

They say that there are no two snowflakes alike. Perhaps this also holds true for today's student populations at our American Universities. And like snowflakes, beautiful in their diversity and fascinating in their surprising geometry they are equally capable of bonding, and transforming landscapes. This to me is at the heart of student development theory. It is recognition of the individual, of the uniqueness not only of human biology but also of human experience and environment. It is the consideration of all of these things when evaluating what occurs at higher education institutions that either inhibits or promotes the development of the modern student.

I appreciated the holistic approach in that it considers the whole person, the whole experience and the whole environment, however I cannot help but grin when I recall the "80s Montage" analogy as provided this week by group mate Joe Corso in relation to self-authorship. It rather does feel that way, the child goes off to college and in a popped collar epiphany realizes that his whole world has been a lie, a protective cocoon which was only shattered through the knowledge and experience provided by this new place, these new people, this new experience (electronica background music provided of course by a European band of questionable talent and commensurate fashion sense).

Yet despite the levity I recognize the seriousness of the purpose of these theories even if I cannot yet quite grasp the theories themselves. I find myself having to go back and then back again to recognize what concept goes with which theory and by who the theory was postulated in the first place. So perhaps therein lay the biggest take away—the sheer complexity of the field. It is vast, a chasm far too deep to have a simple solution for its crossing. And rightly so, human beings are not simple creatures.



Also of interest, after our groups conversation and my subsequent rumination of aforementioned conversation was my own steady recognition of the truth of these theories. We had each of us recognized our own experiences somewhere within the reading and that spoke to me. It is not that every nuance of every theory is true for every person, but rather that every theory holds some truth for some person. Which is why perhaps our authors suggested theory as a guide and not a devotional. Just as there is no one snow flake replicated a thousand times over so to is there no one student replicated a thousand times over and it is this fact that casts student development theory as a malleable, changeable tool to be reevaluated within each new set of circumstances instead of being cast in stone, a monolith that generations hence would not be able to decipher.

