**Birds of a Feather: Using Student Development Theories to Connect with Your Online Student Flock**

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Nancy Schlossberg’s (1989) Marginality and Mattering

* Marginality can be defined as a sense of not fitting in and can lead to self-consciousness, irritability, and depression. This feeling can be permanent for people of nondominant groups or temporary for people in a new situation like first year students.
* Mattering, on the other hand, is a belief that you matter to someone else. Schlossberg noted that this following five aspects that lead to a sense of mattering:
  + Attention, which is the feeling of being noticed
  + Importance or the feeling of cared about
  + Ego-extension which is the feeling that someone will be proud of me or sympathize with me
  + Dependence or the feeling of being needed, and
  + Appreciation which is the feeling that one’s efforts are appreciated by others.

Laura Rendon’s (1994) Validation

* This theory speaks to issues, backgrounds, and experiences of low-income, first-generation students, and adult students returning to college.
* Validation is an enabling, confirming, and supportive process initiated by in- and out-of-class agents that foster academic and interpersonal development. In short, validation leads to greater confidence, which leads to increased involvement.
* We can provide a sense of validation to our students by knowing their names, allowing them to see themselves in the classroom, acknowledging what they bring, allowing for success, and helping them develop peer networks.

Your Online Flock

* The Early Bird- Logs on the moment module opens
* Canary- If they are having concerns, the entire class is!
* Carrier Pigeon- Messenger to the cohort
* Road Runner- Speeding through the course

Applying Theories to Your Online Flock

* For each of the students,
  1. identify what specific activities you can do to provide students with a sense that they matter and they feel validated
  2. identify what specific activities you should avoid so that the student does not feel marginalized