

# A CRITICAL REVIEW OF STUDENT CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT THEORIES

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**Abstract:** There are commonalities in substance in many student change and development theories that have been categorized and summarised over the last 15 years. Many of the models that have evolved from theorists are based on the American college model and its associated values. This model cannot readily be applied to other higher education systems, including the Australian higher education system. The structure of higher education institutions in both countries is quite different. The nature of the organization of undergraduate degrees can be associated with the value system of a country. There are differences between countries in the cultural perception of the role that higher education plays in preparing students for society. These differences are highlighted by recent discussion papers issued by the Australian government to instigate a review of Higher Education in this country. These discussion papers indicate that the main issue in higher education in Australia is “Who pays?” and the impression that there is an inherent problem in Australia’s higher education system that has nothing to do with reduced government funding and over-stretched resources. This paper discusses the various change and development models and typologies that have evolved in higher education over the last 15 years and their impact on innovation in teaching. The Australian higher education system is used as a case study to highlight the need to treat the US model with caution when applying to other countries and cultures.