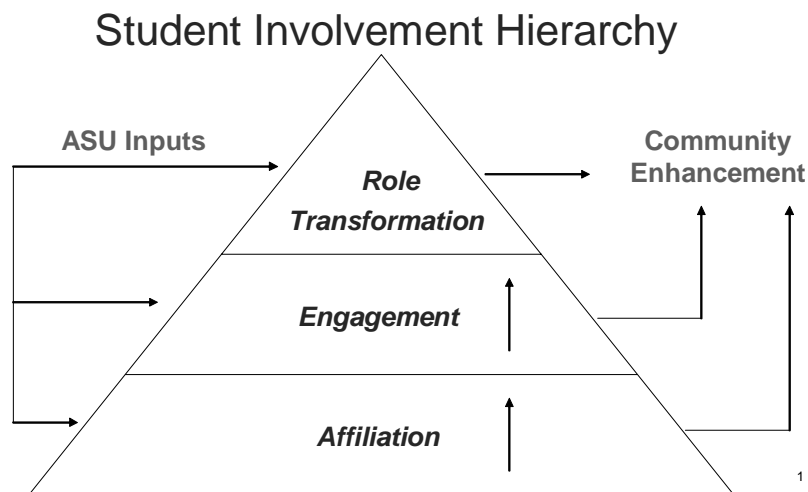


Osher Lifelong Learning Institute
at
Arizona State University

Figure 1 summarizes the vision we hold for a hierarchy of older learner involvement in the ASU OLLI. Through the Institute, ASU welcomes learners to participate in a way that best suits their life circumstances. Our approach is grounded in social optimization theories of aging (Baltes & Baltes, 1990; Nussbaum & Barringer, 2000). In short, these theories suggest that when appropriate living and learning environments are created (including university environments), older persons tap “latent” talents, selectively develop new areas of expertise, and develop new and rewarding relationships.

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At the level of *affiliation*, older students become part of the ASU community. They enjoy access to the university campuses and events, use the university libraries and computer resources, and attend lectures and presentations.

At the level of *engagement*, older students participate in short courses, small group discussions, film discussions, and educational field trips. These are lead by emeritus faculty, current ASU faculty, and talented peers.

Role transformation is the most intensive level in the hierarchy. These kinds of learning experiences encourage older learners to try new roles, learn about new cultures, or seek higher levels of learning through degree programs or certificates. Examples include Travel and Learn experiences, substitute teacher “boot camp”, or training to become a peer-teacher in one of the lifelong learning sites. These learners are offered opportunities to become leaders in their communities.