High-Risk Environment
“Learning is a remarkably social process. In truth, it occurs not as a response to teaching, but rather as a result of a social framework that fosters learning. Knowledge is inextricably situated in the physical and social context of its acquisition and use”. John Seely Brown
SOCIAL REALTIES

- High Risk Lives
- Interior Conflict of Self
- More diverse in gender, race, socio-economic class – limited role models
- Concerns for a “place” and being part of a different higher education world
Our Realities are not Their Worlds
PARADOX OF SELF-DIRECTED AND CRITICALLY REFLECTIVE

- Entry – desire to conform to social world of the program.
- Faculty role - Developing levels of self-directed and critically reflective engagement. Valued role of creativity and innovation
- Paradox of High risk-taking behaviors for many students
Models of Self-direction and Critical Reflection

- **Movement towards independent Self-directedness** (Grow)
- **Metacognitive model**
  - self-management (contextual control),
  - self-monitoring (cognitive responsibility),
  - motivational (entering and completing task) (Garrison)
- **Critically reflective practice**
  - Scrutinize assumptions in relation to new contexts and practices (Brookfield)
Developmental Strategies

- Initial structured involvements – Key tools, frames, and understandings.
- Peer supports, collaboration, and validation
- Faculty Modeling, Coaching,
- Scaffolding events towards more confidence and independent self-direction
- Opportunities to showcase independent self-directed and also critical reflective assessments.
- Care focused upon positive feedback or negative critique
“Reform-ing”
One’s World
And One’s Sense of Self
Graduate School is Transformative

“Compelled to rethink who I am, what I desire and value in life and what I wish to commit for my future”

- Challenging one’s sense of self as person and competent professional
- Challenging other roles and responsibilities - spouse, family, work, culture, and key friendships.
- Transformative Learning Journey
Between 3/4 and 4/5 of graduate students experience – Financial distress, work distress, marriage distress, and family distress.

- Life altering experiences
- Marginalized students – experience pressures to conform to norms
- Transformative Learning - - Becoming a new person “ beyond the former self”
Recognize the stresses and provide supports for the identity and role challenges
Creating Community

What is your program doing to create formal and informal community?
Communities of Practice - formal and informal

- Knowledge and practice are the epicenters – but it is the “social experience”. Mentoring and Collaborating and Dialoguing
- Moving from “novice to expert”
- Gaining validation and recognition
SIGNALING FLAGS

Two letter Signals:

1) **AC**  I am abandoning my vessel
2) **RU**  Keep clear of me, I am maneuvering with difficulty
3) **DV**  I am drifting
4) **NC**  I am in distress and require immediate assistance
Responses to Signals

- Program expectations for faculty advising and mentoring
- Developmental Supports for student self-direction and critical reflection
- Supports and recognition of transforming of student selves – ways to understanding and engage in difficult discussions
- Encourage formal and informal communities of practice
Fair Winds! Successful Voyage

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