

How Theory Has Impacted My Practice; A Reflection on ARP 621

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An assignment we had to complete for this class was for us to interview a professional in the field on how theory has driven them and is weaved into their daily practice, then write out a reflection and summary of the interview. This artifact was fun for me, as we had to reach out to someone who is not our direct supervisor. I had the opportunity to reconnect back with an old mentor who is currently the Interim Director of Housing and Residence Life at my undergraduate institution. This interview/conversation was a great opportunity to catch up on what has changed since I left, but also to see how theory was utilized in the area and institution where I found out what I wanted to do with my life. As I explored in that interview and through follow up conversations, each individual uses theory differently, but we all base it off the fundamentals of what people need to live.

Reflecting back on my time through this course, and all that I have learned and experienced, I can share that this specific artifact helped me develop how I think about theory and how to apply theory to my everyday practice when helping students equitably (PLO 1, PLO 2, PLO 3, PLO 5, PLO 7, and PLO 8). Specifically, in this theory interview summary, I was able to use my theory knowledge gained and Identify specific leadership approaches to helping students through their development utilizing meaningful and thoughtful dialogue. (PLO 3). The more I think about theory, and learn to apply the right theory to the right situations into my daily work and in my day-to-day interactions with students, I will be able to help different students in different situations (PLO 8). Out of all the PLO's that I listed above, I feel that PLO 3 and PLO 8 were the most applicable to the work that was discussed in this class, and specifically this artifact I shared.

Through the processing of this artifact, and the learning I engaged with during ARP 621, I was able to work on some goals I set for myself as I entered this graduate program. One personal goal I set for myself that was applicable to this artifact is “to use consistent reflections to get a better understanding of who I am as a student affairs professional in fine-tuning my leadership strengths and weaknesses through this program.” This goal was completed by consistently reflecting on my understanding of theory, as well as through this artifact by reflecting back to a previous institutions theory they use. One professional goal I set for me was “to filter my options of functional areas down to at least 3 different options.” Now I didn’t exactly funnel it down to 3, but rather I was able to realize that one area was not for me. As I will further explain in the reflection on my Out of Class experience in the Spring of 2021, and because of the artifact, I realize that Housing is not for me. As great as it is, and how instrumental for student growth, I realized that my goals and achievements are guiding me in a different direction.

Through this course, I was as actively engaged in the coursework as I possibly could be. Through learning about Theory, I was able to learn which theories I use most, and which theories I resonate with more often. In our reading of Patton et al. (2016), we explored many theories that have been proposed to describe student development. The two theories that I resonated the most with were Sexual Identity Development, and Gender and Gender Identity Development. These two spoke to me more as I am still working on developing my sexuality and having student development theories that have been proposed to share how students going through what I am going through, helps me feel more at-ease with what is going on. This source also points out areas of development where I need to learn more and practice more to better help student who those theories apply to the most.

References

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