Telling Our Story: Using Self-Authorship to Advance our Practice

Stephanie M. Foote, Ph.D.
Donald Coleman
Kennesaw State University
Learning Outcomes

• Participants will leave the session with
  – A foundational understanding of self-authorship and the ways the theory might apply to the development and support of professionals and student staff in OTR programs
  – Strategies that can be used to foster self-authorship development in orientation leaders (KSU example) and professional and student staff
  – Examples of reflective questions and activities that can be used to foster self-authorship
Kennesaw State University

- Third-largest university in Georgia (over 33,000 students)
- Located northwest of Atlanta
- More than 150 bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programs
- On average, approximately half of our new, incoming students each fall are transfer students.
First-Year and Transition Studies

• The Department of First-Year and Transition Studies is in the University College and includes instructors and tenure-track faculty from across the disciplines.

• The department offers five distinct first-year seminars: KSU 1101, 1111, 1121, 1200, and 2000. Additionally, KSU 2290 (special topics) is offered periodically, and in 2015, the department launched the graduate program in First-Year Studies.
Orientation and Transition Programs

- Orientation and Transition Programs is housed within University College (as of January 2015).
- Staff include a Director with three Assistant Directors, two Coordinators, and a Business Manager.

Programmatic Areas Include:
- **IGNITION Orientation Programs** for First-Years, Transfers, Parents and Families, and Web Learners
- **Transition Programs** for all students, but with new focus on transfer initiatives
- **Parent and Family Programs**
KSU Ignition Overview

- New Student and Parent/Family Orientation
What is self-authorship?
Phases/Aspects of Self-Authorship

Phases of Self-Authorship
• Phase 1: Following Formulas
• Phase 2: Crossroads
• Phase 3: Becoming the Author of One’s Life
• Phase 4: Internal Foundation

Baxter Magolda (2008) also discovered three key elements of self-authorship: trusting the internal voice, building an internal foundation, and securing internal commitments. Further, she maintained that challenging dependence and authority were key characteristics of environments that promoted self-authorship. Helping learners situate learning in their experience, validating their learning, and promoting the co-construction of meaning were also important to the path to self-authorship.
Ignition Leader Training Highlights

• Semester Training
• Leadership Retreat
• HOOT Week
Self-Authorship Plan

• Conduct the “Lifeline: Telling My Story Exercise” at the Ignition Leader retreat

• Expand the idea of “telling my story” by introducing self-authorship theory during Ignition Leader training

• At the end of the training, use the reflections from the write/pair/share exercise and lifelines to develop personal stories for the “Owl Talks” presentations
Write/Pair/Share

- Tell me a little about yourself (background, what contributed to the decision to come to KSU, etc.).
- What did you expect college would be like for you this year?
- What has disappointed you the most about your college experiences so far?
- Tell me about a significant experience in your transition to KSU.
- What has been your best experience thus far? What about this experience was most meaningful to you?
- What has been your worst experience thus far? What about this experience was most meaningful to you?
- Describe a challenge or obstacle you’ve overcome in your transfer transition. How did you approach/overcome it? How did you feel in that process?
- What kind of support systems do you have? What role have they played in your college experience thus far?
- How do you think coming to KSU has affected who you are and the way you see yourself? Has it affected the way you see your academic goals?
- In what ways do you see yourself as the same as when you began college? In what ways do you see yourself as different than when you began college?
- Give an example of a time when you made something happen rather than letting something happen in your life. What did you learn from that experience?
- When you are setting academic and/or personal goals for yourself, to what extent do you come up with a specific plan of how you will achieve your goal? Can you please provide an example?
Applying Self-Authorship

• Application of theory to author our own experiences

• Application with other student and professional staff members
Observations, Outcomes, and Plans for the Future

• OWL Talks
  – Student Response
  – Parent & Family Response
  – Staff Response

• Future Curriculum for Training
Please complete an evaluation of this presentation.

Thank you!

Evals can be dropped off next to the registration desk.