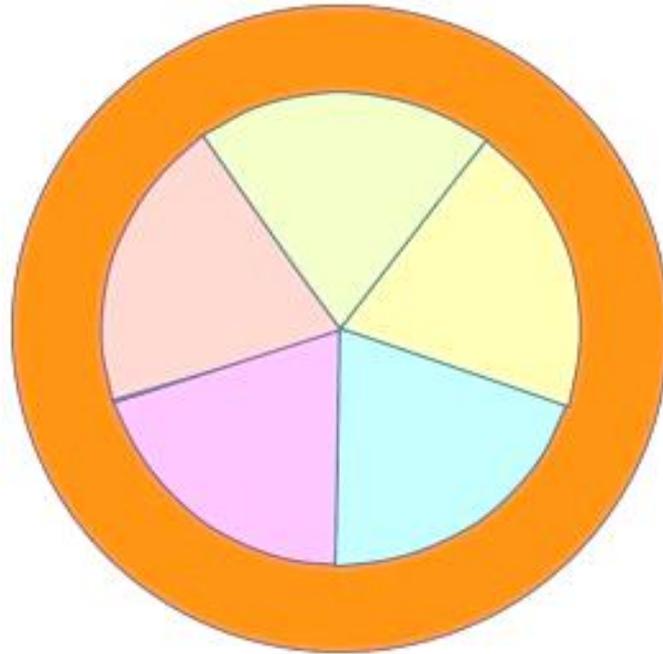# Learning Culture as a Strategy for Student Success
Core Praxis Model for a Learning Culture

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Institutional Agents: Characteristics

- Share common ground with students

- Provide holistic support for students

- Humanize educational experience

- Provide proactive support

Reference: Delineating the Ways that Key Institutional Agents Provide Racial Minority Students with Access to Social Capital in College (Museus and Neville, 2012).

MESA: "Ferrari" of STEM Programs

www.youtube.com/watch?v=VK8FQmVIHWQ

Background
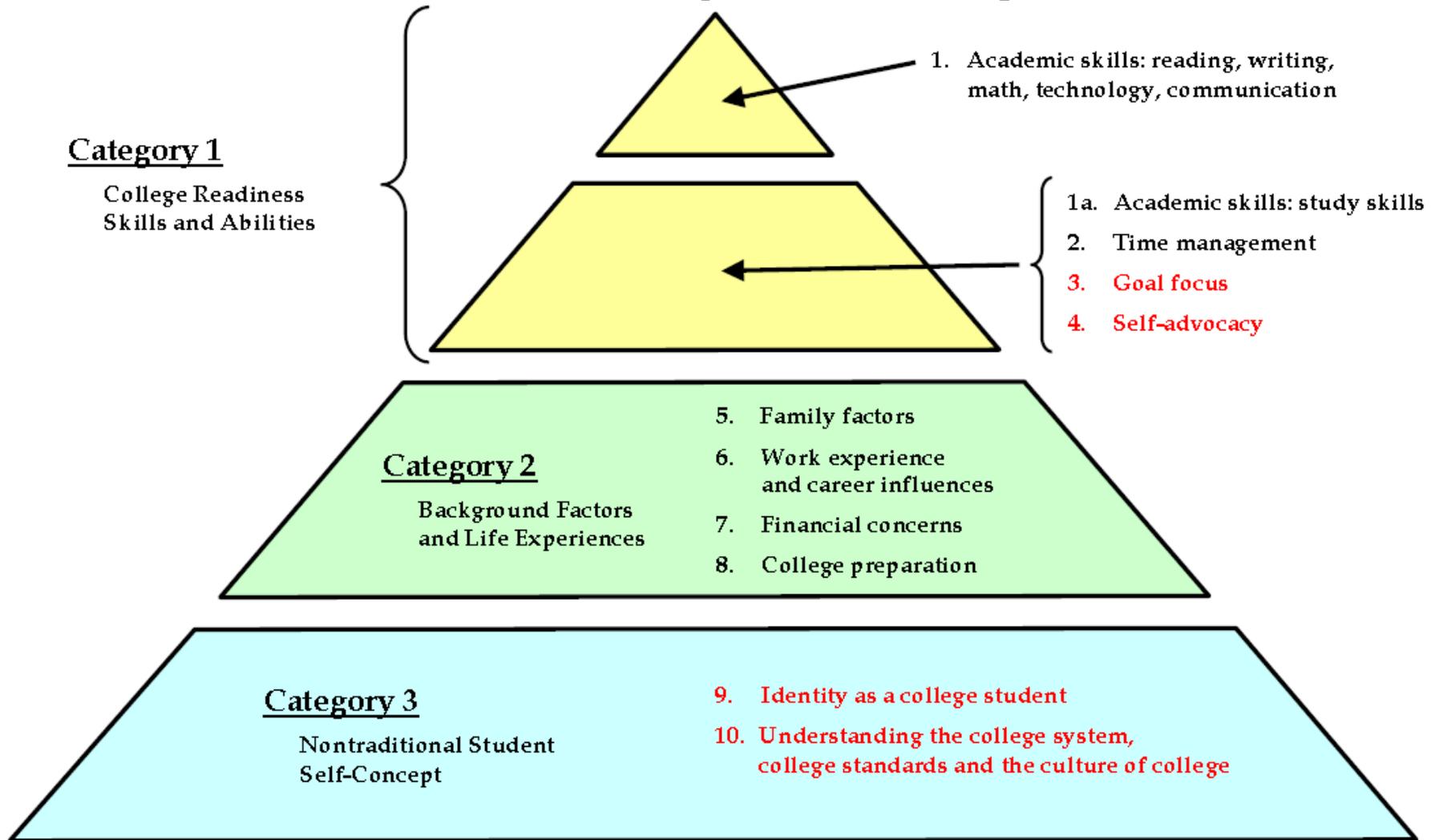
STEM Interventions

- Academic support & social integration

- Professional development activities

- Mentoring

- Summer programs

- Research experiences

Defining College Readiness from the Inside Out: First-Generation College Student Perspectives*

1. Academic skills: reading, writing, math, technology, communication

Category 1

College Readiness Skills and Abilities

1a. Academic skills: study skills
2. Time management
3. Goal focus
4. Self-advocacy

Category 2

Background Factors and Life Experiences

5. Family factors
6. Work experience and career influences
7. Financial concerns
8. College preparation

Category 3

Nontraditional Student Self-Concept

9. Identity as a college student
10. Understanding the college system, college standards and the culture of college

What should be the scope of "early assessment"?

Commonalities & Differences

Military Culture

Learning Culture

CULTURAL ICEBERG*

SURFACE CULTURE

Food
Fashion
Language
Gestures
Art • Games • Music

Norms • Beliefs
Rules • Attitudes
Opinions • Taboos
EXPECTATIONS
World Views
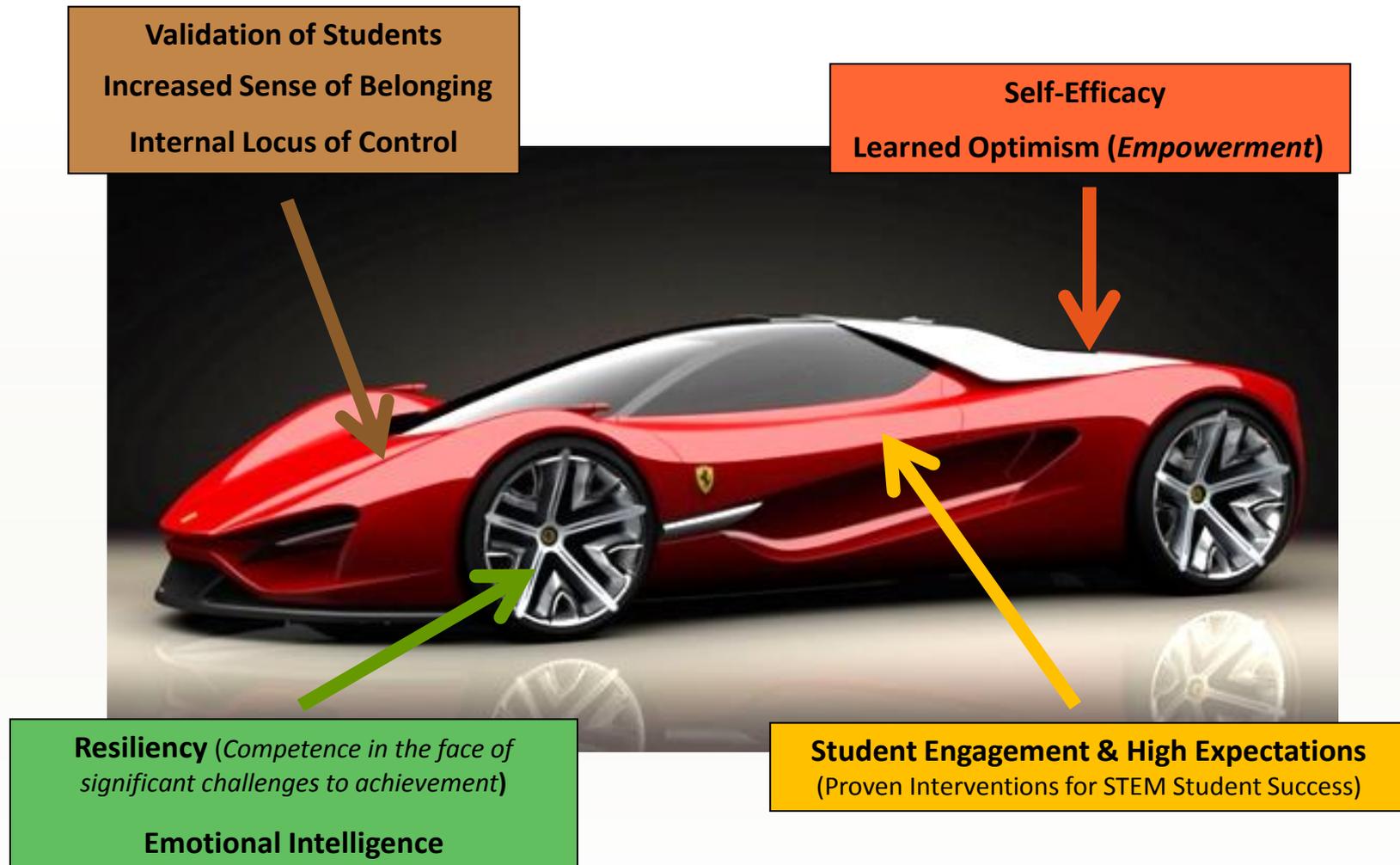
DEEP CULTURE
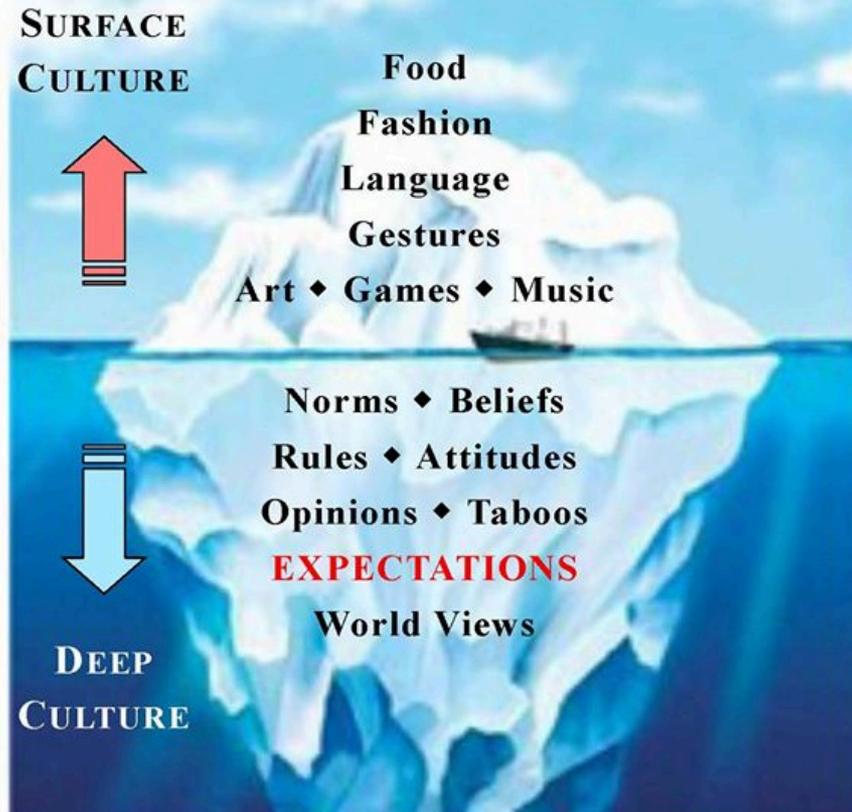
How does this apply to the *Learning Culture*?

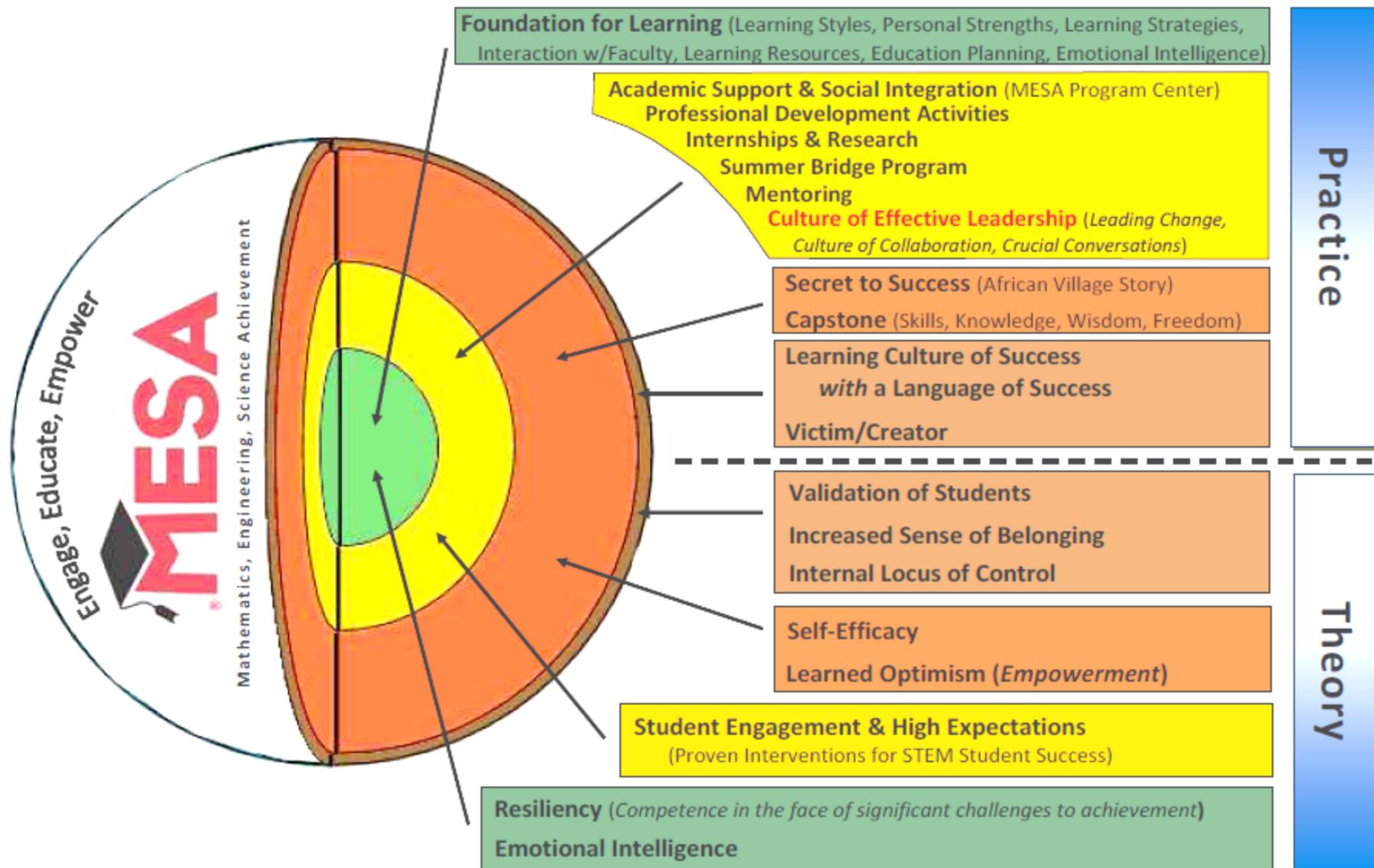*What Learning Culture exists in classrooms, academic programs or support services?*

- *Is the Learning Culture **validating of students**, does it promote an **increased sense of belonging**, and does it facilitate **student engagement and expectations**?*
- *Is the Learning Culture explicit & clear to all OR implied & unknown to many?*
- *Is the Learning Culture supported with positive, proactive language?*

*Adapted from Downing, Skip (2013). On Course: Strategies for Creating Success in College and in Life (7th Ed.)

Concept Vehicle: *Diversity & Inclusion*

Validation of Students

Increased Sense of Belonging

Internal Locus of Control

Self-Efficacy

Learned Optimism (*Empowerment*)

Resiliency (*Competence in the face of significant challenges to achievement*)

Emotional Intelligence

Student Engagement & High Expectations
(Proven Interventions for STEM Student Success)

MESA Culture of Success: *A Move Towards Praxis*

A Model for the Inner Core of a Learning Culture of Success

Engage, Educate, Empower

Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement

MESA

Practice

Foundation for Learning (Learning Styles, Personal Strengths, Learning Strategies, Interaction w/Faculty, Learning Resources, Education Planning, Emotional Intelligence)

Academic Support & Social Integration (MESA Program Center)
Professional Development Activities
Internships & Research
Summer Bridge Program
Mentoring
Culture of Effective Leadership (*Leading Change, Culture of Collaboration, Crucial Conversations*)

Secret to Success (African Village Story)

Capstone (Skills, Knowledge, Wisdom, Freedom)

Learning Culture of Success
    with a Language of Success

Victim/Creator

Theory

Validation of Students

Increased Sense of Belonging

Internal Locus of Control

Self-Efficacy

Learned Optimism (*Empowerment*)

Student Engagement & High Expectations
(Proven Interventions for STEM Student Success)

Resiliency (*Competence in the face of significant challenges to achievement*)

Emotional Intelligence

Core Praxis Model for a Learning Culture

* Developed by Rafael D. Alvarez, San Diego City College MESA Program Director (2014)

Element 1: Learning Culture *with a language of success*

Key:

- A learning culture cannot be implied, it must be **explicit** and clearly communicated initially, often and in varied modalities.

- A learning culture also requires the mindful use of positive **language** to encourage personal and academic growth.

Related theory:

- Validation of students (Rendon, 1994)

- Increased sense of belonging (Hurtado & Carter, 1997)

- Student engagement & high expectations (Tinto, 1993)

Element 2: Commitment

Key:

While success is an expectation in a learning culture, student success must begin with personal ***commitment*** for achieving goals.

Related theory:
Internal locus of control (Gifford, et al., 2006)

Element 2: Commitment

Victims …
- **Blame** others
- **Complain**
- Make **excuses**
- Repeat **ineffective** behavior
- "*Have to*" do things
- **Pretend** their problems belong to others
- "*Try*"
- **Give up**

Creators …
+ Accept **responsibility**
+ Take **actions**
+ Seek **solutions**
+ Do something **new**
+ "*Choose to*" do things
+ **Own** their problems
+ **Commit** & follow through
+ **Take control** of their choices & their lives!

FAILURE
Victims **seldom** achieve goals

SUCCESS
Creators **often** achieve goals

Reference: Downing, Skip. On Course: Strategies for Creating Success in College and in Life

Element 3: Secret to Success

Key:

The ***secret to success*** must be common knowledge for all learners in a learning culture of success.

Related theory:
- Self-efficacy
  (Bandura, 1977 & 1986; Chemers, et al. 2001)
- Learned optimism/ Empowerment
  (Seligman, 1998)

Secret to Success
a.k.a. African Village Story

"When you find something in life that you want as much as you want to breathe, then you will find the secret to success!"

From Foundation to Early Alert

Element/Key	Related Theory
Element 4: Foundation for Learning The cornerstone of the learning culture is the **Foundation for Learning**. *Element 5*: Formula for Approaching the Learning The basic **formula for approaching the learning** must be understood and followed by all students in a learning culture. *Element 6*: Early Alert **Early Alert** is a strategy for handling challenges as soon as possible to increase academic success.	• Resiliency (Waxman, et al., 2002) • Emotional intelligence (Goldman, 1995; Parker, et al., 2005)

Engage, Educate, Empower: The MESA "Foundation for Learning"
True learning WILL happen with a strong foundation!

What is "learning"? *Learning* means "to gain new knowledge and skills" ◆ *Learning* is personal – it is affected by culture, experiences, career goals, likes and dislikes ◆ We learn naturally every day, and we learn best when we are actively engaged in the learning

What does it take for TRUE learning? *Learning* requires an awareness of what is needed for college readiness and success ◆ *Learning* requires an understanding and use of successful approaches, strategies, plans and personal strengths ◆ *Learning* requires support and tools for success

Below is the MESA "Foundation for Learning". *Learn it* ◆ *Own it* ◆ *Use it* ◆ Success is waiting for you!

How strong is YOUR foundation & what steps do YOU need to take?

Early Alert – ① Recognize, ② Seek solutions, ③ Implement change: *A strategy for student success!*

Learning Styles	MESA Story for Learning		Interaction with Faculty	Test Taking Strategies	Time Management Strategies	StrengthsQuest 5 Most Dominant Personal Strengths	Education Plan	Emotional Intelligence
	Approach to Learning Bullet Point Reading (BPR)	"Big Picture" Approach to Problem Solving						
(H)(W)	(B)(H)(P)	(B)(H)(P)	(H)	(B)(W)	(B)(W)	(H)	(H)	(H)

MESA Law
① *If you don't write it down, it didn't happen*   ② *Keep it simple*   ③ *Work smarter, not harder*
(H)

Pyramid Model
College Readiness: First Generation College Student Perspectives
① *College Readiness Skills & Abilities* ② *Background Factors & Life Experiences*   ③ *Non-traditional Student Self-Concept*
(C)(H)
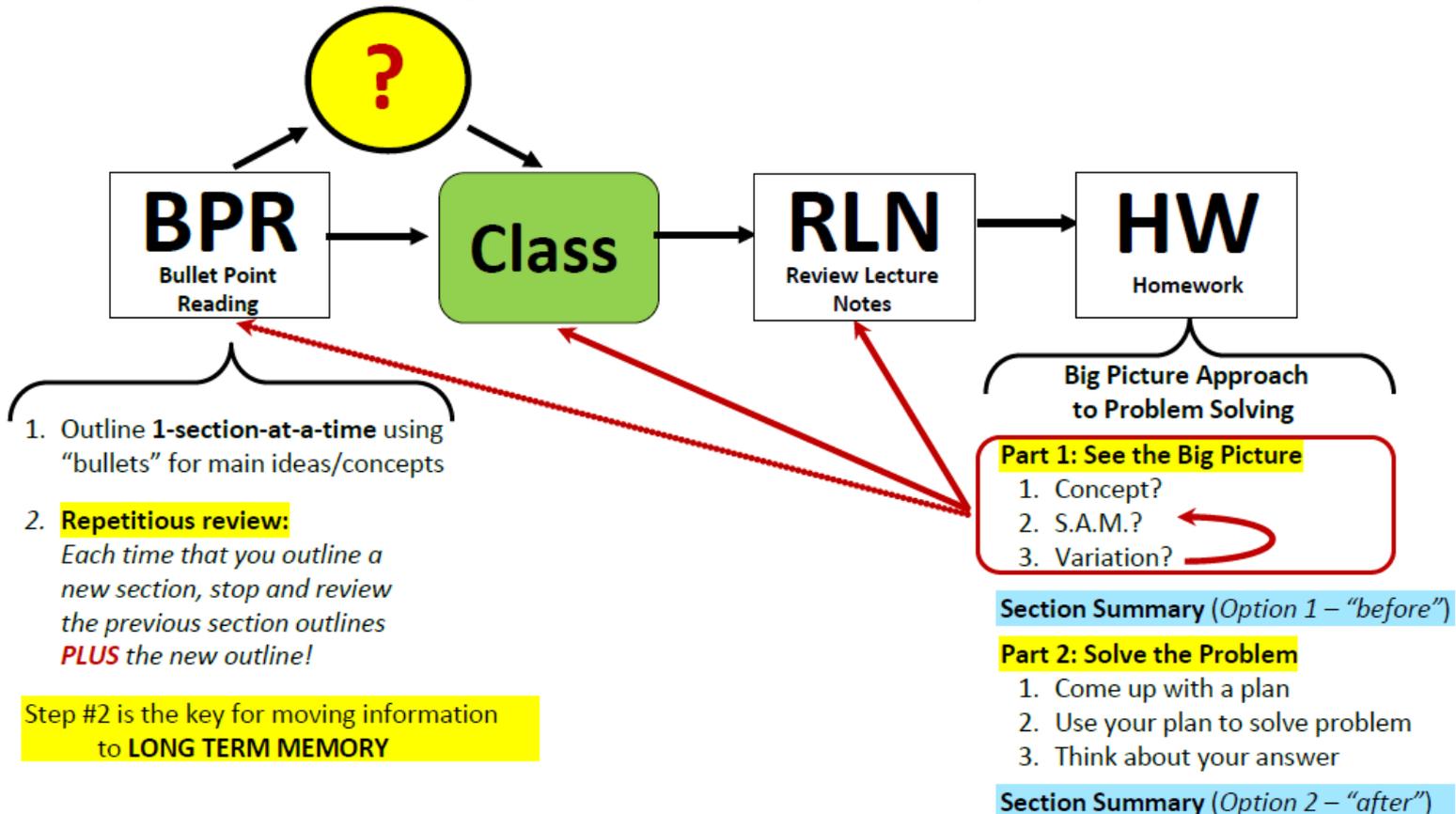
Available Resources: (B) **Bookmarker**   (C) **Course**   (H) **Handout**   (P) **PowerPoint**   (W) **Workshop**

San Diego City College MESA Program

The MESA Story for Learning

The key is to know how the "story" ends!

?

BPR
Bullet Point Reading

Class

RLN
Review Lecture Notes

HW
Homework

1. Outline **1-section-at-a-time** using "bullets" for main ideas/concepts

2. **Repetitious review:**
   Each time that you outline a new section, stop and review the previous section outlines **PLUS** *the new outline!*

Step #2 is the key for moving information to **LONG TERM MEMORY**

Big Picture Approach to Problem Solving

Part 1: See the Big Picture
1. Concept?
2. S.A.M.?
3. Variation?

Section Summary *(Option 1 – "before")*

Part 2: Solve the Problem
1. Come up with a plan
2. Use your plan to solve problem
3. Think about your answer

Section Summary *(Option 2 – "after")*

MESA *Creators* follow this story!

The Corner Man says ...

There is no crying in MESA, we're in this fight to win it!

MESA Creators: Testimonials

Luis
Garcia

Katya
Echazarreta

Nate
Wyley

MESA Creators: Testimonials

Luis Garcia

www.youtube.com/watch?v=17zFwTwewuI

Nate Wyley

www.youtube.com/watch?v=2aYTsPpv24Q

Katya Echazarreta

www.youtube.com/watch?v=HYCr38w6pBs

"Mr. Ferrari" Francis Rowe
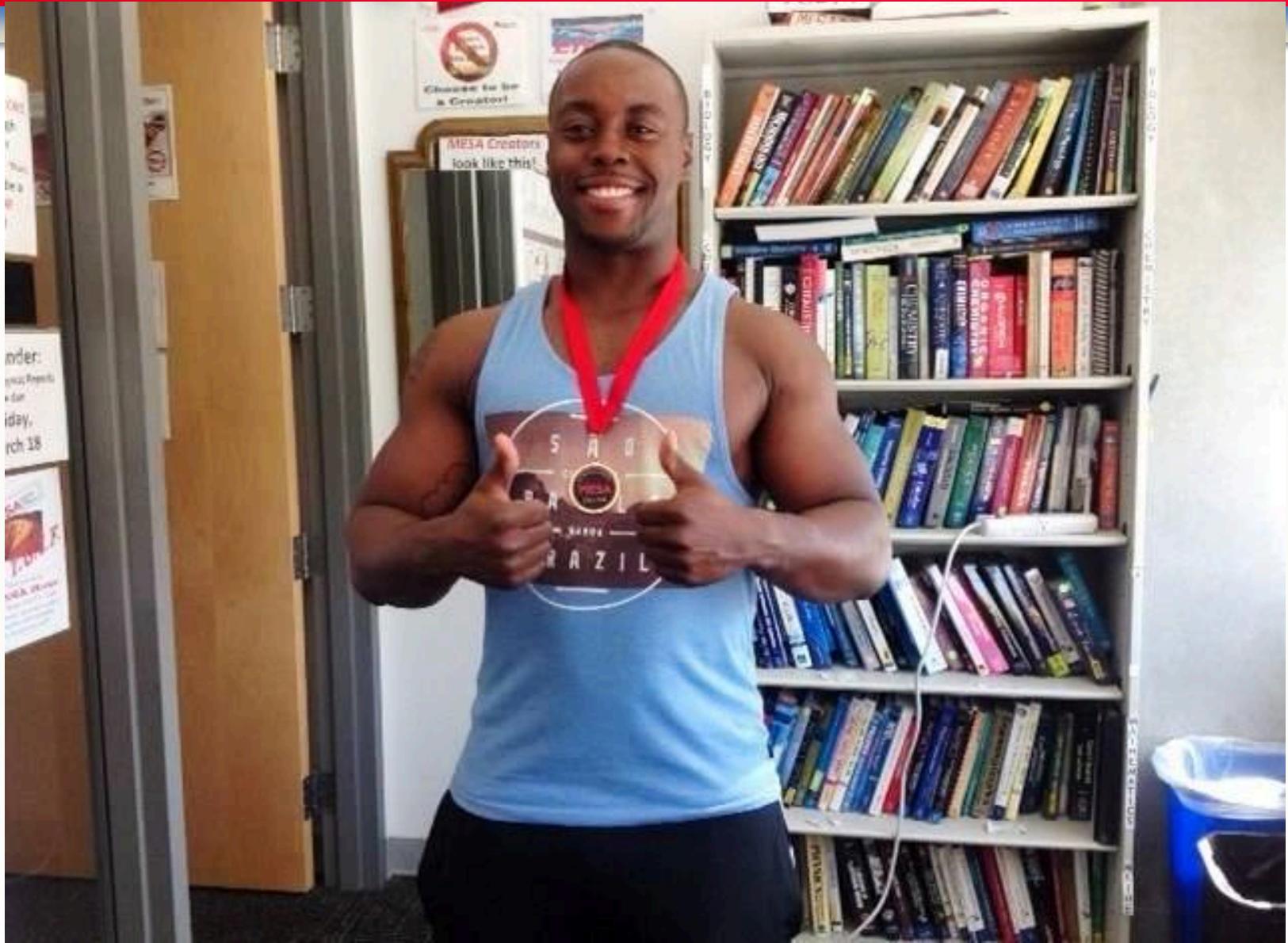
Questions?

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www.sdcity.edu/mesa
(See "Listing of MESA Handouts")

Thank you!

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