



Student Life Philosophy

Student Development Dimensions

In summary, Student Development is a group of nine different dimensions.

These dimensions are:

INTELLECTUAL: The INTELLECTUAL dimension involves two task areas: *Learning and Thinking Skills*. Learning skills focus on styles and strategies for learning, which include effective verbal and written communication. Thinking skills focus on ways to discover and evaluate information. Such tasks include analyzing complex problems to arrive at practical and creative solutions. The purpose of these tasks is to encourage academic success and excitement about the work and how knowledge can improve the quality of life.

LIFE PLANNING: The LIFE PLANNING dimension involves two task areas: *Career and Lifestyle Choices*. The career task involves decisions regarding education, major-field, and occupational alternatives, which are realistically connected to abilities and opportunities. The lifestyle task is concerned with the important relationship between personal life and work life values. It includes using leisure time to participate in campus activities and selecting academic electives, which will add richness to the life experience. The person who is well developed in this dimension recognizes the benefits of study, work and play and balances them effectively.

SOCIAL: The SOCIAL dimension involves two task areas: *Friendships and Intimacy*. The friendship task includes a variety of situations from meeting strangers comfortably to developing a social network that is fun and supportive. It includes the ability to be spontaneous and warm in social interactions. Development in this dimension involves respecting the rights of others. The intimacy task involves deeper level relationships where trust and loyalty are important qualities. In social intimacy there is respect for the need to be alone or be with a crowd. It involves communication without speaking. While intimacy strives for harmony in relationships, it recognizes that disagreements are inevitable and need not disrupt friendships.

PHYSICAL: The PHYSICAL dimension involves three task areas: *Nutrition, Exercise and Rest, and Health Care*. The nutrition task focuses on food knowledge and behavior that is enjoyable and reduces the risk of disease. It is also concerned with avoiding the dangers of tobacco, alcohol, and substance abuse. Balancing rest and exercise are important factors in developing strength and endurance. Being physically healthy means that health care principles are practiced to ensure that the body is functioning at an optimum level. A consistently high level of physical energy is one indication of physical well-being.

EMOTIONAL: The EMOTIONAL dimension involves two task areas: *Expression of Feeling and Emotional Autonomy*. Emotional development begins with a self-evaluation regarding four emotions: fear (anxiety), anger (frustration), depression (sadness), and joy (celebration). The expression of feeling task involves sensitivity and skill in expressing these emotions appropriately. The task of emotional autonomy is a sense of confidence that one does not need continual reassurance, affection and approval. There is also an increased willingness to risk loss of friends and status if there are compelling principles or interests. Dealing with stress and creating psychological energy are important aspects of emotional development.

SEXUAL: The SEXUAL dimension involves three task areas: *Appearance, Gender, and Sexuality*. This dimension is a key to identify development for young adults. The appearance task includes learning to improve physical appearance as a primary way to build self-acceptance and self-esteem. The gender task focuses on personal competence and potential. It replaces power-oriented assumptions with behavior that is supportive of the opposite sex in work and social settings. Mature sexuality looks beyond media images and stereotypes to include inner qualities and beauty. It also involves intimate relationships where behavior is responsible at both the emotional and physical level.

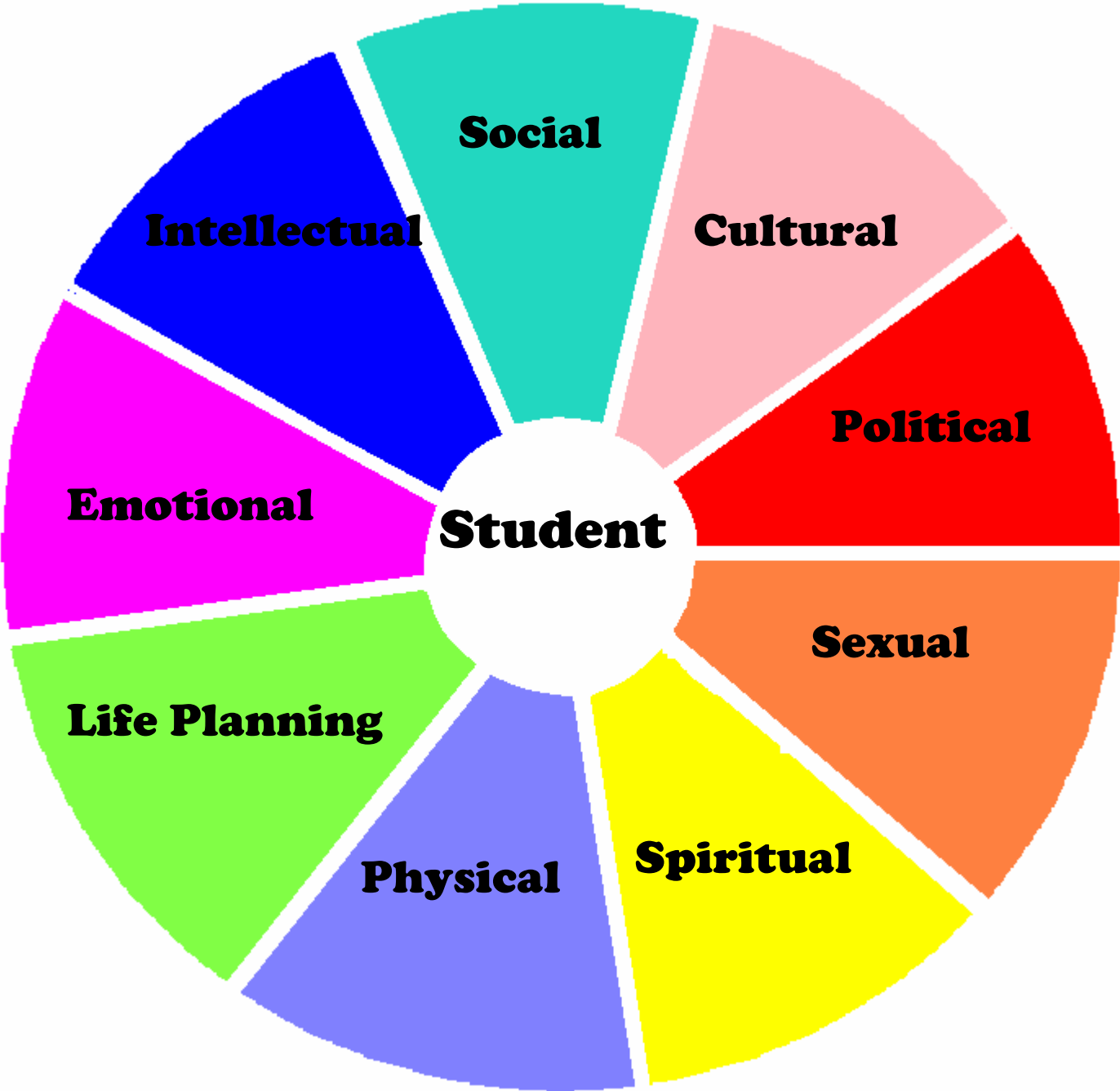
CULTURAL: The CULTURAL dimension involves two distinct but related task areas: *Aesthetics and Tolerance*. The aesthetic task includes enjoyment of a wide variety of experiences in the visual and performing arts. Involvement can be in appreciating creative works or performing in them. Development in this dimension results in an awareness of the unique relationship between the arts and cultures. The tolerance task requires the ability to suspend judgment while learning to understand differences of all types. Acceptance of individuals with a diversity of lifestyles, religion, and ethnic background is essential.

SPIRITUAL: The SPIRITUAL dimension involves two task areas: *Values Development and Behavioral Integrity*. The heart of this dimension is the search of “meaning in life.” Values development includes simple questions of right and wrong and complex questions of life and death. It involves moving from rules and traditions to a set of principles, which guide personal behavior and learning to make important ethical and moral decisions. Sorting out important basic values can take place in either a philosophical or religious setting. Behavioral integrity means that there is an increasing consistency between beliefs and action. Finding peace and joy in daily activities and a confident view of the future are hallmarks of this dimension.

POLITICAL: The POLITICAL dimension involves two task areas: *Learning the System and Leadership*. This dimension begins with a basic understanding of personal rights and responsibilities at both the local and national level. Learning the system requires a practical knowledge of legal and legislative systems. It also includes learning to successfully negotiate organizational values and procedures without becoming cynical. Leadership and service are the ultimate expression of being aware of current events and empowered enough to help solve problems in the community. Political development is recognition that interdependence is a necessary value in modern society.

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Student Development Model



Why a Wheel?

The wheel is chosen as a symbol to describe the student's development during their years at Indiana School for the Deaf. The wheel is an "action picture" and is dynamic as it moves forward and backward at varying speeds in response to a student's needs. If the wheel stops rolling so that one spoke is "stuck" on the ground for too long, problems will likely occur. The wheel must keep rolling, rolling, rolling...

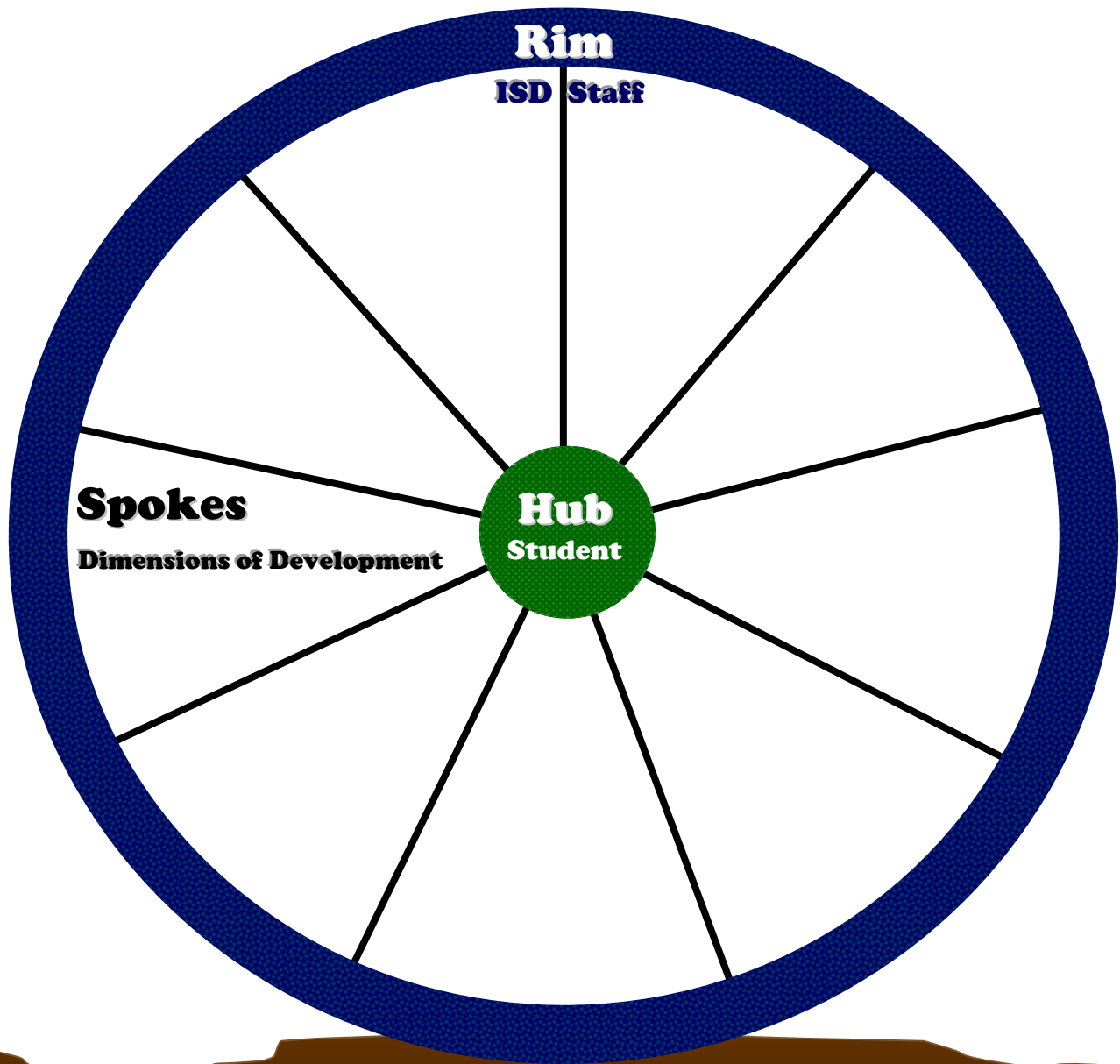
The **hub** of the wheel represents the student. The student is at the center. The student provides both the motivation and energy for movement. This is learning in action. The **spokes** represent areas of development. They give strength and balance to the wheel. The spoke that "touches" the ground is the area where the action is. It is where the "rubber meets the road." Sometimes friction occurs because this is where learning, or the lack of it, takes place. The **rim** represents the Student Life Staff, as well as any and all staff members at the Indiana School for the Deaf, working together.

The wheel, without a rim to meet the road, can still move, but not as effectively. The rim serves its function best when our staff becomes totally student-centered, rather than focusing only on academic discipline or administrative tasks. For example, when decisions are being made, as student oriented "rim" continually asks the question, "What impact will this have on the students?" We can see that a car wheel is an improvement over a wagon wheel, and so a rim that cushions many of the bumps in the road is important, and makes the ride smoother.

The **road** represents the programs and policies of the school. The road also represents the attitudes that ISD staff have about policies and programs in relation to the student. If the road is too hard or inflexible, the ride will be rough. If it is too soft, unstructured or disorganized, the wheel will spin with little forward movement. How the "wheel rides on the road" is very important in helping the student. It is therefore imperative that all parts of the wheel be working well to create a student-centered learning environment. We are responsible to help students take education and leadership development seriously. Give it all you've got. Get on a roll!!

Adapted and written by Debra K. Fetzer, April 1994

Pictorial Philosophy of Student Development



Road
Policies and Programs