encounter new and dissonant information both about themselves and the world with safety.

This abbreviated discussion should convey the importance of attending to differences in the way individuals tackle the psychosocial identity task. Knowledge of student status does not automatically lead to a particular approach; however, in career advising, residence hall programming, orientation programs, commuter services, and fraternity/sorority advising, these developmental differences need to be addressed in setting goals or designing programs if we are to take a developmental approach to practice.

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