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*Chickering's Theory, originally proposed in the 1960's and reformatted in the early 1990's, is one of the more prominent student development theories. Chickering combined this research (completed with students during his time at Goddard College) with some of his previous development studies to generate the Seven Vectors—according to the authors, vectors symbolize the "direction" and "magnitude" of college student development. Vectors were chosen as determinants of development, as opposed to "stages" for example, because college student development is too diverse and unique to be characterized by "specific maps or pigeonholes." Rather, "movement along any one [vector] can occur at different rates and can interact with movement along the others" (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 34)*

## VECTOR 1: DEVELOPING COMPETENCE

Chickering identifies three types of competence that college students develop, including intellectual, manual skills, and interpersonal competences. Intellectual competence specifically refers to the ability to understand, analyze, and synthesize. Manual competence refers to the ability to physically accomplish tasks, where interpersonal competence refers to working and establishing relationships with others.

## VECTOR 2: MANAGING EMOTIONS

There are many aspects of college that encourage intense emotions in students such as fear, anger, happiness, and sadness. It is important for students to recognize the balance between self-awareness and self-control of their emotions.

## VECTOR 3: MOVING THROUGH AUTONOMY THROUGH INTERDEPENDENCE

It is important for students to find emotional and instrumental independence. Emotional independence means the ability of a student to willingly risk relationships of those who are close to them in exchange for pursuing their own individual interests or convictions. Instrumental independence is the ability to solve problems on one's own. Students can manage the tensions between the need for independence and the need for acceptance, along with respecting the uniqueness and independence of others.

## VECTOR 4: DEVELOPING MATURE INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

This requires the ability to be intimate and the ability to accept and celebrate unique differences. College students have the opportunity to meet a wide variety of people, with a variety of different beliefs, values, and backgrounds. This exposure can help students gain such tolerance of unique differences. Intimacy refers to the ability to establish relationships that are close and meaningful.

## VECTOR 5: ESTABLISHING IDENTITY

"Development of identity is the process of discovering with what kinds of experience, at what levels of intensity and frequency, we

resonate in satisfying, in safe, or in self-destructive fashion," argues Chickering. Ultimately, the formation of one's identity leads to a sense of contentment with one's self and how that self is seen by others.

## VECTOR 6: DEVELOPING PURPOSE

College students begin to identify why they are earning their degree. They not only establish the purpose of getting a job, earning a living, a building skills, but the development of purpose moves beyond that. Through experiences in college, students discover what gives them energy, and what they find to be most fulfilling.

## VECTOR 7: DEVELOPING INTEGRITY

This vector is closely related to the previous one, as it is the ability for students to personalize humanizing values, and apply them to their own behavior. Many values that students bring with them to college are challenged in this environment. The establishment of integrity is the ability for students to assemble and practice the values that are actually consistent with their own beliefs. (Chickering, 1969)

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

Chickering, A.W. (1969) *Education and Identity*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. Jossey Bass: San Francisco.

## Chickering's Seven Vectors of Development

(Updated in 1993 with Reisser)

