Bridging the Gap: Advising Theory to Practice

Background & Purpose

Background

- Professional experience in higher education
- Experience versus education
- Applicable theory

Purpose

- To understand theory's applicability.
- To bridge the gap between advising theory and practice.

# Sanford's Challenge and Support Theory (1962)

- Foundational theory in student affairs
- Essence of the theory: Students grow or develop through experiencing internal or external challenges.
- "If the challenge is too great and the student is not ready for the challenge, a student may go into a state of retreat, where they cease to develop and pull away from the challenge (Evans, 2010)." http://nwacuho.org/2018/02/theory-review-part-challenge-support/

Providing Support

- Support comes into play.
- Key component for Challenge and Support: "In order to be most affective, you must provide enough support to prevent retreat, but not so much that a student stagnates in development." http://nwacuho.org/2018/02/theory-review-part-challenge-support/
- How to create "just the right" amount of support.

Sanford's Challenge and Support Theory
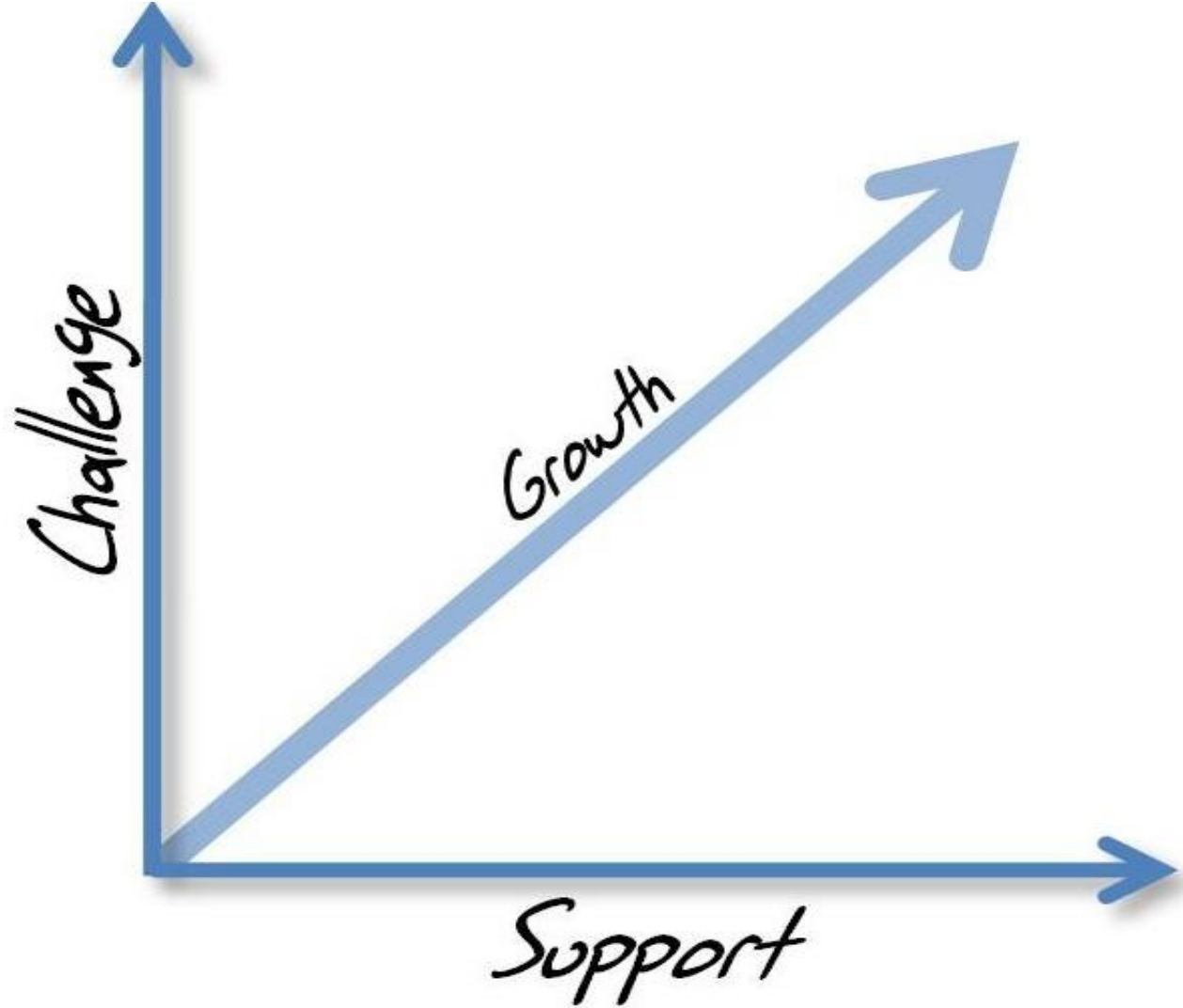
Methodology

- Qualitative Study asking 3 questions:

1) What strategies do you use during advising appointments to find out about challenges students are facing?

2) When you know students are facing challenges, what do you do during advising appointments to provide support?

3) In general, what do you hope students who are facing challenges will do as a result of the support you provide?

- Method: Qualtrics Survey

- Subjects: CA&ES College and Departmental Advisors

- Results: Over 50% response rate

Challenges Question

1. Focus on interpersonal relationship

- Build rapport, Create welcoming space, Mindfulness empathy/sensitivity/"non-judgement", and Prepare in advance

2. Deploy Appropriate Communication Skills

- Open-ended questions (follow-up), Active listening, Coaching, Strengths/appreciations, and Pay attention to non-verbals

Support Question

1. Offer Student-Centered Support

- Listen actively, Normalize situation, Empathy/humility, Promote self-care, Acknowledge basic needs, Affirm privacy, Focus on positive, and Empower

2. Action-oriented support

- Create SMART goals, Referrals and prep for maximum effect, Identity/remove potential barriers or suggest alternatives, and Set goals/plans.

3. Affective Advisor actions

- Acknowledge role as support, Be credible and honest (know what you don't know), and Follow-up

Hoped for Outcomes Question

- Divide into groups.

- Discuss following question:

    "In general, what do you hope students who are facing challenges will do as a result of the support you provide?"

- Debrief

Why is this important? Conclusions

- Advising philosophy is ever-evolving.
- Learn techniques/strategies from other advisors.
- Familiarity of advising theories leads to equitable advising.
- Self-reflection and professional development are important.
- Old theory is still relevant.
- Learned ways to create just the right amount of support.
- Try to avoid becoming snowplow and helicopter advisors.

Other Conclusions

Limitations:

- Focused too much on literature review.
- Time management/focus time

NACADA Competencies:

- Conceptual, Informational, and Relational

Credits:

- Thanks to Kate Creveling, Nicole Wood, Erin McMurry, Man Econ Advising Team, CA&ES Advisors, and a big "shout out" to Kara Moloney

Resources

Works Cited

- Evans, N. J., Forney, D. S., Guido, F. M., Patton, L. D., & Renn, K. A. (2010). Student development in college: Theory, research, and practice (2nd Ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

- Stankey, O. (2019, February 18). Theory Review Part 1: Challenge and Support. [Blog Post] Retrieved from https://blog.apastyle.org/apastyle/2016/04/how-to-cite-a-blog-post-in-apa-style.html

Questions?

Hoped for Outcomes Question

1. Affective Outcomes

- Feel heard, Movement forward "growth mindset", Resilient, Challenges=opportunities

2. Action Outcomes

- Continually seek out and use resources, Define direction/make plans, Accept responsibility for choices and resulting consequences, Take care of self, Find their "people/niche"