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Chapter 5
Reframing as Defining in Student Affairs:
Co-Curricular Learning Through a Different Lens

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the design concept of framing and the ways in which student affairs practitioners can apply the process of reframing in their work with students and in their assessment efforts. Similar to the way designers use frames to define the problem situation, students can be prompted and coached to view their curricular and co-curricular learning experiences in new ways. This chapter applies learning sciences theory and design concepts to student affairs assessment practice, beginning with the importance of reframing for student affairs and student learning. The chapter then employs transformative learning theory and Fink's taxonomy to understand and explain the use and importance of reframing. The authors utilize literature from the design and architecture fields to describe and illustrate the concept of reframing, drawing parallels to how student affairs practitioners can apply these concepts to assess and improve student learning.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout its history, the student affairs profession has demonstrated its ability to reframe its purpose within higher education. This reframing has been the result of distinct but overlapping factors: economic, political, societal, and cultural. Changing student demographics, expansion and industrialization of higher education, waning public trust, and global events such as wars and pandemics have required student affairs to reflect on its value and role within postsecondary institutions. The development of the

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Professional Competencies (ACPA & NASPA, 2015), the expansion of ACPA/NASPA organizations through the creation of coalitions, commissions, and knowledge communities, and numerous reports and publications such as the *Student Learning Imperative* (Calhoun, 1996), *Learning Reconsidered* (Keeling, 2004), and *Learning Reconsidered 2* (Keeling, 2006) illustrate how the field has reframed its goals and priorities to serve students and institutions more effectively. The COVID-19 pandemic which began in 2020 forced student affairs to once again reconsider their priorities and reframe how work is done and the measures of effectiveness.

Influenced by changes in postsecondary accreditation agencies such as the Higher Learning Commission, coupled with public pressures of accountability and a scarcity of resources, student affairs leaders have needed to reframe their contributions to students and their institutions. This reframing requires a shift in focus from inputs to outputs. It is no longer enough to document the number and types of programs and services; student affairs divisions must also address questions such as: Who is being served and who is being overlooked in the programs? What are students learning as a result of this program? What is the impact of policies on student success?

This chapter shifts the conversations around reframing from the institutional level to the student level. The objectives of this paper are twofold: (a) outline strategies that can assist students reframe the learning they receive through co-curricular activities and (b) provide suggestions for capturing and documenting this reframing.

MAIN FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER

Students' definitions and sense-making of their learning experiences influence their personal and educational goals and their evaluation of their progress towards these goals (Mezirow, 1997). Within the classroom, students use scores on assignments and grades as proxies for learning and goal achievement. Student affairs professionals also provide significant learning experiences but may lack these formal systems that help students recognize or evaluate their learning (Kerr et al., 2020). Students may fail to consider the learning they gain from their co-curricular activities; thus, overlooking or minimizing the value of these experiences. Additionally, when this learning is not made explicit or documented, administrators and faculty often undervalue the importance of student affairs within their institutions. We posit that through the process of reframing (Dorst, 2010; Schön, 1984), student affairs professionals can address both of these challenges: (a) assisting students to identify their co-curricular learning experiences, and (b) demonstrating the value of student affairs. Reframing affords opportunities for students to design and articulate their own transformative, co-curricular experiential learning opportunities according to their own interests, meanings, and purposes. By documenting this learning, student affairs professionals can illustrate their role in educating students and, subsequently, can more comprehensively demonstrate the value of a postsecondary education.

The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate the power of reframing in enhancing student learning and the critical role student affairs professionals play in this reframing. The concept of framing and reframing has its roots in design education, so the chapter begins with an overview of design thinking and the use of mental frames within design thinking. As this chapter situates reframing for purposes of student learning, the authors draw upon transformative learning theory that supports the claim that reframing can lead to these outcomes in co-curricular environment, and Fink's Taxonomy, which provides a comprehensive view of significant learning as a guide for reframing learning experiences. The chapter then provides an

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illustration of the process of reframing within an architecture studio (i.e., curricular environment) and how reframing assists student learning. Building from foundation and theory, the chapter illustrates the ways in which student affairs professionals can work with students to help students reframe their co-curricular learning experiences and while creating processes for assessing and documenting this learning.

Reframing and the Origins of Design Thinking

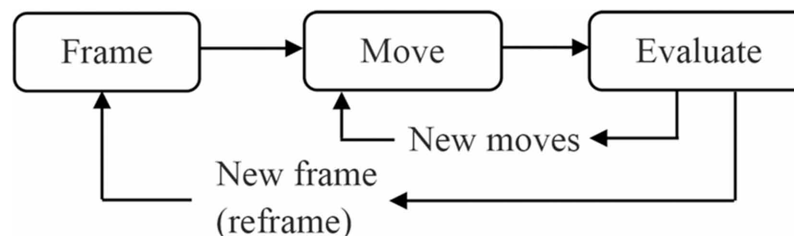
Reframing is a design thinking skill as well as a strategic skill (Reframing Studio, n.d.). *Design thinking* refers to a framework of mental processes designers go through to solve design problems (Kimball, 2011). Starting in the 1960s, research into the design process initially focused on how professional designers engage in design practice. This 'design methods' research movement eventually shifted attention toward investigations into the cognitive processes involved in design activity (Kimball).

Research into what is now known as design thinking was precipitated in the 1970's by Herbert Simon's research into design as a method for problem solving. Simon, having already made contributions to the fields of economics and organizational theory, turned his attention to the mental acts of designing as a cognitive process that could also be found in professions such as engineering, management and medicine. For Simon, design was a rational set of procedures to respond to problems, and the goal of designing was to create a desired state of affairs, which is at the core of all professions. He believed that to design was to be concerned with "what ought to be" in contrast to scientific thinking which was concerned with "what is" (Simon, 1962 as cited in Kimball, 2011).

In the years since, design researchers in many fields have built upon and further refined Simon's focus on design as both a way of knowing and as a process. This reconceptualization eventually led to the adoption of the term *design thinking*. Peter Rowe, whose 1987 book entitled *Design Thinking*, contributed two central ideas to the field. First, professional designers largely rely on episodic knowledge, or knowledge built upon past experiences as frames of reference. Episodic knowledge is largely case specific and experiential, and situated in a structure related to past events, occasions, and experiences. Designers use these frames of reference in which to ideate possible solutions. Secondly, Rowe argued that the problem-solving process itself shapes possible solutions. For designers, the knowledge gained through the act of designing, and its end result are entwined; the thinking dictates the outcome, knowing and acting are inseparable. In this way, designing becomes a pragmatist inquiry: knowledge is situated, embodied and rooted in experience (Kimball, 2011).

These historical investigations into design thinking, which situated design as a unique approach to problem solving also inadvertently highlighted the learning that happens during the design process

Figure 1. Schön's Reflective Practice (as modeled in Larson & Dorst, 2009) @ 2009. Kees Dorst. Used with permission.



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(Dorst, 2010). This description of design as learning was most clearly articulated by Donald Schön in his book, *The Reflective Practitioner* (1984). He described design as a reflective practice; a process of 'framing' the problem, performing 'moves' toward a solution, and then 'evaluating' these moves, which in turn leads to new moves or a new frame ('reframing').

Using Schön's (1984) model of reflective practice, the first step in problem solving, and therefore learning, is examining the frame through which the situation or problem is viewed. Similarly, applying Schön's model of reflective practice to student affairs involves understanding students' past experiences and contexts that have informed their frames of reference in order to consider new learning. Engaging students in this process subsequently will lead to new knowledge and meaning-making.

Reframing Within Transformative Learning

The concept of reframing assumes that it is possible for learning to occur when faced with new information. Mezirow's (1997) theory of transformative learning validates this assumption. Transformative learning is the process of effecting change in a frame of reference or the structure of assumptions and belief systems through which meaning is made from experience (Mezirow, 1997). This mental framework shapes preconceptions and ideas and guides actions. People judge or assess their actions against these frames of reference, tossing out what does not fit. Transformative learners are able to adjust their frames of reference to be more inclusive, reflective, and integrative of various experiences (Mezirow, 1997). In doing so, learners are able to 'reframe' their frames of reference as they develop and grow.

To facilitate transformation, educators create learning environments that encourage three types of learning: instrumental, or how best the information can be learned; dialogic, or when and where the learning takes place; and self-reflective, or why students are learning the information (Kitchenham, 2008). When considering co-curricular learning experiences facilitated through student affairs, many of the answers to instrumental and dialogic questions, the "how", "when", and "where", have been answered. Consider, for example, an off-campus internship program. A student expresses an interest in participating in an off-campus internship, and has already determined that an internship experience (instrumental) during their junior year will provide the real-world experience (dialogic) they need for their major. The student may be required to do an internship, or they have been told by their advisor or faculty member that an internship would be good for their future job prospects. However, without being prompted to ask why they feel an internship is the learning experience that will help them learn and grow from their own perspective or by examining their own assumptions about what an internship affords, the transformative process of the learning experience may be incomplete without this critical self-reflection.

Many times, self-reflection is prompted after the learning experience has taken place, in the form of assessment methods such as surveys or reflective essays. Prompting students to explain why a certain learning experience meets their learning needs and goals prior to the experience happens less frequently. Returning to the internship example, a student has already determined that an internship is necessary based on their pre-existing assumptions and frames of reference on what an internship affords them (e.g., required for the major, employability). In that case, any internship in their field may do. But, if a student is prompted to examine their assumptions about their learning needs, co-curricular learning, and the internship experience in particular, the student is encouraged to reframe the value of the internship experience according to their individual learning needs and personal goals. The student may also determine that an internship is not the experience they need and that a different type of work-integrated learning experience, such as a field experience or work-study opportunity, will help them reach their

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goals instead. The student may also realize that there is not an established program that will help them meet their learning needs and they have to design their own. Through reflection, the learner encounters a problem that cannot be solved through established or pre-determined means; the resolution comes through a redefinition, or reframing, of the problem. For transformation to take place, the learner needs to reframe the problem through a change from established assumptions and solutions to a new perspective and point of view (Mezirow, 1997).

Transformative learning emphasizes learning opportunities that foster critical thinking, imaginative problem posing, and discourse with the goal of developing autonomous thinking (Kitchenham, 2008; Mezirow, 1997). Therefore, encouraging students to design experiences based on their own self-defined learning goals will give their experiences more value. How can student affairs leaders encourage students to think critically and creatively, to imaginatively 'problem pose' and self-define the learning opportunities that help them reach their goals? In essence, student affairs professionals are asking students to engage in the design thinking process of reframing. Transformative learning views reframing as both a process and outcome (Kitchenham). Student affairs professionals are uniquely poised to accomplish both of these tasks.

The concept of framing and reframing as a mental process has been predominantly situated within design thinking (Dorst, 2010). This chapter integrates the ideas of reframing from design with transformative learning theory to demonstrate how reframing in student affairs can enhance student learning. To this end, Fink's Taxonomy serves a guide for student affairs professionals to assist students in reframing learning opportunities through a value-oriented lens.

Reframing Learning Using Fink's Taxonomy

Reframing learning requires a definition of learning that encompasses more than academic content and skills. Assessing student learning of course material is a staple of higher education, yet the skills and knowledge that college students need to be successful, such life and career skills, learning and innovation skills, and media, information, and technology skills (OCED, 2008) transcend academic majors. Fink's Taxonomy of Significant Learning (2013) can be a useful framework in articulating these different categories of learning. Unlike Bloom's (1956) taxonomy that focuses on the cognitive dimension of learning, Fink's taxonomy acknowledges "a need for important kinds of learning that do not emerge easily from the Bloom taxonomy" (p. 34). Fink's taxonomy was developed with the assumption that "for learning to occur, there has to be some kind of change in the learner" (p. 34); which, in essence, mirrors the assumptions of transformative learning theory. Fink's taxonomy includes six categories of learning: foundational knowledge, application, integration, human dimension, caring, learning how to learn. For each category, Fink also described the special value it adds to learning.

- **Foundational knowledge**: Understanding and remembering information and ideas. Students are required to understand basic knowledge, ideas, and perspectives. Special value: provides basic understanding necessary for other kinds of learning.
- **Application**: Engaging in new action (intellectual, physical, or social), engaging in new kinds of thinking (critical, creative, practical), developing skills or managing projects. Special value: allowing other types of learning to become useful.
- **Integration:** Making and understanding connections between concepts or ideas. Special value: making connections give learners a new form of power.

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- **Human dimension**: Learning something about themselves or others, understanding how they and others learn. Special value: informs students about the human significance of learning.
- **Caring**: Learning about what is important, what one cares about or for (values, feelings, interests). Special value: caring increases energy for learning which can lead to change.
- **Learning How to Learn**: Learning about the process of learning: how to be more engaged, how to be a self-directed learning. Special value: enables students to continue learning in the future.

Fink (2013) described the taxonomy in *Creating Significant Learning Experiences: An Integrated Approach to Designing College Courses* but limits its application to instructional courses. However, this taxonomy can be adapted for student affairs practitioners as a guide for considering the types of learning they provide and then engaging students in the process of reframing to create change. For example, residential learning communities can be a source of support for students as they are learning foundational knowledge about their discipline, but can also enhance the human dimension of learning as new students begin to learn about their learning and how others learn. Academic success centers, by providing services such as advising and tutoring, can enhance students' foundational and application skills but also provide tools and strategies that can be useful in future learning. Identity-based services such as multicultural student affairs offices and LGBTQ+ centers can encourage students to integrate their knowledge of equity and power with the dimension of application and caring.

Unlike other taxonomies, Fink's taxonomy is not hierarchical but interrelational—learning in one dimension can enhance learning in another dimension. For example, students who care about issues related to social justice may be encouraged to study history or apply their knowledge of history to current contexts. By being asked to reflect on their performance in courses and leadership experiences, their ability to retain and apply foundational knowledge, students can increase their knowledge in the areas of "human dimension" and "learning how to learn." This taxonomy does not preference curricular over co-curricular learning, thereby uplifting the value of co-curricular learning and helping student affairs professionals better understand and articulate how they bring value and contribute to student learning. Its interactive nature also demonstrates the need to foster collaborations between academic and student affairs (Kezar, 2003; Kezar & Lester, 2010; Whitt, 2017) to create a comprehensive vision for student learning.

How Designers Frame (and Reframe) Design "Problems"

The mental process of reframing is an aspect of design thinking with the powerful potential to increase learning. Design researcher Kees Dorst (2010) argued that an understanding of design thinking, and therefore reframing, requires a return to the formal logic behind 'design reasoning'. Unlike forms of analytical reasoning that predict and explain phenomena in the world, designers need to create new and valuable things for others that do not already exist.

When a designer wants to create valuable new things for others, they know what value they want it to have, or the value they aspire it to have. What the designer does not know is what the object will be or how it will work. The designer needs to simultaneously define the "what" (what the object will be) and the "how" (how it will work in a particular situation or context) in parallel. To do this, the designer creates a problem "frame", a meta-cognitive strategy through which a fictional situation is created, to test design ideas within and against.

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Figure 2. Design Framing. Dorst, K. 2010, p. 133. @ 2010. Kees Dorst. Used with permission.

This situation, or frame, is an underlying structure of belief, perception, and appreciation that allows us to see things "as". The designer creates a mental frame, a novel standpoint through which the designer views the problem in a new way and envisions action within it (Schön, 1984). By doing this, the designer creates various scenarios that show how a solution will work to achieve the desired outcome.

Although framing receives little attention in the contemporary design thinking literature compared to other processes, researchers in design and other fields have identified various strategies to encourage the framing and reframing of problems. One method is identifying the important features of a design situation as a heuristic that functions as both the description of the context and boundary by which to test possible solutions (Hey et al., 2007). For example, designers will create a short phrase, sentence, or string of identifiers that describe the value they want to achieve. The use of heuristics has been shown to encourage problem reframing (Kim & Ryu, 2014). An illustration from an architecture course (Rands, 2017) provides an example of how heuristics are used in reframing in design practice.

An Example of Design Reframing: The "Light Box"

An example of reframing from a semester where the lead author was embedded as participant-observer in Architecture Design 1 (AD 1), a beginning architecture course in a college of design at a large, public university, serves to illustrate the process of reframing (Rands & Gansemer-Topf, 2020). In one particular interaction, a seasoned architect was invited to the AD 1 studio course to give a lecture on space analysis and programming —how space is used in a structure and how to design a layout for space according to the client's needs. The project was to design an "in-fill" townhouse, a new house on vacant land between older existing properties on the main street of a fictional town. At this point of the project many students were having difficulty designing their in-fill townhouses in a way that allowed for light into the building. The students had a mental structure, or frame of reference, of what a house was 'supposed' to look like based on their previous episodic knowledge—their pre-existing knowledge and assumptions of townhouses. Because of these existing frames of reference, many students were stuck on how to design for this particular design "problem".

The architect asked the students to think about the type of house they grew up in to examine their preconceived notions of "house". Was it a free-standing house? An apartment? A rowhouse? He then discussed a particular challenge with in-fill houses, which is typical of urban environments around the world. A challenge with these types of structures is introducing light when the structure is wedged in-between two existing buildings.

During the lecture, the architect demonstrated how light enters narrow spaces through showing and telling —simultaneously drawing and talking—with the goal of trying to get students to move away from designing rooms in a house as a way of reframing the design problem. Instead, he had the students start with the natural light the house needed. He told the students, "Don't think 'house', think 'light box'. It is a dwelling within the light..." as he walked students through the design strategies for bringing light into

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dark spaces. The instructor prompted students to reframe the design problem by using identifiers and short phrases (e.g., "think light box") to move students away from what a townhouse should look like based on their preconceptions and focus instead on the value the students wanted to achieve. By doing this the students were prompted to think the values and the actions the spaces will support, rather than on the rooms, walls and doors. "Focus on the experience, not the object".

Through reframing and focusing on the values and the actions the structure supports rather than the object itself, the students were able to view the townhouse in a new way and envision a novel approach to their townhouse designs. Allison, a student in the course, explained how reframing helped her ideate and evaluate new design solutions for her townhouse project:

[The architect] wanted me to describe what I wanted my space to be, in three words. Then, he said 'go around and assess everything that you could put [in your town house design] by those standards, to make sure everything fits', according to those three references, or whatever they are. It's definitely helpful because then I feel like everything I do is intentional…I'll be able to justify whatever I do. And I think that's important.

Although this example is from an architecture course, a similar approach could be used in student affairs. For example, a student expresses an interest in campaigning for the role of student government president. During an advising meeting, the student affairs professional prompts the student to describe why they are interested in the role, focusing less on the position and more on the qualities of leadership in an attempt to reframe the conversation. "What qualities do you think would make a good student leader?" "What does 'leadership' mean to you?" Through dialogue, the focus is less on the positional role or title 'president' but leadership experience— what do they bring to the leadership experience, what do they need to build their skills? The student could then be asked to frame their idea of student leadership in a using a one-sentence summary. This one-sentence heuristic creates a mental frame for students to assess their actions as student government president, or another student leadership role, against their own framework of leadership. The benefit of reframing allows the student to affirm they have the skills and interest to fulfill the role of president, and gives them the language to articulate leadership in their own words to strengthen their application.

As illustrated in the student affairs example above, using questioning as a strategy can also influence problem reframing and idea-shaping in discourse. Low-level questioning aimed at information-seeking helps to define key attributes of the problem, while higher-level questioning encourages critical thinking and judging the value of established ideas or solutions (Fleck & Fitzpatrick, 2010). However, adding generative design questions, such as those that encourage scenario creation, ideation, or brainstorming, encourages students to move away from established solutions and generate new possibilities (Cardoso et al., 2016).

The act of reframing problems has also proved beneficial outside of design disciplines. When faced with significant disruption, the ability for businesses to frame and reframe longstanding implicit beliefs is necessary for leading during change (Beckman, 2020). Problem reframing requires "intense engagement in sensemaking" (Beckman, p. 146) to deeply understand the problem or challenge to be addressed. To encourage sensemaking, leaders encourage reframing through the use of narratives and storytelling, enabling team members to broaden their understanding of a situation. Analogous thinking, through storytelling and metaphor, allows for elements from a familiar situation to be applied to a novel problem or opportunity. For example, a student may be prompted to use a story to describe how living on campus has

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provided valuable learning opportunities. They may recall a story of a discussion with a new roommate and how they overcame a roommate disagreement through conflict resolution techniques suggested by their hall director. The use of narrative and storytelling acts as a reframing strategy to prompt students to reflect on how they learn to effectively communicate and work through differences, and can be used as effective assessment methods as well.

Social innovators have also applied design thinking as a methodology for solving complex social problems. Many social initiatives fail because of preconceived notions and established needs and solutions; failing to reframe social problems beyond these assumptions can block innovative solutions addressing the true needs of a community (Brown & Wyatt, 2010). Using ethnographic methods such as interviewing and observation, social innovators gather information about the culture and needs of the communities they serve and use the knowledge to reframe the problem and ideate possible solutions. Through this reframing, high-impact solutions arise from the needs of the community rather than being imposed upon them from the outside (Brown & Wyatt). This method of reframing is particularly important when students design a community service experience. Many times, students enter into community experiences with their own preconceptions, or frames, of what constitutes 'service' to a given community. Prior to the experience the student could be required to conduct interviews with key stakeholders in the community in an attempt to reframe the problem from the community members' point of view. The student then designs an engagement experience that contributes to the community in a meaningful way while enhancing the individual student's growth.

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Encouraging students to design and reflect on their own learning experiences, through reframing and articulating their learning goals, not only helps students give their experiences value, but also helps develop critical thinking skills and encourages autonomous thinking. Student affairs professionals can also use reframing to demonstrate how co-curricular learning experiences support student learning. However, implementing reframing strategies which are both feasible and meaningful for the student and the practitioner can be challenging. To that end, we provide some practical methods for when and how to apply reframing in student affairs practice.

Reframing Before a Learning Experience

A reframing exercise conducted prior to a learning experience or activity encourages the student to ideate and design an experience that will help them meet their learning goals. For example, a student expresses a desire for community-engaged learning experience that assists a community after a hurricane or natural disaster. Low-level and high-level questioning, using Fink's Taxonomy (2013) as a guide, can assist the student in designing an experience that is meaningful to the community and to themselves:

- **Foundational Knowledge**: What prior experiences prepare you for this?
- **Application**: How do you handle stressful situations?
- **Integration:** How does this experience related to past, current, or future experiences?
- **Human Dimension**: How do you see yourself working with others?
- **Caring**: Why do you want to help the community?

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- **Learning how to Learn**: What do you know about the people and community you will be serving? What assumptions do you have? How might your identities influence this?

Through questioning, the student affairs professional encourages the student to reframe and design a community-engaged experience that is situated in a dimension of care and adds to their metacognitive learning. By focusing on the human interactions that are necessary to lead to the desired outcome, the experience becomes less about the "what" and more about the "how" and "why". In this way, the designed learning experience is led by the pivotal interactions that give life experiences their meaning (Reframing Studio, n.d.).

Reframing During a Learning Experience

Prompting reflection mid-way through the learning experience encourages students to reflect on their actions thus far to assess if they hold value for them, or if a new frame of reference on the experience is necessary. To return to Schön's (1984) model of reflective practice, reflection-in-action prompts students to reflect while the learning experience is occurring. This 'thinking while doing' allows the student to reflect in the moment, and make judgements and changes while the learning experience is happening.

For example, if a student is engaging in a study abroad, a mid-semester check-in as a reflective interview or essay can assist the student and the student affairs practitioner in assessing whether the experiences and learning activities are meeting students' personal and learning goals, and if they need to make changes or refocus. Are they on the right path, or do they need to adapt? This mid-term prompt may also encourage students to rethink their perceptions about people and culture of both their host and home country. Has their study abroad activity thus far helped them see their host and home country in a new way? Does the student need to reframe how they view their host and home country due to this new learning?

As an additional example, students are often responsible for coordinating large scale events and activities that can take several months or more to plan. Checking-in with students during the planning can assist the student in evaluating their learning and their leadership: How is the experience similar or different than what you anticipated? Given what you now know, what skills are needed to have a successful event? Have your goals for the program or for yourself changed? Student affairs professionals can use these reflections on process in the aggregate to assess what learning gaps there may be in students' knowledge of planning or project management.

Reframing After a Learning Experience

Prompting students to reflect on the learning experience after the experience has concluded through the use of reflective essays, rubrics, portfolios, and other tools are common methods employed in student affairs assessment. To encourage reframing, and for transformative learning to take place, students should be asked explicitly how their thinking has changed as a result of the experience. Encouraging students to critically reflect on how their actions have changed their frames of reference is essential to how students to make meaning from an experience.

Surveys are a common method for assessment after a co-curricular learning experience and can also be designed to prompt reframing. Self-assessment questions, or multiple-choice questions that target students' perceived level or knowledge or skill acquisition as a result of a co-curricular learning experi-

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ence, switches the focus from how satisfied the student was with the experience to how the experience contributed to their learning. Additional open-ended questions could ask the student to document, through the use of narrative or high-level questioning, of what interactions or actions assisted in their skill development during the co-curricular experience, encouraging students to reframe their co-curricular learning as critical to their learning and development. Focus groups or interviews with students that include these reframing questions affords the opportunity to collect data that serves a dual purpose: helping students critically self-reflect on their experiences while capturing rich descriptive data on the outcomes of the experiences for student affairs professionals to determine program effectiveness and impact.

Reframing for Student Affairs Practitioners Themselves

Within the student affairs profession, the complex problem of student success (or lack thereof) would also benefit from reframing. As illustrated previously, reframing methods can provide valuable assessment artifacts that student affairs professionals can use to assess how and why the learning experiences provided through student affairs contribute to student success.

Methods such as phenomenography can assist in the reframing process. Students' definitions of success and learning vary; they are shaped by their past experiences, current actions, and perceived value of the outcome. Phenomenography can be used to investigate how students conceptualize their learning experiences, unearthing preconceived notions, assumptions, and initial frames of reference (Rands & Gansemer-Topf, 2016). The use of phenomenography aims to uncover these variations through questioning, encouraging reflection for the student to become aware of how their frames of reference and actions are related. In this way, the method becomes a vehicle for capturing student thinking as well as performance (Rands & Gansemer-Topf), which subsequently, can be used to develop services and policies that address student success.

Examples of Institutional Practices for Reframing

Documenting student learning through assessment is a necessary responsibility for student affairs practitioners. In addition to helping students reframe their learning, student affairs leaders must consider how to capture this reframing. Below are examples of institutional efforts to reframe the student learning experience through assessment practices.

Bennington College: The Plan

Bennington College is a private, liberal arts institution in Vermont. Bennington is unique in that it does not have majors. Instead, students devise their own path of study through a process called *the Plan*. The Plan process is described as a "theoretical map" drawn by students in consultation with their advisors that outlines their path of study based on a series of written prompts, proposals, reflections and artifacts (Bennington College, n.d.). Although not solely situated in student affairs, Bennington's use of written reflections and artifacts serves as an example of how to reframing helps students to design and articulate how co-curricular learning experiences help them meet their learning goals, while providing valuable assessment artifacts for student affairs professionals to demonstrate the value of student affairs learning.

In devising and implementing the Plan, students are asked to answer a series of questions in prospective and reflective essays. These narratives not only require students to detail their academic goals and

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strategies, but prompt students to describe how their courses and co-curricular experiences will deepen their commitment to their educational goals and show progress toward their aims. The Plan process starts with discussions with the writing of a first-year essay toward the end of their initial year of studies. In this first-year essay, students are asked to address, for example: "Did you experience a topic in your first-year coursework that was unfamiliar to you? If so, what happened?" The use of narrative helps students to articulate how their frames of reference have changed as a result of their in-class learning. Likewise, a student might write about an experience during orientation that was new and unfamiliar, which would provide valuable information to student affairs professionals about the various pre-college experiences and knowledge students are bringing to campus and how their perceptions of college have changed as a result of the orientation experience.

During students' third term at Bennington, students and their advisor revisit their first-year essay and devise a Plan proposal, a mosaic of curricular and co-curricular activities of the student's design in lieu of a major, designed to meet their own educational and professional goals. Students are also asked to give their Plan a working title, the purpose of which is to identify a preliminary unifying theme or question of their studies. Using this title as a framework, students identify the curricular and co-curricular learning opportunities they want to achieve during their studies at Bennington. In this way, the working title creates a mental frame for students to design their own learning Plan and assess the effectiveness and impact of their Plan. Students' Plans are assessed and reframed throughout students' studies at Bennington. If a student deviates from their Plan, or the focus of their study changes, students are prompted to articulate the reason for this shift and propose new goals, or reframe, in ways that reflect these changes (Bennington College, n.d.). Using a reflective process, students' assessment of their progress is not measured using grades, degree audits, or lines on their resumes, but prompts students to make connections between their actions and their personal and professional goals.

Plan meeting assessments and students' reflective essays are the principal artifacts of the Plan process, although students also are prompted to embed artifacts of their learning into their Plan reflections, according to Zeke Bernstein, Dean of Research, Planning, and Assessment at Bennington College. Work-informed artifacts such as reports or presentations, or creative works such as photographs or composed music, are particularly useful when students are reflecting on their learning outside of class. Starting in their third term and in each Plan meeting thereafter, students are prompted to connect their artifacts to Bennington's Capacities of "inquire", "research", "create", "engage", and "communicate" (Bennington College, n.d.). For example, students might embed a series of photographs from a civic-engagement experience as an example of "engagement" and write to how the photographs demonstrate their capacity for engagement. Allowing artifacts allows for multiple paths for students to demonstrate the Capacities beyond solely written reflections (Z. Bernstein, personal communication, 19 February 2021). Using the Capacities as a framework, the Plan artifacts demonstrate how students have developed, through iteration and reflection, a Bennington education of their own design.

University of California, Berkeley: My Major Map

The University of California, Berkeley (UC Berkeley) uses "Major Maps" to help undergraduate students discover academic curricular and co-curricular opportunities related to their majors. Although based in intended majors and fields of interest, the Major Maps help students to plan their educational path and guide their experiences by making suggestions for coursework, how to engage with advisors and other staff, and clubs and other extracurricular activities to join that enhance their studies (UC Regents, 2021).

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These suggestions prompt students to design their own paths and learning experiences throughout their studies.

The Major Maps were designed to provide potential or admitted students a visual guide to help them think about the opportunities afforded to them throughout their time at UC Berkeley. “We have many students who were having a ‘fear of missing out’, that they were missing important co-curricular opportunities” said Anthony Yuen, Project Lead for the Major Maps project at UC Berkeley. Early focus groups with students showed that students were interested in knowing what curricular and co-curricular opportunities were afforded to them, but found it difficult to navigate when they should be exploring and applying to those opportunities. A simple checklist wouldn’t work; students needed a guide that introduces and suggests a timeline for important co-curricular learning opportunities and how these opportunities fit with their major, or if they should be thinking about another path that provides both the curricular and co-curricular learning opportunities that will help them reach their goals (A. Yuen, personal communication, 16 February 2021).

The Major Maps act as a visual metaphor to reframe how students’ curricular and co-curricular learning experiences combine to help them progress toward their educational goals. “The visual aspect (of the Major Maps) is really important” says Yuen. “The maps allow students to see possibility in a visual way that is consistent across majors” (A. Yuen, personal communication, 16 February 2021). The consistency of the visual design allows students to envision how curricular and co-curricular opportunities work together across various majors.

At the individual student level, staff at UC Berkeley use the Major Maps to guide conversations to explore majors and student affairs activities with undergraduates early in their studies. Academic departments also use the Major Maps to promote their majors in a different, more visual way that combines both curricular and co-curricular learning, than simply listing the information on their website. Institutionally, each Major Map is tied to UC Berkeley’s strategic plan by way of the framework of “Connect”, “Discover”, “Engage” and “Reflect” (UC Regents, 2021). Arranged on a matrix, the Major Maps give examples of experiences in each year of study that will help students:

- Connect with others to build community and create a network of support;
- Discover opportunities on- and off-campus to enrich their studies;
- Engage locally and globally to broaden their perspectives;
- Reflect on their academic career and prepare for life after college.

For example, the strategy of “Connect” includes joining a student organization such as the Black Student Union or the LEAD Center, UC Berkeley’s hub for student leadership; “Engage” includes study abroad locations, alternative spring break programs, or community-engaged projects. When co-curricular learning opportunities are combined with academics such as major requirements and minors, the Major Maps illustrate to students how learning happens inside and outside the classroom at UC Berkeley, and how both lead to success after graduation.

Comprehensive Student Record Project

With support from Lumina Foundation, the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) and NASPA, Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education Association of Student Personnel Administrators embarked on a collaborative project to develop a comprehensive

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student record (Green & Parnell, 2017). Unlike student transcripts that have often exclusively captured academic credits, the student record project sought to develop instruments that would capture student curricular and co-curricular learning. The purpose was to encourage students to "use the process as a reflective exercise for students" (Green & Parnell, p. 1) and to consider student learning in a broader context. In essence, this project was calling on institutions to engage in the process of reframing. Twelve institutions participated in this project, but each developed their own model based on their own contexts; two of these examples are from community colleges.

Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC), developed a co-curricular transcript housed in student affairs that captured activities in six categories: athletics, clubs and organizations, community service, honors and awards, leadership training, and workshops and seminars. These categories have since been expanded to include assessment and certifications, global experience, performance and art exhibits, professional activities, and research (BMCC, n.d.). Students can couple their co-curricular transcript with their academic transcript to ascertain a more comprehensive view of their learning (Green & Parnell, 2017).

LaGuardia Community College also participated in the project and developed a Career Readiness Badging process. Their model focused specifically on "six competencies in high demand in the work-force" (Green & Parnell, 2017; p. 76). Through participation in activities such as clubs or engaging in skill development tasks as such writing a resume, they can earn badges that signify their competency in one of the following areas: critical thinking and problem solving, oral and written communication, teamwork and collaboration, information technology application, leadership, and professional and work ethic. LaGuardia also has an ePortfolio program that "allows students to document, deepen, and reflect on their learning experiences" (LaGuardia Community College, n.d.). Both the BMCC and LaGuardia projects involved a reframing of co-curricular student learning and exemplify how institutions can promote deeper learning through reflection and provide artifacts to students and the institution that document this learning (Green & Parnell, 2017).

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

This chapter introduced the concept of reframing and described suggestions for incorporating this concept in student affairs work, and provided strategies that illustrate ways in which student affairs practitioners can help students reframe their questions and examples of reframing student affairs assessment activities. The intent was to begin the discussion about the potential for reframing to be incorporated in a variety of ways. The following questions offer an opportunity to consider additional ways that reframing can be applied to enhance and promote the of student affairs:

Where do or how should framing and reframing conversations with students take place in student affairs practice? This chapter has identified various points of contact describing how and when reframing dialogues with students could occur. A larger, focused study on student affairs assessment practices could identify what approaches for reframing are currently being used and which approaches best support the reframing of co-curricular learning situations.

How might current methods for framing and reframing offered by design thinking approaches be adapted for feasibility and result in more meaningful conversations with students? Engaging students to use visual tools such as mapping, employing ethnographic approaches (e.g., interviewing and observing), and encouraging the use of metaphors and storytelling prompt the reframing of learning experiences. Al-

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though useful, these approaches rely on gathering information through individual dialogues with students at great cost of time and resources. How can student affairs professionals build upon these approaches and/or adapt them to make them more feasible and meaningful in their work? Could a "reframing tool kit" be developed for student affairs practitioners to assist in this process?

How might reframing assist student affairs professionals in their praxis? In the example from the AD 1 architecture course, students were asked to think about "light box" instead of "townhouse." Like all professions, student affairs professionals work from frames of reference that hold preconceptions and internal biases. Practitioners often default to old frames, relying on embedded routines makes reframing difficult. How are existing frames of reference communicated and internalized throughout student affairs? How can student affairs professionals employ reframing to assist in considering and communicating the priorities and purposes of student affairs work that will lead to new and innovative ideas? How might reframing be used in strategic planning, budgeting, and/or program development?

CONCLUSION

Through their programs, services, and engagement with students, student affairs practitioners provide rich learning experiences for students. The process of reframing can deepen this learning by helping students consider how their skills and experiences change and develop. Student affairs professionals can subsequently capture these changes as a way to promote their value. Design thinking and the concept of reframing have traditionally been confined to design disciplines. To illustrate the process, this chapter illustrated how architecture incorporates reframing as a part of their learning process. Student affair practitioners, by applying their commonly used tools and methodologies, can utilize these strategies to encourage and document student learning.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Assessment: The systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improvement (formative assessment) or to judge the quality or worth of the program (summative assessment).

Design Thinking: A framework of mental processes designers go through to solve design problems (Kimball, 2011).

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Donald Schön: (1930-1997). A philosopher and professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology who developed the concept of reflective practice and researched learning systems within organizations and communities.

Fink's Taxonomy: A classification of types of learning that includes six categories of learning: foundational knowledge, application, integration, human dimension, caring, learning how to learn.

Reflective Practice: The ability to reflect on and learn from experience in a process of continuous learning (Schön 1984).

Reframing: Viewing situations, events, relationships, and experiences through a different perspective that results in new thinking or behaviors.

Transformative Learning: The process of effecting change in a frame of reference or the structure of assumptions and belief systems through which meaning is made from experience (Mezirow, 1997).