Experiences that Promote Self-Authorship among Students of Color:

Understanding and Negotiating Multiple Perspectives

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Much national attention has been directed to whether college graduates are learning what they need in order to succeed in a variety of adult roles, including being employees, family members, consumers, and citizens of local, national, and international communities (e.g., the Spellings Commission, U. S. Department of Education, 2006). Advocates of liberal education are also encouraging educators to clarify their expectations for student learning outcomes and to improve educational systems to better stimulate and document student learning. They claim that students with a liberal education are better equipped to address the multiple and shifting challenges of contemporary life than are those with a narrower educational focus (e.g., toward specific career training), and that training in the liberal arts is actually quite practical and applies directly to work settings:

> In today's knowledge-based economy, a good liberal education embraces science and new technologies, hand-on research, global knowledge, teamwork cross-cultural learning, active engagement with the world beyond the academy, and a commitment to lifelong learning, as well as the acquisition of knowledge and skills. These forms of learning provide a strong foundation for success in a dynamic economy. They are also essential as a foundation for civic participation and for a meaningful life. (AACU, 2004, p. 4)

Nevertheless, they also acknowledge that our understanding of the kinds of administrative structures and instructional pedagogies that enable the achievement of these goals has not kept pace with the demand to apply this understanding to improve student learning outcomes. It is readily apparent that greater clarity is needed about factors that enable college students to be successful in work and civic settings (AACU, 2004).

Another group of educators and researchers has addressed the identification of these enabling factors from a different perspective, turning to student development theories for insights about developmental processes that affect student success. There is an extensive body of theory and research on students' intellectual, identity, and moral development that informs how students learn and how they develop the capacities to use what they learn; several dozen examples of this body of work were recently compiled for the *ASHE Reader on College Student Development Theory* (Wilson and Wolf-Wendel, 2005). Understanding students' development helps educators intentionally structure educational practice to promote it in both the curriculum (e.g., Bekken & Marie, 2007; Haynes, 2004; Hornak & Ortiz, 2004; Ortiz & Rhoads, 2000) and co-curriculum (e.g., Egart & Healy, 2004; Piper & Buckley, 2004). A recurring theme across developmental theories and a consistent finding from research based on these theories is that students who develop complex frameworks for understanding the world and their roles in it are better prepared to meet the challenges they face in both collegiate and post-graduate settings (Baxter Magolda, 2001; Kegan, 1994), especially unpredictable challenges associated with changing circumstances and contexts.

Developing complex frameworks and a well-grounded understanding seems particularly urgent when learning how to relate to those who are different from oneself. As we have argued elsewhere (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005), those who have achieved intellectual and identity complexity not only have a deeper appreciation for multiple perspectives and experiences, they are much better equipped to work interdependently with diverse others.

Despite the value of the college student development literature in informing understanding of the goals of development, how these relate to intended collegiate learning outcomes, and how to promote the learning and development of college students, this literature is

not without its limitations, two of which are relevant to this discussion. First, theories of college student development are based largely on white students, as Moore (2002) has noted regarding most research on students' intellectual development. A similar weakness exists in the identity domain: in their major review of research on college impact, Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) noted the "absence of studies dealing with identity development among Black (or other minority) students" (p. 166), a pattern that remained virtually unchanged in their later compilation of studies (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Complicating this problem is that educators have often relied on identity development research for people of color that is based on adolescents or adults, translating and adapting these models and findings to college students of color (Torres, Howard-Hamilton & Cooper, 2003). Although research on identity development of college students of color has begun in recent years, very few longitudinal studies exist. Torres' (2003; Torres & Hernandez, 2007) longitudinal study of the ethnic identity development of Latino/a college students is one notable exception. Her study explicitly focuses on the developmental change process (Torres & Baxter Magolda, 2004) to better understand the kinds of experiences that promote development. More research is also needed that integrates the intellectual, identity, and relationship dimensions of development, and whether this differs across student subgroups; examples of works examining cross-domain relationships are Baxter Magolda, Abes, & Torres (in press), Creamer & Laughlin (2005) and Meszaros (2007).

A related complication is that studies on the impact of diverse interactions have often targeted the beneficial effects on white students without comparable attention to the effects on students of color (Gurin, Lehman, & Lewis, 2004; Schoem and Hurtado, 2001). As a result, much less is known about how students of color understand, react to, and benefit from their diversity experiences.

A second limitation is that few studies have explicitly linked information about student development to specific educational approaches designed to promote learning and development, thus limiting the use of developmental theories as a resource when identifying effective practices. Although hundreds of studies have documented the effect of attending college on student development (summarized in Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005) and several have examined effects of attending liberal arts colleges in particular (e.g., Pascarella, Wolniak, Cruce, & Blaich, 2004; Pascarella, Wolniak, Seifert, Cruce, & Blaich, 2005; Winter, McClelland, & Stewart, 1981), few have offered a detailed examination of educational practices and their effects on individual students, relying instead on more general levels of description (e.g., participation in service learning, study abroad) across groups of students. Not attending to the variability within general practices makes it difficult if not impossible to discern the pedagogical principles and strategies that make such practices educationally beneficial. There is a small but growing body of research that has attempted to identify such factors (e.g., Barber & King, 2007; Baxter Magolda, 1999, 2001; Baxter Magolda & King, 2004; Baxter Magolda et al., 2007; Mezirow, 2000), but it consists largely of cross-sectional studies. Thus, there is a need for longitudinal studies that link student development to specific educational practices. Understanding both sides of this person-environment equation is more likely to provide educators with the information they need to help students achieve liberal arts outcomes than is either side alone.

These limitations stand against a backdrop of a rapidly changing demographic picture of college students in the US, with students of color now comprising 28% of this population (ACE, 2006). Yet their enrollment is well below their representation in the population at large, and there are on-going concerns about their low graduation rates (ACE, 2006). Further, Blaich, Wolniak, Siefert, Cruce, Goodman, & Schneider (2006) recently reported that students of color were less

likely than their white counterparts to experience liberal arts education. Better understanding the kinds of experiences that promote the learning and development of students of color and whether the developmental paths they follow are adequately described by existing developmental theories will provide educators with essential information so they can better serve these growing subset of college students. Providing this information is particularly important in light of the marginalization and oppression students of color so frequently experience (Torres, Howard-Hamilton & Cooper, 2003).

This paper was based on data from one part of the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education (WNSLAE), which draws from the dual concepts of wisdom and citizenship, major constructs that have defined goals of liberal arts education. The broad purpose of the WNSLAE is to identify critical factors affecting liberal arts outcomes by examining student background characteristics, institutional practices, and student experiences that are associated with the achievement of the outcomes. The liberal arts outcomes that guide this study are integration of learning, inclination to inquire and lifelong learning, effective reasoning and problem solving, moral character, intercultural effectiveness, leadership, and well-being (King, Kendall Brown, Lindsay, & VanHecke, in press).

Collegiate educators whose work is directed toward helping students achieve these outcomes need information about the entering characteristics of the students they serve, and about the developmental and educational impact of students' educational experiences. They can then use such information to more intentionally construct learning experiences for students. Providing such information to educators on participating campuses is another purpose of The Wabash National study. In support of this effort, this paper focuses the experiences of a subgroup of study participants, and how their background experiences affected how they came to

recognize, understand, and evaluate experiences in which they encountered multiple perspectives.

Theoretical Framework

The interview portion of the WNSLAE uses the constructive-developmental tradition, in particular the theory of self-authorship (Baxter Magolda, 2001; Kegan, 1994), to explore the intersections between growth on the liberal arts outcomes and meaning-making. This tradition holds that humans actively construct their perspectives by interpreting their experiences (i.e., constructivism) and that these constructions form meaning making structures that evolve over time (i.e., developmentalism). Kegan (1994) portrays development as "the evolution of consciousness, the personal unfolding of ways of organizing experience that are not simply replaced as we grow but subsumed into more complex systems of mind" (p. 9). According to this tradition, students enter college with particular background characteristics, histories, and assumptions about the world, themselves, and their relationships. These entering characteristics and assumptions mediate students' educational experiences (both required and optional). Students' interpretations of these experiences indicate whether they maintain their original assumptions or adopt new ones to make sense of their experience, and indicate progress on the cognitive (i.e., assumptions about knowledge), intrapersonal (i.e., assumptions about identity), and interpersonal (i.e., assumptions about relationships) dimensions of development. Framing the first-year WNSLAE interview to identify student characteristics, initial meaning making assumptions upon college entrance, and early experiences that promoted growth offers the opportunity to explore whether growth on the liberal arts outcomes over the course of students' college enrollment is related to growth in meaning-making assumptions.

Research suggests that growth toward more complex meaning-making structures is consistent with growth on the liberal arts outcomes. The core goal of liberal education is "teaching students how to develop their own independent and evidence-based judgments about complex and contested questions" (Geary Schneider, 2006, p. 2). Mezirow calls this process transformative learning, which focuses on "how we learn to negotiate and act on our own purposes, values, feelings, and meanings rather than those we have uncritically assimilated from others" (Mezirow, 2000, p. 8). Kegan (1994) argues that moving from reliance upon what we have uncritically assimilated from others requires replacing a meaning making structure that relies on an external foundation with one that reflects the internal grounding of self-authorship.

Growth away from dependence on others' beliefs and values, acknowledging but not allowing these to dictate one's thinking (i.e., growth toward self-authorship), is consistent with the definition of the seven liberal arts outcomes used in the WNSLAE. For example, effective reasoning and problem solving requires the cognitive maturity to view knowledge as complex and contextual, the intrapersonal maturity to view oneself as capable of weighing evidence to make wise knowledge claims, and the interpersonal maturity to consider but not be overwhelmed by others' perspectives. Initial evidence for a connection between meaning making structures and growth on liberal arts outcomes emerged from the WNSLAE cross-sectional pilot study involving 175 first-year and senior students (Baxter Magolda et al., 2007). For example, students reported an increasing awareness and openness to responsibility for their own learning, but how they gained this awareness differed according to how they interpreted (made meaning of) their experiences. For those students using external meaning making, this meant developing a more questioning attitude and taking responsibility to seek help, manage time, or set priorities. For those using a mix of external and internal meaning making, this meant taking intellectual risks in

class and gaining a broader, more integrated perspective on issues. For those using meaning making structures consistent with early self-authorship, this meant taking active responsibility for their own learning and applying learning to life and identity. Thus, there appears to be a link between the nature of growth students experienced and the meaning-making structures they used to interpret their experiences. Analysis of the Year 1 WNSLAE interviews in this paper builds on this prior work by examining the intersections of student characteristics, initial meaning-making structures, and important early college experiences that contribute to growth toward the liberal arts outcomes.

Methods

The WNSLAE is a national 4-year longitudinal study of 4500 students attending 19 institutions; all students entered these institutions as first-year students in 2006. This study utilizes a concurrent mixed methods design. For the quantitative portion of the study, all participating students completed a series of outcomes assessment instruments and an extensive survey of their pre-college and collegiate experiences at the beginning and end of their first year and will do so again in their senior year. (For initial results from the quantitative portion of this study, see ___.) For the qualitative portion of the study, a total of 315 students at 6 of these institutions also completed an individual interview (described below). Students of color were over-sampled in this study to address the paucity of longitudinal research on this growing subgroup of college students; Year 1 responses provide a baseline for tracing these students' development over time.

Sample. Among the 315 students in the interview portion of this study, 34 identified themselves as African-American students and 35 as Hispanic students; they were enrolled in five of the six interview campuses; all were traditional-age first-year students. In the fall of 2006,

each student participated in a 60-90 minute individual interview with an individual who was trained to conduct the WNSLAE Interview. These 69 interviews were analyzed for this paper.

Interview Protocol. The interviews were conducted using an approach that incorporated both the "informal conversation interview" and the general "interview guide" (Patton, 1990, p. 288). The WNSLAE Interview is a three-part semi-structured interview protocol (Baxter Magolda & King, 2007). The introductory segment asked students to share relevant background information, their expectations for college, and how these expectations were realized. The second component addressed their key educational experiences and why these particular experiences were important to them. The third segment addressed how students made meaning of these experiences and integrated their learning across experiences. Recognizing that the content and nature of meaning was unique to the individual, questions were responsive to the students' answers and functioned "to discover the meaning individuals make of their experiences" (Ortiz, 2003, p. 36). In this way, the interview was co-constructed by the interviewer and interviewee. All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Coding and Analysis. We used a multi-step approach for data analysis. First we created a three-part interview summary: 1) a description of the student's relevant background characteristics and an overview of the interview; 2) a description of the major experiences the student reported and how each contributed to the student's development (the "developmental effect" of the experience); and 3) an assessment of the nature of student's developmental meaning making orientation (predominantly external, a mixture of external and internal, or predominantly internal). For each element, illustrative quotes from the transcript are included in the summary. Each summary is approximately 15 to 20 pages.

Second, we read the summaries for this group of 69 students to identify experiences the students had indicated were important to them during the first few weeks of college, and to identify those that were described in enough detail to illuminate the factors affecting their learning and development. When necessary, we returned to the full transcript to retrieve relevant details not included in the summary. We then recorded these experiences in a table listing the student ID, the nature of the experience, and comments about what made the experience interesting, important, or developmentally effective. Only a few of the experiences in the summaries met the criterion of being developmentally effective, probably because the interviews were conducted early in the first year when students had been enrolled for only a few weeks. However, those that were chosen suggested that as a result of the experience, the student was taking steps that might later result in a developmental change, such as being more open to new experiences. We used a grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2003; Patton, 2001) to categorize the experiences, allowing themes to emerge from the data rather than determining them a priori based on particular outcomes, contexts, or experiences. We then identified themes that emerged across this subset of experiences. In this paper, we report on the predominant theme that emerged for this subgroup of African-American and Hispanic students.

Findings

The interviews upon which this analysis is based took place in the early weeks of students' first semester in college. Student experiences with their families and in high school contexts indicated that these formed a foundation for understanding students' early reactions to their college experiences. A recurring theme in the experiences these students shared as significant in the early weeks of college was Understanding and Negotiating Multiple Perspectives, that is, how they understood and responded to experiences in which they learned

about multiple perspectives. Given that progress toward achievement of each of the WNSLAE liberal arts outcomes includes understanding the outcome domain with greater complexity (e.g., what it means to think critically about one's own and others' views), Understanding and Negotiating Multiple Perspectives is relevant across the seven outcomes. Examples of experiences that students identified as significant in this theme ranged from interacting with others who held different political beliefs or values, making friends with someone from a different racial/ethnic group, interacting with gay students, and learning concepts and principles in class that they applied to their own lives.

Although the interviews revealed that the majority of these students entered college heavily reliant on some external source of authority for their beliefs, identities, and notions of social relationships, variations in the perspectives of those authorities led to students exhibiting varying levels of readiness to understand and negotiate the differences they observed. The diversity of their high schools, the perspectives of their families on diversity, and the attitudes of their high school and college peers all played a part in the way they were socialized to approach to understanding multiple perspectives. Thus, as we report the findings from this theme, we will draw from the sources of influence that students reported, including family dynamics, relevant high school experiences, and experiences that occurred in their collegiate contexts.

We discerned three sub-themes in the ways these students were socialized to approach and make sense of multiple perspectives: no reported prior experience with multiple perspectives, prior experience interacting with diverse others, and prior experience learning to respect multiple perspectives. Each sub-theme reflects a different approach to understanding and negotiating multiple perspectives.

No Reported Prior Experience with Multiple Perspectives

Some students' stories about their backgrounds revealed little evidence of any socialization or education about how to attend to multiple perspectives. For two students who had attended predominantly White high schools, their encounters at college with multiple perspectives opened the door to a new way of understanding social issues. For example, a male student who identified as half White and half Hispanic shared a significant experience that caused him to reevaluate the factual basis of his beliefs about homosexuality as well as professors' points of view and how they communicate those in class:

> I'm taking this course called "Gender and Sexuality in Pop Media." It's based not only on how men and females are portrayed, but also gays, lesbians, bi's, trans-sexuals. I came to college not really having a stance on homosexuality, and I think from taking that class, I still don't know where I stand (laughs), but I feel I'm very more open-minded to it. Everybody talks about going to college and it makes you more liberal, and stuff like that, and I don't know that it's more liberal as much as, as it is more open-mindedness. It gives you multiple perspectives and it gives you a choice, how you're going to take it. I think the problem is when a spin is out on it, mainly when professors will give you something and it's well, this is how it's commonly believed, and then you come to figure out that common belief is really what they believe, how they're viewing it. But when it's presented to you in a very factual manner, I think that's when it's really beneficial. Because if you get all the facts and you get all the different perspectives, then you can make your own perspective from everything that you've come across. So, I think, yes, there's a lot of different things from my college experience so far, that's [learning about homosexuality) been one of the best things. I really hope I don't become really liberal because of this, and I don't think I will become really liberal, but maybe, I'll become more liberal because I'm more open-minded, but I don't necessarily see that as a bad thing. [F0652]

This encounter with ideas upon which the student did not have a stance led him to consider how to put different perspectives together to arrive at a decision about his own stance. He became aware that professors present their views, and anticipates that he will become more open-minded as he learns to construct his own view. He has the sense that becoming more open minded is one of the outcomes of college, yet he hopes he does not become too liberal. He appears to be cautiously considering his own worldview, trying it on, seeing how it fits, and reflecting on its

possible consequences. In the course of describing this experience, he made no reference to how he came to hold this point of view.

A Mexican-American first generation college student reported that a reading assigned for a sociology course caused her to reinterpret her high school experiences, bringing a broader social frame of reference to her prior educational experiences.

> My Sociology class, we're learning about culture and identity and cultural capital. I feel smart, I know terms. (Laughs). How it affects people's perceptions of you and what that means. And a lot of people in my class, the majority it's like privileged white kids. Me and three other Mexican kids are just always clinging to each other and we're reading books on talking about Mexican-American… we read *Women without Class*. It's [about] a woman who researched a Los Angeles high school and the cliques and the differences but she took the angle of the Latino girl and she hung out with them and took their judgments on things and how they were tracked into courses, how not to get like why the working class is staying working class, why is the upper class staying there. And just the whole idea of public schools or schools in general, teaching the lower class how to stay there and the upper class how to get ahead and it's things that I had been [through]. My high school was predominantly rich White kids too, so I mean I didn't feel weird being here because it's a lot of privileged people as well, it's an expensive school. My professor has noticed that one group of us were always doing readings with each other and expressing them to each other because we don't feel the other kids really understand, and they don't. We read the book and it will talk about being stereotyped as not as smart if you're from working class background. We would explain how our high schools were, and a lot of the kids would say, "Oh, well, we didn't have any of that and everybody was equal in things." Like they don't see it, but it's nothing against them, they just, I mean, I wish I didn't see it, but from where my background is, I do. So that related to my life and I had a unique opinion in the class cause I saw things differently. So it was interesting to know that I wasn't the only one experiencing that. I mean, it's in books, it's being taught in college courses, it's like, this is an issue that they're really addressing. And I didn't have that before, it was kind of hush, hush, this isn't happening, it doesn't happen that way. I never looked at it that way and then in the book we were reading, it's like this is my high school, this is what happens. Spanish classes that are taught in Spanish to the kids who don't speak English, like there's no honors classes in Spanish. It's like, why? It just makes you reflect back and say well being Mexican didn't help me in high school and it didn't cause everyone was like, "Oh you're the exception, that's the smart Mexican girl, it's one in a million and, and you're going to college" and, and it just wasn't thought of. And I always felt that way as an exception but I just thought that's how every smart kid felt. But it was different because they seemed to be more surprised if I got the same thing on something as a White person but, "Oh you really, you got that? Oh, good job." But it's expected of them, which is another stereotype that's like, what if you're not so bright and you're privileged and White then that's hard, too, I would think. I've thought of that since my sociology class. It has me thinking about it, I never thought of it before. I

> just took it in stride, and now I'm saying, "Hey, that's what's going on." It makes me more aware or it. [J0645]

Although she recognized others' surprise at her performance in high school, she had not attributed it to her class or ethnicity prior to this sociology course. Encountering a new perspective about something she had actually experienced helped her reframe what she had observed in high school, and to acknowledge the role being a Mexican-American had played in her education. Thus for some students, encountering new (and sometimes disturbing) perspectives opened doors for them to acknowledge and examine issues of difference.

Others who reported little socialization regarding multiple perspectives found themselves in conflict with others who held perspectives that differed from theirs. A student who described herself as Mexican and as having a strong religious faith that was at odds with the "party hearty" culture of her residence hall found herself at odds with her peers there:

> In my friendships, people can think the most different opposite of me and I'm willing to know it, but I will stand my ground if I really firmly believe it. Just like personal things – religion always comes up with me because I'm known as the Ms. Religious Girl on my floor, especially on my building. I pray everyday, I mean I talk to God everyday. One thing I have learned here by meeting new people that are just completely different from you. There's all these kids that smoke, and do hookah, and drink, and party hearty, and I'm not. So I had to learn more from that and be more accepting of that. It's really more of a personal thing like honestly people can be religious and drink if you're legal. I know friends that are over eighteen and will smoke a cigar and they're Christian or Catholic or whatever and they're religious too and have faith, or they'll do a hookah once in a while, but it's very more of a person's decision. I've realized that was one part that I didn't know about myself. I thought if you're a good, religious person, you don't do that kind of stuff because I guess I grew up with that. My Dad and my Mom never smoked and very minimal drinking, so I kind of just seen that by example so I expected everyone to be like that almost. And it was really easy for me to close that in high school because I didn't have to encounter myself with it. If I didn't want to go to a party I just didn't have to go, but here, like you live in the party like you're in a camp, you're in a floor where even though you don't want to be in a party, but next door he'll be having one, you know? So you'll have to kind of live with it you can't really take yourself out of it unless you're not living on campus. So I just have to kind of accept it and accepting them for who they are. In the beginning it was so hard, and it broke a lot of my relationships. It broke this big one and if anything, I hope it makes it stronger, I hope that recovers and I can – just because I am learning. And it hurt, I had to go to such a great low to realize it to be more

> loving of people such as who cares if they do party hearty, and do whatever they want, I can still really be accepting of it. [J0635]

This student had not witnessed party behavior on the part of religious persons prior to college and was able to avoid peers who partied in high school. As a result, she initially judged those whose behavior was inconsistent with her values as wrong. She found that this hindered and even broke some of her relationships, which was painful for her. This realization led her to conclude that it would be desirable to be more accepting of their behavior even if she did not engage in it herself. She was unable to physically extract herself from this difference in perspective due to "living in the party," so she had to devise an alternate solution to holding firm to her values and living comfortably with her peers. Instead of using this experience to gain a deeper understanding of her religious beliefs or of the differences she felt between herself and her peers, or even to try to leave this environment to seek out others with similar religious values, she instead opted to not judge them, thus retaining the friendships while not addressing the basis for their differences.

An African American student reported a different kind of struggle to negotiate multiple perspectives; this stemmed from his beliefs that some of his values put him at odds with his home community. The valedictorian of his high school class, he felt he had to "dumb himself down" in his home community prior to coming to college:

> S: Where I'm from, people don't really talk correctly. They misuse subject-verb agreement. I have a great vocabulary and I use it to its fullest extent now. I was like, are you being facetious? I used vicissitude today. It's like "What?" "Go look that up." I use my vocabulary a lot more. That's a big thing for me. The others are like, "How come you just can't say it?" "Well I did say it. I just said it in a way that will make you think." So that's a big thing, I just talk different.
>
> I: So is that vocabulary that you've learned here or vocabulary that you've had at home?
>
> S: I've always had it. I just never used it. I wasn't in the correct environment, but now I am in this whole erudite environment. I can say whatever I want to say to impress people

> or just upset people. That's all it is, but I use it because if I decide to be a lawyer, I want to have it just in the bag. "Were you inebriated when you assaulted your wife?"
>
> I: So then will you use this vocabulary when you go back home for Thanksgiving?
>
> S: Probably, it's in me now. I don't have to put up with stupid people all the time so I don't have to dumb myself down anymore.
>
> I: And you felt like you did when you were in high school?
>
> S: Oh yeah, yeah. [I0655]

This student found support in the college environment to use a much wider range of his vocabulary. His reaction to the interviewer's question about how he would use this vocabulary back home does not indicate that he has reflected seriously on this issue. He was also at odds with his college peers in terms of interests. His musical interests and tastes were affirmed in his artistically focused high school, but not in his college environment, as he explained:

> S: Oh the football thing. Huge. Music really dominated back home, but all these guys are jocks and they've played football since like 6th grade. In high school, that's all they cared about, going to the game Friday. Well I went to a performing arts high school. It was about "How's your concert yesterday? Did you perform well? What new music are you learning? When does your show start?" They really can't relate to that [here]. Yep, it's all about football, basketball, and baseball. I don't really care, but it's just that I can't really relate to them at that level because I played classical piano for the past five years. I can't get up and say "Hey, I'm learning this new Rachmaninoff Prelude in C minor. Do you want to come listen to it?" "No, I don't want to listen to it." "Hey, do you want to come sit in on my practice?" "Sure, why not? I'll do it." It's that difference right there.
>
> I: Have you asked people to come in and listen to you play?
>
> S: No, I mean if I did, they probably wouldn't come because they wouldn't like the music. I've asked them to come when Glee Club performs. They haven't come yet though. I'd really like my own concert with my own performance at the end of the semester. I'm pretty sure they'll come to that, but they're anti Glee Club.
>
> I: Why is that?
>
> S: Cause it's not football. [I0655]

While this student found affirmation to use his extensive vocabulary at college in ways that may lead to alienation in his home community, he was without affirmation for his particular artistic pursuits in college. Although he identified and articulated these differences with his communities, he offered no indication of how he might negotiate them. He assumed that his college peers would not come to hear him play piano because they are anti Glee Club.

This group of students had significant experiences in the first few weeks of college in which they were exposed to differences with others. These experiences gave them pause to reflect on who they were and to make decisions about how they wanted to relate to others. At the same time, they seemed not quite satisfied with the solutions they created for themselves, and were at a loss for how to negotiate differences with their peers in a more satisfying way. Although the dissonance and hurt they report may eventually motivate them to develop more effective ways of understanding these situations, these encounters had not yet translated into new, more encompassing perspectives for understanding and negotiating differences.

Prior Experience Interacting with Diverse Others

Students whose families modeled openness toward diverse others socialized them to refrain from judging others who differed from them. For example, one African American woman who attended a vocational high school in a northern urban city attributed her interest in cultural diversity to her mother's friendship network. She reported that during high school "it was just my mom and me" because her parents were divorced, her dad was in the Army, and her brother was overseas:

> S: Well I went to an all black high school and like I was always around different cultures or whatever. My mom, she has friends of all nationalities, and I've always been interested in different cultures, so I wanted to go somewhere more diverse to see new things and hear new ideas and different things of that nature. So instead of going to an historically black college or university, I want to go somewhere more diverse just so I can be open to different things, like why there are certain people have these ideas or those

> ideas and [student's college] is very diverse. [I: How so?] We have a few Middle Eastern people here, people from Asia, Europe, Africa, Jamaica, different parts of the United States. So it's like wow, a lot of different cultures and the people that are from different countries, they're not necessarily from the same part, so you get to learn about their different ideas and things like that.
>
> I: Sure. How do you react when you meet someone who has a different religious belief, sexual orientation or culture than you?
>
> S: Um, as far as religious beliefs, I don't react in a different way. It's like OK, I just see a face and see it like and most young adults like have the same ideas on life, but their culture is just different. So like their morals or something may be different than yours, but as far as, "Oh, well that looks cute" or "I don't like that class, blah, blah, blah," like you're still communicating on the same level. But learning about their religion or their family at home, things like that, that's different. So I don't know. I was raised to have different ideas and things like that, so it's not really… But like sexual orientation, I don't care about that. It's just, OK, well you like girls or you're a boy that likes boys, well whatever. I don't care. It's like "oh." [E0618]

This student's family, particularly her mother, served as her source of understanding and openness to difference. Because she was accustomed to interacting with diverse others, she did not judge them based on their cultural differences. The same was true for another African American woman whose family values and those of her high school peers conflicted. Her parents were divorced, her mother died when the student was 14, and she was extremely close to her godparents. In response to the interviewer's question about how her predominantly Black high school compared to her college environment, she offered:

> S: That was different, because I mean, in my school, you probably could count them on your fingers – the Caucasians. When I got here, you can count us on your fingers now. So it was different, and I guess I have a lot of Caucasians as friends. I'm open-minded when it comes to friendship. I'm not like some people like, "No, I only talk to people who look like me." You never get to know people like that if you set your standards like that, because everybody's different. But I have a lot of friends. And coming here I was like, "Oh my goodness. It's a lot of white people." And then when I went home, it was like, "It's a lot of y'all." (laughs) I just thought about it as being different, and I said,

> "Okay. Step one, number one: look past that and make friends." So I've paid attention to it, but then I don't pay attention to it, because it doesn't bother me.[1]

Wanting to know more about the source of her openness, the interviewer asked:

> I: Did you have the same views before you came here? Or was that something that you picked up here?
>
> S: I viewed it before I came here, because my uncle… he married a white woman. So I got to be like, "OK." 'Cause before, it was like… that was like, "No! You don't do that." So when he did it, and then I got cousins – they're mixed – so I'm like, "OK." But I always viewed people with… they're the same, we're just lighter or darker than each other. I have friends that … out of my six [high school friends] that might be like, "No you did not just talk to that white girl." I'm like, "What?" Or I got one out of the six…, "They cool with anybody." They're just like me – one, she could talk to anybody. I don't care if you white, black, (laughs), Asian, Chinese… She could talk to you. If you got something to say, she'll say it back to you. And that's what I love about her, because she's like me. And some of my friends are like very stuck on talking to their own color. [E0614]

This student felt conflicting pressures. Once her uncle married a white woman, she adjusted her perspective on racial relations and what is acceptable. Although one of her high school friends agreed that it was good to talk to anyone, others pressured her to stick with her own group. She shared with the interviewer her attempts to change her high school friends' thinking:

> I wanted to take some of my friends home, so they could see where I was from. And then [for] my friends at home to see what I have as in friends here. But I mean, when I went home, it was like, "How are the people up there?" And I told 'em. They was like, "They all white?" And I was like, "Mostly." They was like, "Don't come back here acting white." How do you act white? What do white people act like? And that was my question for a lot of people really. And I got to know the difference when I got here, they don't act no different than I do. Most of 'em don't. Some of them act more Black than I do. And I'm like, "OK!" So what do they act like? So when I went home, they was like, "Don't come back here acting like that." Then when I got them to understand they act just like us, they just a different color, lighter… Then they was like, "You're right." And I was like, "If you all thought that this one girl named [name] here and be talking to her in front of you, it would be like, "Okay. I'm gonna see this Black girl." (laughs) This girl is Black. Well, when you see her, you're like, "Oh my God. You're White!"

[1] It is interesting to note that the student body on her campus is about 50% African American; this is illustrative of differences in perceptions of the structural diversity of campus environments based on one's past experiences.

> (laughs). So I figured they shouldn't judge nobody because of how they look. You got to get to know some people before you say anything. [E0614]

In fact, getting to know people who are different was the source of this woman's openness about sexual orientation. She reported that her godparents' daughter was a lesbian who was married to a White lesbian. Her openness to gay students again put her at odds with her peers – this time her college peers.

> S: I have a godsister… my godparents' daughter is actually a lesbian. So when I came here, I came here with an open-mind that, "OK. That's what you choose to be. I don't have nothin' to do with that." …People figure when you talk to the gay people – now that you know about 'em – they figure you're gay. So now I'm like, "Uh!" When people talk to me, they like, "[student's name], are you gay?" I'm like, "No."
>
> I: So these are people who've seen you talking with…
>
> S: I talk to a lot of lesbians, because I'm just nice! [Student name] is actually a lesbian. Her friend is actually a lesbian. I have another friend who's a lesbian. I have a lot of friends, and I guess lesbians are like the boy figure here. And that you can tell something, and they don't tell it. One girl came to me. She's like, "I don't mean to be funny, but are you gay?" I'm like, "No." She's like, "Okay. Just wantin' to know." I was like, "Okay." I was like, "Why?" She was like, "Because you talk to a lot of lesbians, but then you still talk about your boyfriend." I'm like, "Yeah, because I'm not gay!" (laughs) "I'm not gay. I just talk to everybody." I said, "If it was boys who were gay, I still would've been like, "Hey, how y'all doin'?" You know? I don't have a problem with talkin' to people, 'cause that's not…I don't judge how they make you, so I can't say, "Well, I didn't want you to be like that!" That's not my business.
>
> I: Do you think that…what's the impact of people coming up to you and saying, "[student's name], are you gay?" Is there any impact on you?
>
> S: No. I mean, I still talk to 'em, because I… that's just close-minded people that think because you talk to one person, you gotta be that way. I think everybody should talk to everybody, because it doesn't matter. And as long as…if you know you are straight or if you gay, then it shouldn't be a problem. But if you're weak-minded, then maybe you can't do that, 'cause maybe it'll get in your mind, and you'll turn that way. But I'm not weak-minded. And I know that that's not something I wanted to experience. That's nothing I want to play with, so … I can talk to anybody. [E0614]

This student's family background emphasized that interacting with peers across differences in race and sexual orientation was appropriate and an important part of being nice to others. She prided herself on "being cool with everybody."

Despite these students' willingness to interact with diverse others, their stories did not contain much reflection on the meaning of these differences. Because difference was acceptable to the authority figures in their lives, and because they had explicitly been taught to be open, being open to differences in social identities had become acceptable to them, too. It was not apparent in the interviews that they had seriously reflected on these multiple perspectives beyond refraining from judging people on the basis of race, culture or sexual orientation.

Prior Experiences Learning to Respect Multiple Perspectives

Some students in this sample attended diverse high schools, were familiar and comfortable interacting with others from different ethnic backgrounds, and were actively interested in multiple perspectives. However, they found themselves challenged to negotiate with peers whose perspectives they struggled to understand. One student described how she came to realize the salience of race on her campus, and in particular, become very aware of being seen as – and being – African-American.

> S: I was really lucky, like, to go to a school in Los Angeles that was very diverse. A lot of people from different cultures and different socio-economic backgrounds, so, a lot of my friends aren't of my same race, but I kind of at a young age, really realized that race wasn't super important. When I think of my friends, I don't think of their races. I think of them as people, and that's really just helped me to learn a lot about different cultures and different foods and just have a lot more respect for people of different cultures.
>
> I: So you tell me a little bit more about what that means to not factor in race? How does that play out for you?
>
> S: Yeah. For instance, it's really interesting coming here, because I feel like I'm so much more aware that I'm African-American, because it's such a, um, well…lack of diversity compared to my school. It's just very interesting. People look at you. I can feel that they're looking at me and saying, "Oh, she's African-American." And putting me in

that category. Whereas, when I think of my friends, or just people in general, I try not to put them in a category, because I found that that really inhibited me knowing about them, and me having new experiences with people of different cultures. I don't like the whole idea that we're so divided by race. And a lot of it is just that we're not familiar with it, and so we don't try to engage in conversations with different people or try to learn about them. But I feel like these people are just missing out on so much. My [high school] friends and I … I would always go to their families' parties, and I would know their families, and we all had stuff in common. Like, it wasn't everything is by race. Like what you have in common or, um, your interests. So I just feel like I was just lucky to have that experience and hopefully bring some of that knowledge to [college], because of it.

I: So what does that feel like when…when you think people might be putting you in a certain box or category?

S: Um, it's kind of annoying… I don't get it at all. It's not really all the time that… I mean, I definitely feel like people are just more aware of my race. Not that they don't accept me, but they're not going to, just right off the bat, want to be my friend or whatever. A lot of my friends here are still African-American, but then also other races. A lot of people think that I'm half white and half black. My family's from New Orleans. They were Creoles who are light-skinned. Because then people always ask me that question. Like that would have some… it shouldn't really matter if I'm half white or I'm full African-American. So that's also kind of strange, because that didn't happen in my old school cause everyone knew both my parents, so… Um, and it was just very odd, like, to think why that's really important, and you're like… I don't know. One of my really good friends, she's Haitian, um… Well, actually I met her at the summer program. She said when she found out both of my parents were African-Americans, she was in shock, 'cause she totally thought one of them was white, and she was taken aback. And I was like, "Why does it matter?" Why was that factor into you knowing me or liking me? It's just weird, because she has really dark skin. So there's kind of this idea in the African-American community, that if you're light-skinned those people think that they're better than the dark-skinned African-Americans, because they're mixed, or they have, like, I guess, prettier features, but I never believed that, and my family doesn't believe that, and we're all, like, pretty light-skinned. And that was just weird for someone to actually say that. Basically she said she grew up saying that she didn't like light-skinned people, because guys would always want to date them and not date her, because she was dark-skinned. And so I just found that really interesting, because…

I: So how did you handle that?

S: Well, I just said, "First of all, like, I can't control, like, if I'm light-skinned or dark-skinned. And second, that's a problem that she faces. I don't consider myself better than someone else because of the color of my skin." It just was kind of weird, because a lot of times you think racism is against your race, but a lot of times, in the African-American community, it's within your race that certain people don't like certain people, because they're mixed or because they have certain features. They have long hair, or they have

> light eyes or something like that. I didn't think that she would still believe that, 'cause I mean, that's just part of ignorance to think that people really think that way or just because of one factor of themselves, they're better than someone else or prettier than someone else, so…But I think that when you think of beauty, you have to find your own beauty and like… Just because people think I'm pretty doesn't mean that I think I'm pretty. So that has to be your individual journey to find yourself and think of yourself in that better light, so… [F0621]

This student's high school experience prepared her to continue to develop friendships across multiple races. She was somewhat surprised at her peers categorizing her as African American and even more surprised at what she termed racism within the African American community around skin color. Although she expressed disappointment in the perspectives of her peers, her progress in her journey to think about herself kept her from being derailed by these encounters.

Similarly, a male Hispanic student who reported coming from a large, urban, diverse high school in the northeast and a family background that reflected multiple religions attended a midwestern college with the intention of learning more about diverse religious and political perspectives. He reported his most significant experience as interacting with White conservatives:

> I have met more WASPS, that's what I call a White Anglo-Saxon Protestant cause they're, I've met a lot of rich Caucasian people. In [my home state], you can have that, but here it's like they're religious at the same time. In [home state] that's a very different aspect. That whole religious factor is huge. I've never really dealt with so many people who are so religious. Like in [hometown] schools, it's not uncommon for a good portion of the class to denounce Christianity. They could believe in God, but a large portion of them don't go with religion. They almost shun it and if you sort of do go with religion you're almost an outcast in a sense. You almost look like you're kind of dumb. Why are you following religion? You sort of see people challenging religion generally, maybe not God, but religion and fate and free will. Here they just accept it. Here you're brought up a Presbyterian and have those values and for me that was a big challenge. I have a good friend here who I knew before from a summer program that was here, actually three of them, he's very Christian. He's a die hard Republican too. That's another thing. Republicans! I'm not used to dealing with a lot of Republicans here. They just look at me and I'm like "where I come from Democrats actually do a good job." That's the big thing dealing with conservatives and religious that was my biggest like fear to tell you the truth. Politically, I don't really like the religious right. I don't really favor the conservatives like not that I don't respect them, but how am I going to deal with this?

> How is this going to happen? Most of them are tolerant in a sense and I don't know if it's because of religion or just because they're from [state], how the culture is supposedly Midwestern hospitality. I don't know if it's that or if it's their natural religion, but of course there's always people who are different and if you're not a Christian you're going to go to hell. For me, I think that's the biggest issue here for me is dealing with that culture, with the religious culture especially due to the fact that my family is one of the weird families like religious wise. I was a devout Catholic. I sort of weaned a little away from it and once Ratzinger [Pope Benedict] took place and I saw what he was doing. The guy he doesn't really acknowledge AIDS in Africa or he doesn't really do anything there. I find that kind of disturbing and I don't really agree with that so after that I still find myself on a quest for God and that's one of the reasons why I think I'm going to [this college] cause they have a really good theology department and I hope to learn something from that. I'm eager to learn my theology. I went from being Roman Catholic to being Buddhist. I went through that for a while and I just started questioning it again. My parents went from Roman Catholic at one point we were all Roman Catholic. I'm the Buddhist and my parents are newborn Christians and then you know I'm the dissenter of the family and I'm like why do you believe in God? Why do you believe in this? My family is still the Protestant family and my sister is still the Roman Catholic that goes to church with my parents just to please them. My dad has seven brothers and sisters. So one's a Baptist, one's a Jehovah's Witness, one's something else and when they get together they argue. One's a Pentecostal pastor. Me and him have great times let me just tell you that. We have the best times together and when the get together they just like spitting that out, spitting this out, and I'm like you guys are all wrong. You guys just open your eyes and deal with it. I guess that was one of the aspects that brought me to [this college]. This is a red state. It's very conservative and I wanted to deal with that. I felt like as a human being, as a person, I have to deal with all sorts of people. At [home], I dealt with minorities. I dealt with the real world, but I also need to learn how to deal with these conservatives. I almost in a sense thought [this college] was going to help me with that at the same time. Its religious program helped me try and understand religion if I could, if that's possible to understand God or just make some sense. Maybe give me some knowledge at least. It's taught me tolerance. I'd be the guy who was intolerant of people who were intolerant. It has taught me to be a lot more tolerant. They're still people, too. They have their opinions and they're entitled to it. I guess it's allowed me to think outside the box. It's allowed me to like I can see why they're arguing. I can see the way they're brought up and I can see why they would want that. To them that's right. To them that's what they need. I can't really argue that because I'm not in their situation so it's like [this college] and its curriculum has taught me to think outside the box and that's helped me think broadly and question stuff. Ask the right questions and think in the right manner. At the same time, just with that interaction with the students, it's just like it's taught me tolerance in general and just taught me a new type of diversity, I guess. [I0658]

This student's quest for a better understanding of theology in combination with his family's complex religious background revealed that he was actively seeking out diverse others to learn

from them. Yet he struggled with his peers' religious and political views. Finding new forms of religious and political diversity helped him learn more about why people held their perspectives and move toward being more tolerant as a result.

A third example from a student who had been raised to respect multiple perspectives also resulted from a difference in values; here, this difference stood at the base of an impasse with another gay African American student. This participant indicated that his Mormon family allowed difference and was open to his sexual orientation. However, he also portrayed his home community as closed-minded and noted that "if you can survive there, you can survive anywhere." He found the college environment open to gays and held an office in a gay rights organization. He still found himself at a loss in dealing with a peer:

> S: There's a guy, he's a junior and he, it's even hard to describe him. He's Black, but he considers himself South American cause he has South American in his ancestry and he's a Republican. It's okay to be a minority Republican. But he wrote this article that basically says that you decide your identity for yourself, which superficially I agree with, I think most people would, but in the article, he discounts ancestry as having a significant role in that identity. He's also gay. He's a lot of things, but he's not happy with himself. And so we'll get in arguments about politics or whatever and I just can't really talk to him because we come from such a different value base. He just blows my mind and so I don't really quite know how to actually converse with him. So our conversations are normally very light because I just don't understand him. I don't know what to do.
>
> I: How would you go about getting to a point where you can agree to disagree? And work through it.
>
> S: You have to keep talking and I guess you have to kind of get to understand where we're both coming from. There has to be background baggage that shapes both of us and maybe understanding that more will put it all in perspective maybe. I don't know, understanding where each other is coming from, but politically we'll probably never agree. I guess trying to come to an understanding at least about the perspective we're coming from. At least having more appreciation for our differences rather than just having it being derisive and existent, I don't know. Most people that I disagree with, we still have a general, we know why we disagree. We understand it. It's just a difference of opinion; you're for it or you're against it. But with others, and it still boggles my mind. When there is just a fundamental difference of how you approach things, it's harder to even get to that point. I mean his best friend and me have the same problem and I just don't know what to do. It's like I can't even argue with some of them. [I0621]

Because he could not come to understand his peer's value base, this student could not find a way to talk with him about their multiple perspectives. He knew this was important to do, struggled to think of ways to overcome the impasse that was between them, but had no idea how to go about it. Students who had been socialized to respect difference worked to understand divergent perspectives even when it was difficult. Their willingness to explore perspectives that differed from their own heightened the possibility of learning about themselves and others in ways that would support movement toward more complex meaning making.

Discussion

Teaching students to understand complexity of ideas, multiple frames of reference, differences in cultural contexts and values, and to appreciate multiple forms of cultural diversity and interact effectively with diverse others are commonly cited purposes of higher education. The focus of this paper, Understanding and Negotiating Multiple Perspectives, is directly related to these purposes; the knowledge and skills associated with this educational domain are also reflected in several of the liberal arts outcomes identified by the Wabash National Study. Many students in this study described challenging experiences as they confronted multiple perspectives, and in the process, revealed important information about some of the sources that influenced their reactions and responses.

The three subthemes described and illustrated above reflect different ways that students constructed their reactions to experiences in which they were confronted with different beliefs, values, and actions; most of these experiences involved interactions with peers in classroom or co-curricular settings. Despite differences in topic and context, we observed a pattern across these experiences: when describing collegiate experiences that involved learning about or wrestling with multiple perspectives, students appeared to draw upon lessons taught to them

through family beliefs or actions or a result of their high school experiences with diversity. Although the beliefs and actions reflect an open-mindedness toward accepting multiple perspectives, few of these students indicated that they had yet weighed or critiqued these lessons, instead seeming to apply them "instinctually," that is, without sustained reflection about the basis of learned beliefs or about whether or how to apply these lessons to their new collegiate contexts. Another finding is consistent with not yet having subjected their entering beliefs to their own scrutiny: these students' meaning making structures were predominantly external. A hallmark of externally-grounded belief structures is reliance on external authorities, such as the authority of a parent or teacher, or the authority of one's experiences. Perhaps this lack of sustained reflection is related to their use of external meaning making structures.

Another common thread among these experiences is that they created a sense of dissonance for the students who reported them (a reminder that significant educational experiences aren't always comfortable and enjoyable). However, the source of the dissonance differed across the three groups. Those who did not explain their reactions by referring to lessons learned from family or educational experiences about dealing with multiple perspectives experienced dissonance in encountering new perspectives, whether about homosexuality, stereotyping based on race or ethnicity, or in accommodating to differences in partying habits. By contrast, those who pointed out family practices or educational experiences that modeled ways of negotiating differences were socialized not to judge others experienced dissonance in having to defend her choice to have friends from different social identity groups. A third type of dissonance was experienced by those whose prior experiences led them to respect multiple perspectives. They were all intentional in their attempts to be open-minded and respectful toward other students who held divergent attitudes about race, religion, or politics, but were challenged

to the point of being immobilized in trying to reconcile these differences with peers whose perspectives they found offensive or simply did not understand.

It is useful in examining these three subthemes to ask whether that they simply describe differences in background and upbringing and reflect alternative paths toward developing intercultural effectiveness. Our interpretation is that those whose prior experiences led them to enter college already respecting multiple perspectives engaged more fully than those in the other two groups in reflecting on their diversity experiences, were more reflective about the sources of their dissonance, and attempted to interact more deeply with those who held perspectives different from their own. Thus they had a firmer conceptual and experiential foundation to draw upon when interacting with others who held divergent perspectives; further, their inquisitiveness and ability to articulate the nature of their concerns allowed them to take full advantage of opportunities to learn about themselves and others through these interactions. Thus, these students would appear to have an advantage in achieving liberal arts outcomes, especially intercultural maturity.

What role students' entering patterns of making sense of experiences that require them to understand and negotiate experiences involving multiple perspectives will play through these students' college years remains to be seen (but will be possible to examine given this study's longitudinal design). It is possible, for example, that students' entering sources of awareness about dealing with difference, how they resolve the dissonance described here, to what degree they continue to rely on external sources of authority to make decisions will affect their willingness to learn and what they learn about interacting with others who come from or hold a different perspective. Their success in achieving outcomes that require an understanding of multiple perspectives may also depend on the kinds of encouragement and support they

experience from faculty, staff, family, and peers and whether the messages encourage or discourage them from taking risks to better understand and interact with others while retaining a sense of self and being true to one's values. Doing so is essential to both making progress on the liberal arts outcomes and achieving self-authorship. Steps educators can take to help students develop toward these ends include offering sustained opportunities for students to engage in interdependent relationships with others, having resources available for enhancing these relationships, giving students feedback and encouragement to take full advantage of these opportunities by engaging in appropriate risk-taking around these issues, and offering opportunities for students to reflect upon and articulate their experiences. (For an example of a way to engage students in a structured reflection of their experiences, see Baxter Magolda and King [in press] and King [2007].)

Deeper understanding of the issues introduced in this paper could be informed by systematically gathering detailed information about the kinds of collegiate experiences students reported here, both in terms of formal instructional and co-curricular programs and informal experiences (e.g., conversations with peers). Notable by its absence in the examples reported here was the role of faculty or student affairs staff in assisting students to understand and navigate their ways through these experiences. Although this might be an artifact of how early in the term these interviews took place (before there was time for these relationships to develop), it may also signal that students are confronting these important issues without the benefit of campus educators. Having more detailed information about faculty and staff roles in such experiences could reveal important insights about the processes to which students alluded here. For example, detailed descriptions of courses and programs designed to help students learn about multiple perspectives (how they were structured, what issues they raised, what barriers educators

observed to helping students gain deeper and richer understanding of differences, etc.) would provide important information to complement students' perspectives on their experiences. Given the role that background experiences played in how they approached the experiences reported here, researchers and educators alike who aren't already doing so would be advised to attend to these factors in future research. Taking additional steps as these will create a richer body of scholarship on the experiences of underrepresented college students and how educators can help students of color achieve liberal arts outcomes, gain the full range of capacities associated with achieving self-authorship, and be better prepared for the post-collegiate challenges they will face.

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