

NACADA 19TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE
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Toward a Theory of Academic Advising

- What is Theory?
- Do We Need a Theory?
- Potential Factors and
Basic Assumptions

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TOWARD A THEORY ON ACADEMIC ADVISING

PRESENTATION OBJECTIVES

- TO QUESTION THE NEED FOR A THEORY (OR THEORIES)
- TO DEFINE ADVISING BY IDENTIFYING SOME POTENTIAL FACTORS THAT AFFECT THE ADVISER/ADVISEE RELATIONSHIP AND ADVISING OUTCOMES
- TO EXPLORE SOME BASIC ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT ADVISING
- TO QUESTION THE FEASIBILITY OF CREATING A THEORY OR THEORIES

DEFINITIONS OF THEORY

- * THE ANALYSIS OF A SET OF FACTS IN RELATION TO ONE ANOTHER
- * AN IDEAL OR HYPOTHEORETICAL SET OF FACTS, PRINCIPLES, OR CIRCUMSTANCES
- * A BODY OF THEOREMS PRESENTING A CONCISE SYSTEMATIC VIEW OF A SUBJECT

- *WEBSTER*

WHAT IS THEORY?

- * ...THE FORMAL OR CONCEPTUAL PROCESSES OF SCIENCE AS CONTRASTED WITH STRICTLY EMPIRICAL OR OBSERVATIONAL ASPECTS.
- * ANY GENERALIZED EXPLANATORY PRINCIPLE CONSISTING OF A STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS AMONG VARIABLES.
- * A GROUP OF LOGICALLY ORGANIZED (DEDUCTIVELY RELATED) LAWS.
- * A REFERENCE TO SUMMARY STATEMENTS WHICH GIVE ORDER, IN AN ESSENTIALLY DESCRIPTIVE MANNER, TO THE CLUSTER OF LAWS WHICH HAVE BEEN EMPIRICALLY DEVELOPED.

- M.H. MARX

EXAMPLES OF ESTABLISHED THEORIES AND HOW THEY MIGHT RELATE TO ACADEMIC ADVISING

STUDENT DEVELOPMENT THEORY

- Explains how college students develop personally, socially, educationally and vocationally and how this influences their adjustment and involvement in college life.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT THEORY

- Helps advisers understand what is involved in the career decision making process and how students make educational and vocational decisions (e.g., why most freshman major choices are tentative).

LEARNING THEORY

- Explains how students learn best (e.g., individual learning style, how to create effective learning environments)

DECISION MAKING THEORY

- Helps advisers understand how students progress through the educational and career decision making process and how individuals use a personal approach or style when making decisions.

MULTICULTURAL THEORY

- Helps advisers appreciate the cultural influences upon students both between and within cultures and how this understanding might assist in more sensitive and effective advising approaches.

RETENTION THEORY

- Helps advisers understand why some students drop out and what personal and environmental factors are important in retaining students.

PERSONALITY THEORY

- Explains students' uniqueness in terms of psychological traits, such as introversion/extraversion and openness to new experiences; also explains how students interpret their involvement in the college environment.

MORAL DEVELOPMENT THEORY

- Explains how students develop perspectives on virtue, authority, justice and other moral principles and how these perspectives relate to their behavior as they are engaged in certain situations in the college environment (e.g., plagiarism or cheating on exams, reactions to authority).

ADULT DEVELOPMENT THEORY

- Explains many of the issues with which non-traditional students are concerned such as putting down roots, making progress in a career, and reassessing personal priorities and values.

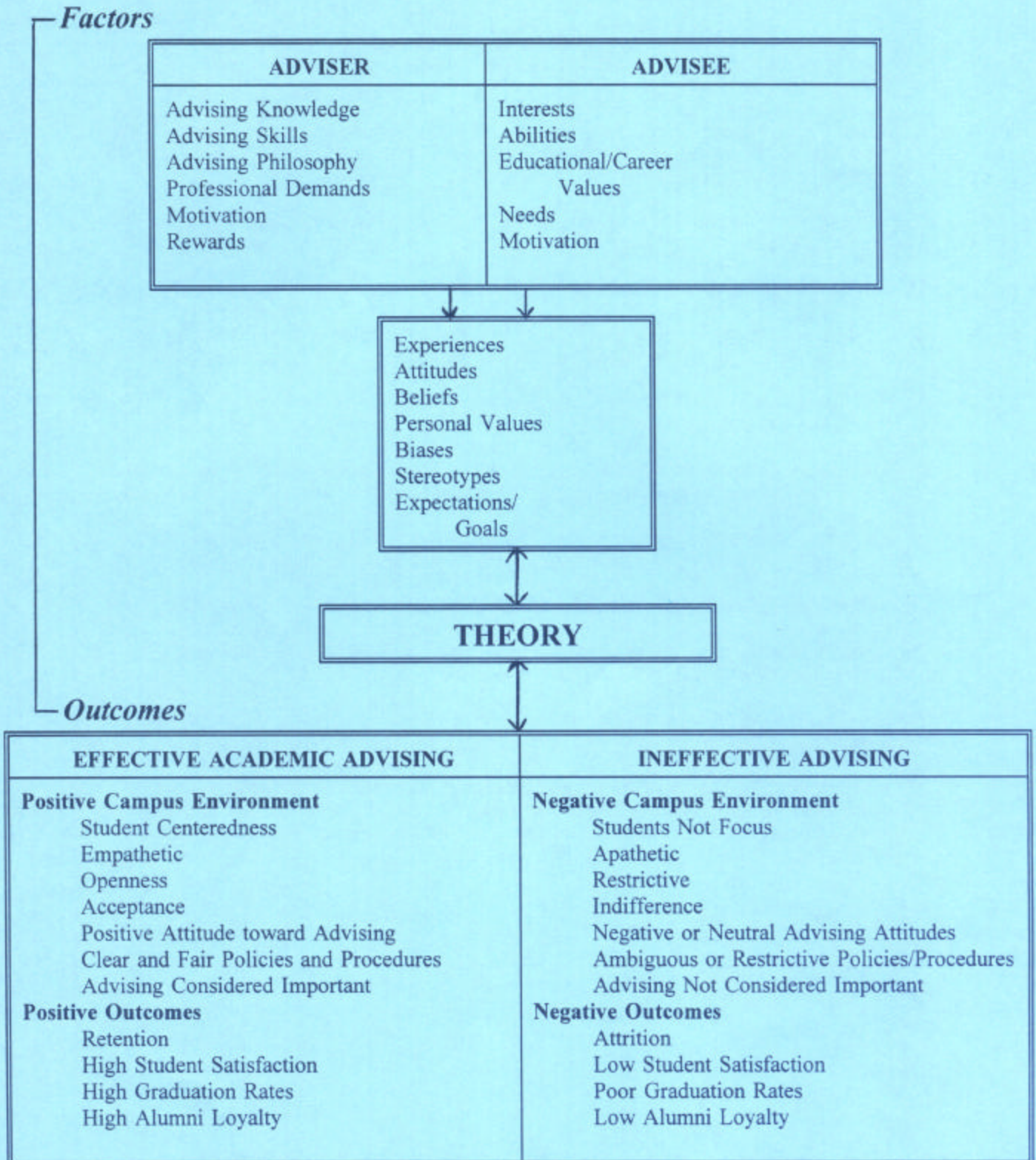
SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

- Explains how students are a product of their environment and how this might influence their adjustment and negotiation of the college community; it also helps advisers understand the cultural differences that students bring to the advising setting.

ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY

- Offers ideas about the most efficient and effective way to organize advising services taking into account the uniqueness of a campus and how various offices and services interrelate.

POTENTIAL FACTORS AFFECTING THE ADVISER-ADVISEE RELATIONSHIP AND OUTCOMES



EXAMPLES OF BASIC ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT ACADEMIC ADVISING

I. THE GOALS OF ADVISING

1. The primary purpose of advising is to assist students in the development of meaningful educational plans that are compatible with their career/life goals. (Crockett, 1993)
2. Students are ultimately responsible for making decisions about their educational plans and goals; advisers help students identify and evaluate educational alternatives and the consequences of their decisions. (Crockett, 1993)
3. Advising is an integral and necessary component of the higher education process. (Crockett, 1993)

II. THE ADVISER/ADVISEE RELATIONSHIP

4. The most influential factor in determining advisee satisfaction with the advising process is the quality of the adviser/advisee relationship.
5. Advisers are responsible for the students they serve. (NACADA Core Values)
6. Advisers are obligated to assist students in self-understanding and self-acceptance and in developing decision making skills. (NACADA Advising Goals)
7. Students are partners in the adviser/advisee relationship and are responsible for the tasks involved in academic exploration, planning and implementation.

III. THE INFLUENCE OF THE ADVISING ENVIRONMENT

8. The advising environment can enable or restrict the advising process through its organization, procedures, policies, and physical settings.
9. How the advising environment is perceived by students, advisers, and other campus personnel affects their response to and involvement in the advising process.
10. Institutions should establish an on-going program of evaluation of the effectiveness of advisers, program elements, advising materials, and all other components of the advising process (to determine the influence of the advising environment). (CAS Standards)

TOWARD A THEORY OF ACADEMIC ADVISING

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