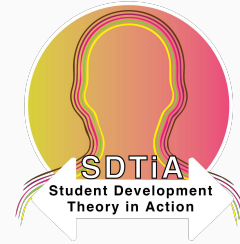


Informal Theory Paper Assignment



Assignment Rationale

The Informal Theory paper is a learning activity that supports students' engagement with the *translation of formal and informal theory* component of the Student Development Theory in Action (SDTiA) framework. Each of us holds our own informal theories, beliefs, and assumptions about how and why students develop during college—what developmental challenges they face, and what areas of growth are essential for maximizing learning. According to the SDTiA framework, developing a critical awareness of your own growth and experiences with privilege/oppression helps educators (e.g., instructors, supervisors, mentors, academic leaders, and student affairs educators) recognize the personal "informal theories" they use to understand others and their learning processes. This assignment encourages self-reflection to learners thoughtfully engage with the formal student development theories introduced in this course.

Assignment Overview

This is an individual assignment, where students will prepare and submit a reflection paper. Students are expected to use first-person voice, consistent with APA style guidelines for reflective writing. Students are not expected to share deeply personal information—and should include only what they feel comfortable disclosing. The submission will be read by the course instructor and the teaching assistant (TAs).

Assignment Requirements

Write a reflective paper (maximum 6 double-spaced pages, not including the cover page) that introduces you and responds to the following prompts:

1. How do you differ now, as a college senior, compared to your memories of yourself as a first-year student?
2. What changes contributed to those differences?
3. What experiences—inside or outside the classroom (or lack thereof)—do you attribute those changes to?
4. How would you summarize your student development journey throughout college?
5. What advice would you give to students who want to make the most of their college experience?

Grading Criteria

Students' papers will be evaluated based on:

- The depth and thoughtfulness of your reflection
- Clarity and coherence in articulating your ideas
- Overall quality of writing and adherence to academic standards (no "correct" answers expected)