Envisioning success: Navigating doctoral education in a thriving sense

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INTRODUCTION

More than ever before, “improving graduate education, and specifically, strengthening the preparation process” of doctoral students has become a significant responsibility in higher education (Wiff). This poster explores the subject of doctoral students attaining successful outcomes in a broader sense of thriving. This is important, considering the well-known secret that over half of doctoral students who begin doctoral studies across the nation and beyond never complete it (Livitts, 2001). Therefore preparing doctoral students to envision success from a holistic perspective becomes crucial in the discourse on doctoral education. The poster briefly explores the concepts of thriving and four embedded components of thriving as an approach to successfully navigate doctoral education.

Research Questions

- What does it mean to thrive in doctoral education?
- How can doctoral students be prepared to navigate doctoral education in a thrive sense?

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Thriving: Optimal development (Lerner, 2004)
Thriving: Broader vision of student success (Scheriner, 2010a, 2013).

Four envisage components of thriving in doc. Edu
- Growth and development
- Positive environmental human interactions
- Engaged learning and involvement
- Broader vision of success

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of thriving is a term that has been studied by various scholars and understood from multiple perspectives. Some of the notably areas of research are: Positive youth developmental asserts (Benson & Scales, 2009), adults and older adult development (O’Leary and Ickovicks, 1995), positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszenmtihalyi, 2000), and higher education experience (Scheriner, 2013). Most of the research on thriving describe thriving as an ideal process of optimal development (Lerner, 2004), an adaptive response (Spreitzer, Sutcliffe, Dutton, Sonenshein, & Grant, 2005), resilience in the face of challenges (O’Leary and Ickovicks, 1995), positive trajectory and outcome (Haight, Barba, Courts, & Tesh, 2002), and a holistic experience of student success (Scheriner, 2013). Building on these different perspectives, this study, envisage thriving in doctoral education as an ongoing process of growth and development, positive environmental human interactions, engage learning and involvement and a broader vision of success. This definition have been adopted as a conceptual framework to navigate doctoral studies given the “complex formative process” of doctoral education (Walker et al, 2008). And therefore, approaching doctoral education from a thriving perspective will lead to greater outcome as indicated in the literature on thriving.

Positive environmental human interaction in thriving

“people affect people”

Engagement & Involvement in thriving

A broader vision of success

Recurring themes to thrive

- Ideal Optimal development (Lerner, 2004, 2008)
- High intellectual engagement
- A holistic view that represent student success (Scheriner, 2013)
- Continually evolving and becoming (Ryff, 1989)
- Fully engage learning, deeply energized by ideas, see multiple perspectives, and connect purposefully (Scheriner, 2013).
- Positive trajectory and emotion (Seligman & Csikszenmtihalyi, 2000).

Conclusion

Attaining success in doctoral education is a lofty goal considering the high rate of doctoral student attrition. This study explore the concept of thriving and recommend it as a positive approach in navigating doctoral education.