

epistemological beliefs, and learning" (Schommer-Aikins & Easter, 2006, p. 415), expanding the paradigm to include considerations of age, gender, and academic year position in order to achieve an academic-success predictor.

Application

Belenky et al.'s (1986) theory has relevance to classroom teaching and to student affairs settings. Advocating "connected teaching" (p. 214) to help women nurture their own voices, educators place emphasis on connection rather than separation, understanding and acceptance rather than assessment, and collaboration rather than debate. Connected teaching respects and supports first-hand experience as a source of knowledge and encourages student-initiated work patterns rather than imposing arbitrary requirements.

Belenky et al. (1986) suggested the role of teacher as midwife, an individual who assists students "in giving birth to their own ideas" (p. 217). Class discussions that encourage the expression of diverse opinions represent a means of implementing connected teaching. Connected teachers demonstrate belief and trust in their students' thinking. Ten years after the publication of *Women's Ways of Knowing*, Stanton (1996) reported that voice and connection were the most widely adapted of its concepts.

Utilizing principles of connected teaching in an undergraduate learning theory course taught at a women's college, one scholar included *Women's Ways of Knowing* as a text and used a discussion format, case studies, group presentations, a cooperative evaluation system, and a final paper rather than an exam (Ortman, 1993). Ursuline College, in an institution-wide application, introduced a core curriculum, the Ursuline Studies Program, based on the work of Belenky and her colleagues, which emphasized group discussions and collaborative learning in a freshman seminar (Gose, 1995).

Focusing on student affairs applications, development can be supported in any area of student affairs in which educators emphasize issues of connection when working with women (Forrest, 1988; Fried, 1988). One way to do so is by genuinely connecting with students and helping them produce their own ideas. In class or out, all students need to connect and build relationships helpful to their personal and professional development.

Nurturing both separate and connected knowing and their integration is best for intellectual development. Student affairs professionals should also be aware of the call for teaching developmentally oriented leadership (Belenky, 1996; Belenky, Bond, & Weinstock, 1997). Belenky et al. (1986) are cited as a helpful resource for providing effective mentoring to women (Egan, 1996). Finally, their work was also instrumental in the development of Asian American and Pacific Islander feminist epistemology (Yee, 2009).