

- preconventional, conventional, and postconventional levels (as a whole known as the justice orientation) and what the student's decisions might look like at each level (or stage).
2. How do theories of moral development differ from those of psychosocial development? How might intersections of knowledge in each area inform student affairs practice?
 3. Rest's neo-Kohlbergian approach to moral development is based on Kohlberg's moral theory but differs in significant ways. Describe the differences.
 4. Gilligan noted that women's decision-making processes appeared different from men's. Identify another student you know who is facing a moral dilemma right now. Using Gilligan's theory as a model, describe how this student might decide, using a care orientation.
 5. Create a table or diagram that compares and contrasts the similarities and differences between decision-making that focuses on care and decision-making that focuses on justice orientations. Please address how each relates to gender.
 6. Overall, when thinking about college students' moral development, describe a metaphor for the concept and draw an illustration of its meaning to you.
 7. Compare and contrast the three theories presented in this chapter (including Kohlberg, Rest, and Gilligan) with the corresponding theories presented in the preceding epistemological and intellectual development chapter (including Perry; Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule; and Kitchener and King).
 8. Think about moral development through a lens of privilege and oppression. Provide examples of how issues related to moral development in college can affect populations minoritized by their race, gender, sexuality, religion, disability, and class.



CHAPTER SIXTEEN

DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-AUTHORSHIP

Since the early 2000s, the concept of self-authorship has become a central theory in understanding college students' ability to make meaning of the world and their lives in it. Self-authorship theory is holistic in that it includes epistemological/cognitive, interpersonal/relational, and intrapersonal/psychosocial dimensions of development. The processes related to developing the ability to self-author—to write one's own life—relate well to prevailing philosophies of higher education, including the cultivation of critical thinking and intercultural understanding.

This chapter describes the concept of self-authorship, "the internal capacity to define one's beliefs, identity, and social relations" (Baxter Magolda, 2008, p. 269). This concept aligns with theories in the "constructivist-developmental" category, which focuses on "the growth or transformation" of ways people "construct meaning" (Kegan, 1994, p. 199) regarding their life experiences. We present and examine two important constructive-developmental theories—those of Robert Kegan and Marcia Baxter Magolda.

Kegan's Theory of the Evolution of Consciousness

Kegan introduced his theory of self-evolution in his 1982 book *The Evolving Self*. In his later book *In Over Our Heads: The Mental Demands of Modern Life* (1994), he presented a revised version of his theory and further discussion of the implications of his work for society. Kegan (1982) noted that Piaget's

work served as inspiration for his own. Pointing out that Piaget had attended very little to emotion or to the process and experience of development, Kegan sought to address these omissions, drawing on the work of object-relation theorists such as Kernberg (1966), who explored how interpretations of self-other relationships evolved over time, and psychosocial theorists, especially Erikson (see Chapter Thirteen). Kegan especially valued "building strong intellectual bridges" (Scharmer, 2000, n.p.) to educational practice, leadership, and organizational development.

Kegan's Theory

The focus of Kegan's (1994) theory is the "evolution of consciousness, the personal unfolding of ways of organizing experience that are not simply replaced as we grow but subsumed into more complex systems of mind" (p. 9). Growth involves movement through five progressively more complex ways of knowing, which Kegan referred to as stages of development in 1982, orders of consciousness in 1994, and forms of mind in 2000. The process of growth involves an evolution of meaning, marked by continual shifts from periods of stability to periods of instability, leading to ongoing reconstruction relationships between persons and their environments (Kegan, 1982). Each succeeding order consists of cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal components.

Kegan (1982, 1994) saw the process of development as an effort to resolve the tension between a desire for differentiation and an equally powerful desire to be immersed in one's surroundings (Kegan, 1994). The evolutionary truces evident at each developmental stage of Kegan's (1982) model are "temporary solution[s] to the lifelong tension between the yearnings for inclusion and distinctness" (p. 107). While initially stating that his ways of knowing alternated between favoring autonomy at one stage and favoring embeddedness at the next (Kegan, 1982), he later modified his view, stating that "each order of consciousness can favor either of the two fundamental longings" (Kegan, 1994, p. 221) and that neither position is better than the other. He suggested that increased differentiation could mean finding new ways to stay connected. Paradoxically, as people make meaning in a more differentiated way, they also have the capacity to become closer to others.

Kegan (1982) was clear that the process of growth could be painful, since it involves changing one's way of functioning in the world. Borrowing from Winnicott (1965), Kegan (1982) introduced the idea of the "holding environment" (p. 116) to assist individuals with these changes. The holding environment has two functions: supporting individuals in their current

stage of development and encouraging movement to the next evolutionary truce. Kegan (1994) equated a holding environment to an "evolutionary bridge, a context for crossing over" (p. 43) from one order of consciousness to the next, more developed, order. Student affairs educators have numerous opportunities to create these holding environments in which college students can evolve.

Descriptions of Kegan's levels of consciousness follow. They have had different names in different iterations of his theory. We provide the numerical "orders" (similar to a stage or phase) used in the 1994 version as well as the names used for the later orders in the 2000 version. In addition to describing each order, we provide Kegan's (1982) suggestions regarding ways to challenge and support development to the next order.

Order 0. Kegan (1982) described newborn infants as "living in an objectless world, a world in which everything sensed is taken to be an extension of the infant" (p. 78). As a result, when the infant cannot see or experience something, it does not exist. By the time infants are 18 months old, they begin to recognize the existence of objects outside themselves, propelling them into the next stage. Parents must remain constant as the child pushes against them to determine where the boundaries are between its self and the environment.

Order 1. Children develop order 1 meaning making at about age two, when they realize they have control over their reflexes (Kegan, 1982) and become aware of objects in their environment as independent from themselves (Kegan, 1994). Their thinking tends to be "fantastic and illogical, their feelings impulsive and fluid, [and] their social-relating egocentric" (p. 29) in that they are attached to whatever or whoever is present at the moment. Parents should support their children's fantasies while challenging them to take responsibility for themselves and their feelings as they begin to perceive the world realistically and differentiate themselves from others while moving into order 2.

Order 2: Instrumental Mind. Individuals in order 2 are able to construct "durable categories"—classifications of objects, people, or ideas with specific characteristics (Kegan, 1994). As a result, their thinking becomes more logical and organized, their feelings are more enduring, and they relate to others as separate and unique beings. Kegan, Broderick, Drago-Severson, Helsing, Popp, and Portnow (2001) noted that at this time, "rules, sets of directions, and dualisms give shape and structure to one's daily activity" (pp. 4–5). In this order, individuals develop a sense of who they are and what they want. "Competition and compromise" (Kegan,

1982, p. 163) are characteristic themes of order 2 and are often enacted within peer group settings. Support at this stage requires confirmation of the person the child has become. Challenge to develop further involves encouragement to take into consideration the expectations, needs, and desires of others.

Order 3: Socialized Mind. Cross-categorical thinking—the ability to relate one durable category to another characterizes the third order of consciousness. In this order, thinking is more abstract, individuals are aware of their feelings and the internal processes associated with them, and they can make commitments to communities of people and ideas (Kegan, 1994). Kegan and his colleagues (2001) noted that in this order of consciousness, “other people are experienced ... as sources of internal validation, orientation, or authority” (p. 5). Because acceptance by others is crucial in this order, individuals pay particular attention to how others perceive them. Support is found in mutually rewarding relationships and shared experiences, while challenge takes the form of resisting codependence and encouraging individuals to make their own decisions and establish independent lives.

Order 4: Self-Authoring Mind. Cross-categorical constructing—the ability to generalize across abstractions, which could also be labeled systems thinking—emerges in order 4 (Kegan, 1994). In this order, self-authorship is the focus. Individuals “have the capacity to take responsibility for and ownership of their internal authority” (Kegan et al., 2001, p. 5) and establish their own sets of values and ideologies (Kegan, 1994). Relationships become a *part* of one’s world rather than the reason for one’s existence. Support at this stage is evident in acknowledgment of the individual’s independence and self-regulation. Significant others who refuse to accept relationships that are not intimate and mutually rewarding encourage individuals to develop further.

Order 5: Self-Transforming Mind. In this order of consciousness, which Kegan (1994) asserted is infrequently reached and never reached before the age of 40, individuals see beyond themselves, others, and systems of which they are a part to form an understanding of how all people and systems interconnect (Kegan, 2000). They recognize their “commonalities and interdependence with others” (Kegan, 1982, p. 239). Relationships can be truly intimate in this order, with nurturance and affiliation as its key characteristics. Kegan (1982) concluded that only rarely do work environments and long-lasting adult intimate partnerships provide these conditions.

The Demands of Modern Life

Kegan (1982) argued that modern life, particularly within the contexts of the family and the work environment, places enormous stress on individuals. Kegan’s (1994) book, *In Over Our Heads*, focused on the demands of modern society, or the “hidden curriculum” (p. 9). He argued that expectations of adult life—parenting, partnering, and working—require fourth order meaning making, and many adults have not attained that level.

Kegan (1994) hypothesized that postmodern life requires an ever more complex way of knowing, that of the fifth order, which very few people ever reach. He suggested that rather than demanding that people think in a way that is impossible, they would benefit more from support to help them reach self-authorship, the necessary first step on the path to fifth order meaning making. Kegan wrote about the demands of “modern life” before the Internet introduced manifold changes to how individuals access, process, and synthesize information as well as the conduct of interpersonal relationships and deployment of self and identity in face-to-face and online settings. These new ways of being, knowing, and relating in a digital society amplify the need for helping individuals achieve more complex orders of consciousness.

Research

Several studies have built on Kegan’s theory. A four-year longitudinal study of 22 adults conducted by Kegan and colleagues using the subject-object interview (Lahey et al., 1988) revealed that “at any given moment, around one-half to two-thirds of the adult population appears not to have fully reached the fourth order of consciousness” (Kegan, 1994, pp. 188, 191). Drawing on 13 other studies conducted mainly by his doctoral students, Kegan (1994) reported that in the composite sample of 282 adults, 59% had not reached the fourth order. Findings from a longitudinal study of identity development of West Point cadets using Kegan’s (1982, 1994) theory as a framework indicated that for most military cadets the challenge of college is moving from self-interest (order 2) to thinking in terms of being part of a community (order 3), a goal that must be accomplished before self-authorship can be considered (Lewis, Forsythe, Sweeney, Bartone, Bullis, & Snook, 2005).

In a study of adult basic education learners in their twenties—who were mostly non-White, non-native English-speaking, lower-income immigrants—participants interpreted and negotiated learning differently depending on their developmental level (Kegan et al., 2001). Students in the cohort played an important role as a holding environment in the learning

process by challenging and supporting each other, partially because of the different ways of knowing they exhibited.

Application

Much of Kegan's 1994 book is devoted to understanding and addressing the demands of modern life using his theory as a framework. With regard to the college learning environment, Kegan (1994) suggested that while most students approach learning from an order 3 perspective, teaching is generally approached through the lens of order 4, creating a developmental mismatch. For instance, instructors expect students to be self-reflective, engaged, independent, self-directed, critical thinkers—skills that become evident only in order 4. Rather than assuming and treating students as if they are already self-authoring, Kegan (1994) stressed the importance of building a "consciousness bridge" (p. 278) between the point at which the student enters the classroom (generally order 3) and the level at which they are expected to perform in the classroom (order 4), noting that "the bridge builder must have an equal respect for both ends, creating a firm foundation on both sides of the chasm students will traverse" (p. 278).

Ignelzi (2000) used Kegan's concepts to discuss applications in traditional undergraduate classrooms. Noting that most undergraduate students use order 3 meaning-making and therefore look to their instructors and classmates to determine how they should think and the conclusions they should draw about the material being examined, Ignelzi (2000) suggested the following strategies for encouraging both learning and development: (1) value and support students' current ways of thinking, (2) provide structure and guidance in taking on unfamiliar tasks, (3) encourage students to learn from each other by working together in groups, and (4) acknowledge and reinforce students' successes in moving to a self-authored perspective while recognizing the challenges that are required to do so. These suggestions reflect Kegan's (1982) idea of an effective holding environment.

To assist students in moving from order 2 to order 3, Love and Guthrie (1999) raised the importance of letting students know what behaviors are expected of them and what their responsibilities are, working with them to understand how others' perspectives compare to their own and when the needs of others take priority, and encouraging self-reflection. The transition from order 3 to order 4 is often precipitated by a failed relationship around which individuals have constructed their life's meaning and the resulting need to develop independent goals and values. Love and Guthrie encouraged educators to recognize the pain associated with this transition and support

students through the process by recognizing them as independent people, acknowledging their achievements, and encouraging them to get involved in activities where their talents will be valued.

Kegan's concept of coaching can easily translate into student affairs practice (Love & Guthrie, 1999). In the challenging college environment, student affairs staff can act as "sympathetic coaches" (p. 74), providing needed support for students to be who they are while also encouraging them to move beyond their current way of making meaning. Coaching can take the form of programs that keep students' developmental levels in mind and provide appropriate structure and communication in ways students understand, while also encouraging them to try new approaches to ideas.

King and Baxter Magolda (2005) introduced a multidimensional model focusing on the development of intercultural maturity as a pathway to self-authorship, which they described as consisting of a "range of attributes, including understanding (the cognitive dimension), sensitivity to others (the interpersonal dimension), and a sense of oneself that enables one to listen to and learn from others (the intrapersonal dimension)" (p. 574). They identified three intertwined, mutually influencing levels of development in each dimension. Educators will be more effective in promoting intercultural maturity if all the dimensions of development are considered and if the process is viewed as one that evolves over time, given appropriate experiences (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005).

Baxter Magolda's Self-Authorship Theory

Marcia Baxter Magolda's early research focused on the epistemological development of 101 Miami University students during the college years. She then followed a subset of 39 of these students during their twenties, and 30 of the 39 into their thirties. From this study she developed a model of epistemological reflection that was a precursor to her theory of self-authorship. She then presented a model of self-authorship development (Baxter Magolda, 2001) that contains at its core the movement from uncritically following external formulas to a crossroads that leads to self-authorship (Baxter Magolda, 2014). With Patricia King and other colleagues, Baxter Magolda has extended and explored self-authorship theory in the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education (the Wabash study), providing a substantial empirical base for understanding this critical developmental task (see King, Baxter Magolda, Barber, Brown, & Lindsay, 2009). A host of additional studies, which we describe later in the chapter, further elaborate on the theory of self-authorship with

diverse student samples and research methods. In this section we describe the model of epistemological reflection and Baxter Magolda's turn toward self-authorship as a central concept in student development theory.

Epistemological Reflection

Informed by both her own research and the work of Belenky et al. (1986) that we discussed in Chapter Fourteen, Marcia Baxter Magolda was struck by both the similarities and the differences that emerged from Perry's (1968) work on men's development and Belenky et al.'s work on women's development. Kitchener and King's (1981, 1990) research involving both men and women also influenced Baxter Magolda because of the differing conception of the nature of knowledge that emerged. However, because gender was not at the core of Kitchener and King's (1981, 1990) research, Baxter Magolda believed she had identified an important gap in the existing research—the need to address gender in a study of cognitive development that would include both men and women. From this realization came the longitudinal study that served as a basis for the most extensive treatment of Baxter Magolda's early work, *Knowing and Reasoning in College: Gender-Related Patterns in Students' Intellectual Development* (1992). As the longitudinal study progressed it became the empirical base for her self-authorship theory.

Baxter Magolda (1992) presented the results of a five-year longitudinal study of 101 students at Miami University. This volume reflects interviews begun in 1986, during the students' first year, and continuing annually through their first year after graduation. Baxter Magolda (1992) reported that the random sample of entering students included 51 women and 50 men. Ninety-eight of the 101 were white. Seventy students participated for the entire five-year period, including the three students of color.

Baxter Magolda (1992) identified six guiding assumptions underlying her model: (1) ways of knowing and patterns within them are socially constructed; (2) ways of knowing can best be examined using naturalistic inquiry; (3) students' use of reasoning patterns is fluid; (4) patterns are related to, but not dictated by, gender; (5) student stories are context-bound; and (6) ways of knowing appear as "patterns," a term suggested by Frye (1990) to "make sense of experience but stop short of characterizing it in static and generalizable ways" (p. 17).

The epistemological reflection model that resulted from Baxter Magolda's (1992) research contains four stages, with gender-related patterns reflected in the first three. Baxter Magolda (2004a) defined epistemological reflection as "assumptions about the nature, limits, and certainty of knowledge" (p. 31). In

the first stage, *absolute knowing*, students view knowledge as certain. They view instructors as authorities with the answers, and the purpose of evaluation is to reproduce what one has learned so that the instructor can determine its accuracy. Baxter Magolda found two patterns, *receiving knowledge* and *mastering knowledge*, within this stage.

More women used receiving knowledge, a more private approach, in comparison to men who used mastering knowledge, a more public approach. Receiving knowledge involves "minimal interaction with instructors, an emphasis on comfort in the learning environment, relationships with peers, and ample opportunities to demonstrate knowledge" (Baxter Magolda, 1992, p. 82). While receiving knowers do have more independent perspectives, they do not always express them. Mastering knowledge is characterized by a verbal approach to learning, a willingness to be critical of instructors, and an expectation that interactions with peers and instructors will lead to the mastery of knowledge. Mastery knowers rely on logic and demonstrate a competitive style.

The second stage, *transitional knowing*, involves an acceptance that some knowledge is uncertain. A realization that authorities are not all-knowing is a turning point from absolute knowing. Transitional knowers expect instructors to go beyond merely supplying information to facilitate an understanding and application of knowledge. A utilitarian perspective motivates students, with investment in learning determined by perceived future usefulness of the information. Evaluation that focuses on understanding is endorsed over that which deals only with acquisition. *Interpersonal knowing* and *impersonal knowing* are the two patterns within this stage.

Interpersonal knowing, used more by women than by men, is characterized by interaction with peers to gather and share ideas, valuing of rapport with instructors to facilitate self-expression, a preference for evaluation geared to individual differences, and resolving uncertainty by employing personal judgment. Impersonal knowing, used more by men than by women, involves a desire to be forced to think, a preference for debate as a vehicle for sharing views, an endorsement of evaluation that is fair and practical, and the use of logic and research to resolve uncertainty.

In *independent knowing*, the third stage, students view knowledge as mostly uncertain. The instructor role that students prefer shifts to providing the context for knowledge exploration. Students value instructors who promote independent thinking and the exchange of opinions. Independent knowers believe evaluation should reward their thinking and not penalize views that diverge from those presented by instructors or in textbooks. This stage includes *interindividual* and *individual* patterns.

Interindividual knowing, used more by women, places value on one's own ideas as well as the ideas of others. Individual knowing, used more by men, also values interchange with peers and instructors, but more attention is given to the individual's own thinking. Baxter Magolda (1992) noted that for individual knowers, sometimes listening to others involves an element of struggle. Although interindividual knowers lean toward connection and individual learners toward separation, Baxter Magolda (1992) emphasized that they are moving closer together.

Contextual knowing, the final stage, reflects a convergence of previous gender-related patterns. Demonstrated only rarely among undergraduate students, contextual knowing involves the belief that the legitimacy of knowledge claims is determined contextually. While the individual still constructs a point of view, the perspective now requires supporting evidence. The role of the instructor now involves the creation of a learning environment that endorses contextual applications of knowledge, discussions that include evaluation of perspectives, and opportunities for mutual critiques by students and instructor. Students appreciate evaluations that measure competence contextually and permit mutual involvement of instructor and student. Because only 12% of the post-graduation interviews contained indications of contextual knowing, Baxter Magolda (1992) considered the data to be insufficient to explore gender patterns. Baxter Magolda (1995) later indicated, in the post-college phase of her study, that the relational and impersonal patterns of knowing that characterized the preceding stages become integrated in the contextual knowing stage.

Baxter Magolda (1992) found more similarities than differences between men's and women's ways of knowing. In addition, she stressed that variability exists among members of a particular gender. Therefore patterns are *related to, but not dictated by, gender*.

In regard to the evolution of ways of knowing, Baxter Magolda (1992) found that absolute knowing was most prevalent in the first year of college (68%). Among sophomores, 53% were transitional knowers. Transitional knowing was also the most prevalent mode among both juniors (83%) and seniors (80%). Independent knowing was most represented in the year following graduation (57%).

Epistemological reflection upholds one of the three dimensions of the more holistic self-authorship theory, which also includes interpersonal/relational and intrapersonal/identity dimensions. These dimensions appear in the model of epistemological reflection in less prominent forms, and particularly in relation to the role of others in individual sense-making and beliefs about sources of knowledge. As the longitudinal study continued

past the first year in college, these dimensions became more apparent to Baxter Magolda, and she connected her work with Kegan's orders of consciousness to focus on the development of self-authorship.

Self-Authorship

After the study of 101 participants during their college years, 39 continued to participate in the study after graduation into their twenties and 30 continued into their thirties. Participants told Baxter Magolda that learning was not an appropriate framework to discuss their post-college development and suggested that they discuss their overall experience instead (Baxter Magolda, 2004a). In these interviews, Baxter Magolda (1998b, 1999a, 2001, 2004a, 2008) found evidence that her participants' epistemological development was intertwined with the development of their sense of self and relationships with others. Based on her research involving young adults in their twenties, Baxter Magolda (1998b, 1999a, 1999c, 2001) extended her theory to explain their development at this point in their lives—development that centered on achieving self-authorship. Drawing on Kegan's (1994) theory, Baxter Magolda (2008) defined self-authorship as "the internal capacity to define one's beliefs, identity, and social relations" (p. 269). Baxter Magolda (2008) explored the developmental process her participants experienced in their thirties, a time in which self-authorship becomes solidified.

Self-authorship theory undergirds Baxter Magolda's collaboration with colleagues on the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education. In the Wabash study, annual interviews with 228 students at six campuses provided a substantial empirical foundation for verifying and deepening self-authorship theory (see Baxter Magolda & King, 2012; Baxter Magolda, King, Taylor, & Wakefield, 2012). Along with the relative explosion of empirical studies of self-authorship development among diverse participant samples, which we describe later in this chapter, the Wabash study led Baxter Magolda et al. (2012) to conclude with assurance that "development evolves from relying primarily on external sources for meaning making, through relying on a mix of external and internal sources (what Baxter Magolda called the Crossroads), to relying primarily on internally generated meaning making" (p. 420).

Based on evidence from the longitudinal sample from her original study, Baxter Magolda (2001) highlighted a number of developmental tasks and challenges for young adults in their twenties, including values exploration, making sense of information gained about the world in previous years, determining the path one will take, and taking steps along that path. During this time, three major questions take precedence: "How do I know?" "Who am I?" and "How

do I want to construct relationships with others?" (p. 15). The first question has to do with "the *epistemological* dimension of self-authorship—the evolution of assumptions about the nature, limits, and certainty of knowledge" (p. 15). The "Who am I?" question refers to the *intrapersonal* dimension—individuals' sense of who they are and what they believe. The relationship question reflects the *interpersonal* dimension—"how one perceives and constructs one's relationships with others" (p. 15). People soon learn that the answers to these questions are intertwined. They also learn that in a fast-paced and complex society with few clear formulas for success in career and relationships, a self-authoring perspective is key to being able to manage their own lives (Baxter Magolda, 2001, 2008).

Unfortunately, mixed evidence suggests that for some students college does not create the conditions necessary for self-authorship to develop. Baxter Magolda (2001) indicated that students in her study were only anticipating self-authorship as they finished their degrees: "They left college with an initial awareness that they would have to make their own decisions, but without internal mechanisms to do so" (p. 36). Other scholars (for example, Jehangir, Williams, & Pete, 2011; Pizzolato, 2005, 2007; Pizzolato, Nguyen, Johnston, & Wang, 2012) have identified collegiate contexts that appear to promote the development of self-authorship for some students of color and for some students who are the first in their families to attend college. Baxter Magolda and colleagues in the Wabash study identified some "long strides on the journey to self-authorship" among undergraduates (Barber, King, & Baxter Magolda, 2013, p. 866; Baxter Magolda, King, Taylor, & Wakefield, 2012), demonstrating that in a larger sample with more institutional and individual diversity than the one in her foundational study, and under the right conditions, movement toward self-authorship may in fact occur more often during college than the results of the first study indicated.

The Path to Self-Authorship. Baxter Magolda (2001) identified four phases in the journey toward self-authorship involving movement from external to internal self-definition. As we describe here, cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal dimensions are associated with each of these phases.

Phase 1: Following Formulas In the first phase of the "journey toward self-authorship" (Baxter Magolda, 2001, p. 40), young adults follow the plans laid out for them by external authorities about what they should think and how they should accomplish their work, although they frame these formulas to sound like their own ideas. Likewise, they allow others to define who they are. Gaining approval of others is a critical aspect of relationship-building. Sources

of external formulas include societal expectations, adults with whom they interact, and peers. Parents, significant others, and mentors are particularly influential. Baxter Magolda (1998b) equated this phase with the third order in Kegan's (1994) theory. Careers and personal lives were the main contexts in which individuals carried out these formulas. For example, decisions about careers and jobs "revolved around doing what one was supposed to do to be successful" (Baxter Magolda, 2001, p. 78), which often did not lead to meaningful work, since the formulas did not always reflect individuals' actual interests. In taking on adult roles, participants found it even more difficult to follow external formulas to satisfactory conclusions. Often formulas conflicted, such as "be in a relationship" and "devote yourself to your career." Not having a clear sense of self made it difficult to determine what to do, both personally and in relationships, and thus when one formula did not work out, other formulas were sought.

Phase 2: Crossroads As individuals progress along their journey, they discover that the plans they have followed do not necessarily work too well and that they need to establish new plans that better suit their needs and interests. They also become dissatisfied with how they have been defined by others and see the need to create their own sense of self. Individuals see that allowing the approval of others to dictate their relationships is limiting and that being more authentic would be preferable. In some cases, following external formulas leads to crisis, while in others the result is a general sense of unhappiness and lack of fulfillment. In each instance, however, young adults are not yet ready to act on their desires to be more autonomous, fearing reactions of others. Baxter Magolda (2001) determined that career settings often provided the impetus to question external formulas. In the workplace, her participants' developing inner voices often questioned their career paths. Relationships were also the focus of the Crossroads, as individuals attempted to resolve tension between what they wanted and what others wanted or expected. Establishing one's own beliefs rather than adopting those of others as they had done in the past was also a difficult experience in this phase for many young adults. A clearer sense of direction and more self-confidence marked the end of the Crossroads.

Phase 3: Becoming the Author of One's Life Similar to Kegan's (1994) fourth order of consciousness, this phase is characterized by the ability to choose one's beliefs and stand up for them in the face of conflicting external viewpoints (Baxter Magolda, 1998b, 2001). After choosing their beliefs, individuals feel compelled to live them out, which is often difficult. They are also aware that belief systems are contextual, can change, and are never as

clear as one would wish. As a result of intensive self-reflection, individuals develop a strong self-concept. In relationships, renegotiation often occurs, as young adults weigh their needs and desires along with those of others around them. Individuals are also more careful in making relationship commitments to ensure that the commitment “honor[s] the self they [are] constructing” (Baxter Magolda, 2001, p. 140). The three dimensions of self-authorship are closely intertwined, and the saliency of each dimension differs depending on life circumstances and experiences.

Phase 4: Internal Foundation Young adults who successfully negotiate this stage are grounded—in their self-determined belief system, in their sense of who they are, and in the mutuality of their relationships. A “solidified and comprehensive system of belief” (Baxter Magolda, 2001, p. 155) now exists. At the same time, individuals are accepting of ambiguity and open to change. They experience feelings of peace, contentment, and inner strength. While aware of external influences, they are not greatly affected by them, because they trust their own feelings and act on them rationally. Life decisions are based on one’s internal foundation. For some individuals, this leads to new directions in their careers; for others, changes are made in their personal lives. At the same time, their responsibilities to others, based on their own sense of those responsibilities, are clearly a part of their internal foundations. For many individuals, spirituality plays a role.

The Elements of Self-Authorship. Interviews with participants in their thirties uncovered three elements of self-authorship: *trusting the internal voice*, *building an internal foundation*, and *securing internal commitments* (Baxter Magolda, 2008). *Trusting the internal voice* involved participants’ realizing that while they could not always control events external to them, they did have control over how they thought about and responded to events, which led to their becoming more confident of their internal voices. This process occurred in each of the different dimensions of development (that is, epistemological, interpersonal, and intrapersonal) and in different domains (such as work, relationships, self-awareness).

Once individuals learned to trust their internal voices, they began *building an internal foundation*, which Baxter Magolda (2008) defined as a personal philosophy or framework to guide one’s actions. One participant in Baxter Magolda’s study called this foundation the “core of one’s being” (Baxter Magolda, 2008, p. 280). All the dimensions of development merge to create a “cohesive entity” (p. 280). As individuals experience different life events, they may reevaluate and adjust their foundation.

Once the third element of self-authorship, *securing internal commitments*, had been achieved, “participants felt that living their convictions was as natural and as necessary as breathing” (Baxter Magolda, 2008, p. 281). They integrated their internal foundations with the realities of their external worlds, which led to a sense of freedom to live their lives authentically.

The development of self-authorship is not a linear process but can follow many different paths influenced by the personal characteristics of individuals, the contexts in which they find themselves, and the challenges and supports they experience along the way (Baxter Magolda, 2008; Baxter Magolda & King, 2012). Self-authorship enhances rather than detracts from relationships and interactions with the external world. As people become more confident and clear about who they are, they are able to relate to others in a more honest and open manner.

Research on Self-Authorship

In addition to Baxter Magolda’s foundational longitudinal research, which we have already described, a number of other studies have explored aspects of self-authorship.

Looking at the Crossroads within the Development of Self-Authorship

Several scholars have studied the concept of self-authorship as well as factors associated with its development. Jane Pizzolato (2005) explored factors associated with self-authorship by examining narratives written by 613 students in response to her experience survey (see Pizzolato, 2007) regarding important decisions they had made. Her findings indicated that experiencing a decision as a “provocative moment” (that is, one creating disequilibrium leading to reevaluation of one’s goals or sense of self) (Pizzolato, 2005, p. 629) on the path to self-authorship was related to both characteristics of the student and of the situation. More important, however, was the student’s purpose for making the decision. Pizzolato (2007) suggested that self-authored action may be dependent on whether the individual views the situation as supportive of self-authorship. She proposed four expressions of self-authorship, based on whether or not reasoning and/or action are self-authored.

Findings from the Wabash study indicated that the majority of students by their second year of college continued to be externally defined, with some entering the Crossroads, which signals the transition to ways of

making meaning that are not dependent on others (Baxter Magolda, King, Taylor, & Wakefield, 2012). Baxter Magolda and King (2012) elaborated ten “milestones” from external to internal definitions, and Barber et al. (2013) identified college experiences that produced significant gains.

Self-Authorship in Diverse Populations

To extend Baxter Magolda’s theory to more diverse populations, several scholars have investigated self-authorship in different settings. Baxter Magolda joined with Peggy Meszaros and Elizabeth Creamer to edit the volume *Development and Assessment of Self-Authorship: Exploring the Concept Across Cultures* (2012). Chapters address self-authorship in international and multicultural populations, including male and female Bedouin and Jewish adolescents, female undergraduates in Australia, and Japanese college students. Outside of this edited volume, however, the majority of studies on self-authorship among diverse college student populations comes from the United States, with substantial contributions through the research agenda of Jane Pizzolato and colleagues.

In an interview study, Pizzolato (2003) found that so-called high-risk college students often reached self-authorship prior to college as a result of experiencing challenging situations early in life that required them to make decisions and take action on their own, such as making the decision to attend college and needing to negotiate the admissions process without any guidance or encouragement from parents. Pizzolato (2004) discovered that although high-risk students entered college at the level of self-authorship (see Pizzolato, 2003), classroom and out-of-classroom experiences challenged this way of making meaning and led them to feel incompetent, misunderstood, and different from their peers. These feelings led to high levels of anxiety and dissonance, which caused students to reconsider their internal foundations and attempt to meet external expectations. Discomfort with this strategy eventually allowed them to return to a self-authored perspective. Pizzolato (2004) noted that acting in self-authored ways may require not only the ability to reason independently but also feeling supported to take action.

Pizzolato, Chaudhari, Murrell, Podobnik, and Schaeffer (2008) suggested that ethnic identity development and epistemological development are intertwined processes, with each process positively affecting the other. Together, ethnic identity development and epistemological development predicted college GPA almost as well as previous academic performance measured by SAT scores and high school GPA. In particular, capacity for autonomous action made a difference. In another study of 166 students of color at three large

public research universities, Pizzolato, Nguyen, Johnston, and Wang (2012) found that experiencing identity dissonance and relationship dissonance were key catalysts in the development of self-authorship. Chaudhari and Pizzolato (2008) pointed to identity dissonance as a location for epistemological development among multiethnic students (that is, students whose parents are of different ethnicities).

In a longitudinal qualitative study involving Latino/a students from seven colleges and universities, Torres and Baxter Magolda (2004) found that ethnic identity development, an intrapersonal dimension of development, was interwoven with cognitive and interpersonal dimensions of development, with all three dimensions working together as students developed self-authorship. The challenge of cognitive dissonance caused by experiences of stereotyping and cultural oppression was a key factor in propelling students toward self-authorship, while support to address this dissonance was also a critical factor. Torres and Hernandez (2007) also reported that for the 29 Latino students they interviewed, recognizing and making meaning of racism was important in developing self-authorship.

Additional work on students with minoritized sexual orientation and first-generation students also enriches the literature. Abes and Jones (2004) discovered that how far along lesbian students were on the path toward self-authorship determined the extent to which external influences, such as family, peer group, social norms, and stereotypes, affected self-perceptions of sexual orientation identity, and other dimensions of identity, including religion, race, gender, and social class, as well as the intersections of the dimensions. Jehangir, Williams, and Pete (2011) studied the development of self-authorship among first-generation students participating in multicultural learning communities and concluded that interaction with diverse others and purposeful attention to reflection in a multicultural context created opportunities for first-generation students to move toward self-authorship.

These studies of self-authorship among diverse samples affirm the validity of using the theory across student populations. At the same time, the studies deepened scholarship on self-authorship and made substantive contributions to understanding the subprocesses within self-authorship development.

Assessing and Measuring Self-Authorship

Being able to assess students’ level of self-authorship is important for understanding how best to use this theory in practice. Kegan (1994) set the stage for assessing his orders through detailed analysis of qualitative interviews. Following this tradition, initial assessments of self-authorship in higher

education were qualitative, and that tradition continues. Baxter Magolda and King (2007) described two interview strategies to aid educators in assessing self-authorship. The first is the self-authorship interview (see Baxter Magolda, 2001), in which participants share their personal reflections on topics of importance to them. The second is the reflective conversation guide, which was part of the mixed methods Wabash study (see Baxter Magolda, 2008; Baxter Magolda & King, 2007, 2008, 2012). Welkener and Baxter Magolda (2014) assessed self-authorship through students' self-portraits, and a host of dissertation writers and other student researchers have used qualitative methods to explore various aspects of self-authorship and its development.

Pizzolato (2007) introduced and validated a short, quantitative measure of self-authorship, the self-authorship survey (SAS), consisting of four subscales: capacity for autonomous action, problem-solving orientation, perceptions of volitional competence, and self-regulation in challenging situations. The second half of the same instrument is the experience survey, which asks participants to write narratives about a significant decision they have made. Essays are scored on each of three dimensions: decision-making, problem solving, and autonomy. These narratives formed the basis for Pizzolato's claims related to provocative moments in the Crossroads (Pizzolato, 2005). She recommended using the two instruments together to get a more complete picture of participants' ability to self-author both their reasoning and their actions. Creamer, Baxter Magolda, and Yue (2010) used 18 items from the Career Decision Making Survey (CDMS) to measure the first three phases in the development of self-authorship, proposing that the instrument shows promise as an assessment of interventions. Strayhorn (2014b) developed the African American Student Success Questionnaire, which included seven items to measure the four key self-authorship subscales that Pizzolato (2005) identified. Quantitative measures of self-authorship and its development provide a more efficient strategy than qualitative interviews, which are not always possible or practical on a large scale. Taken together, studies using qualitative and quantitative assessments provide ways to understand self-authorship in context and the purposeful creation of environments to promote its development.

Self-Authorship and Other Student Outcomes

Research has also suggested relationships between self-authorship and other variables. In a longitudinal study of the relationships among student characteristics, students' academic and living environment, and self-authorship, Wawrzynski and Pizzolato (2006) found that the sex of the student, being a transfer student, strong academic performance prior to college, being

a student of color, and living on campus significantly predicted several of the subscales on the SAS (Pizzolato, 2004). In a quantitative study of 140 African American first-year students at an HBCU (Historically Black College or University), Strayhorn (2014b) found that controlling for pre-college preparation (for example, GPA and standardized test scores), self-authorship accounted for 58% of variance in first-year GPA.

Pizzolato (2006) determined that students who worked with advisors who encouraged reflection in goal-setting and intentional planning and discussed with students their nonacademic life experiences were more likely to develop abilities and perspectives associated with self-authorship. Continuing to explore the developmental experiences of students in advising situations, Pizzolato and Ozaki (2007) investigated early movement toward self-authorship experienced by students who were part of an advising program modeled after the Learning Partnerships Model (Baxter Magolda, 2001) that was designed to enhance retention of students in academic difficulty. Their findings suggested that students entered the program using external formulas to make sense of the world. However, external pressures caused them interpersonal and intrapersonal stress, pushing them into the Crossroads in Baxter Magolda's (2001) model. As a result of participating in the program, they appeared to experience more rapid development than most students. They came to believe that they had control over the outcomes they experienced and that they personally played an important role in constructing knowledge and decision-making, precursors of self-authorship.

The authors of a study examining the relationship between self-authorship and women's career decision-making concluded that early in the process of self-authorship women still relied heavily on advice from people they trusted, usually parents, even though the women were aware that they were ultimately responsible for their own decisions (Creamer & Laughlin, 2005; Laughlin & Creamer, 2007). This finding supports Baxter Magolda's (2001) description of young adults' reliance on external formulas as they begin the journey to self-authorship.

Application

Much of Baxter Magolda's scholarship has focused on applications of her model to classroom and student affairs settings. She has argued that to adequately prepare students for the increasing complexities of adult life in the twenty-first century, self-authorship needs to be the basis for advanced learning outcomes in college (Baxter Magolda, 2007). Using the principles for learning and development that she initially proposed in her 1992 book

and outlined in detail in several books and in numerous articles (see Baxter Magolda, 1998b, 1999a, 2001, 2002, 2003; Baxter Magolda & King, 2004), Baxter Magolda has suggested methods for measuring and promoting self-authorship in college settings. A number of other scholars join her in this effort, resulting in a robust body of literature to guide postsecondary educators. Baxter Magolda (2009) has also written a guidebook, *Authoring Your Life: Developing an INTERNAL VOICE to Meet Life's Challenges*, which, as the title suggests, engages the reader directly in reflection and action toward self-authorship.

Baxter Magolda (2002) stressed the need for students and educators to work together to develop student self-authorship, demonstrating respect for each other and actively sharing ideas and viewpoints. Classroom and co-curricular settings provide opportunities for this type of exchange. Opportunities for self-reflection in these settings also assist students in becoming clearer about what they know, why they hold the beliefs they do, and how they want to act on their beliefs (Baxter Magolda, 1999a, 2008). King et al. (2009); Barber, King, and Magolda (2013); and Pizzolato and Ozaki (2007) identified practices that might be especially effective in promoting self-authorship.

Baxter Magolda and King (2008) introduced the Wabash National Study Conversation Guide as an aid for engaging students in meaningful, reflective conversations. This guide is based on the interview protocol mentioned earlier. The purpose of the conversations for which the guide was constructed is to offer "students an opportunity to reflect on the meaning of their experiences and to help them develop reflective habits" (Baxter Magolda & King, 2008, p. 9). Advisors, faculty, supervisors of student employees, diversity educators, or other student affairs staff might initiate these conversations (Baxter Magolda, 2008).

Active involvement in meaningful activities and leadership positions is another variable that can foster development of self-authorship (Baxter Magolda, 1999a). Baxter Magolda (1999d) stressed that "students do not learn to behave in mature ways without practice" (p. 4). This process requires identifying situations that are safe, challenging, and doable for students who are at varying points along the journey to self-authorship (Baxter Magolda, 2003). Support is critical as students assume meaningful responsibility.

Learning Partnerships Model

Baxter Magolda was as concerned about the conditions that foster development of self-authorship as she was about the concept itself. Based on the findings of her longitudinal study of young adults and ideas first outlined in her 1992 book, she introduced the Learning Partnerships Model in

Making Their Own Way (2001) and elaborated on it in her book with Patricia King, *Learning Partnerships* (2004). Baxter Magolda (2001) stated that "environments that were most effective in promoting self-authorship" challenged dependence on authority. Three assumptions guided her approach: (1) "knowledge [is] complex and socially constructed," (2) "self is central to knowledge construction," and (3) "authority and expertise [are] shared in the mutual construction of knowledge among peers" (p. xx). These assumptions address cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal aspects of development (Baxter Magolda, 2004b).

Building on these three assumptions, Baxter Magolda (2001) claimed that educational practice that encourages self-authorship is based on three principles: (1) "validating learners' capacity to know," (2) "situating learning in learners' experience," and (3) "mutually constructing meaning" (p. xxi), the same principles she introduced in relation to her original theory of epistemological development (Baxter Magolda, 1992). She noted that while the assumptions challenged students' meaning-making processes, the principles served as a bridge between their current level of development and self-authorship (Baxter Magolda, 2004b).

Examples of the Learning Partnerships Model in action in instructional settings and in student affairs practice appear in numerous books and articles (see Baxter Magolda, 2003; Baxter Magolda & King, 2004; Cardone, Turton, Olson, & Baxter Magolda, 2013; Meszaros, 2007). Some examples of its use in academic settings include framing faculty development (Day & Lane, 2014; Howson, 2015; Quaye, 2012; Wildman, 2004, 2007), undergirding curriculum development (Bekken & Marie, 2007), providing impetus for institutional development (Wildman, 2004), creating an urban leadership internship program designed to promote intercultural maturity (Baxter Magolda, 2007; Egart & Healy, 2004), structuring an international service-learning curriculum (Baxter Magolda, 2007; Yonkers-Talz, 2004), establishing a multicultural education class at a community college (Baxter Magolda, 2003; Hornak & Ortiz, 2004), developing a college honors program (Haynes, 2006), providing a guiding philosophy for student affairs graduate preparation (Baxter Magolda, 1999b, 2007; Rogers, Magolda, Baxter Magolda, & Knight Abowitz, 2004), and creating conditions for self-authorship in graduate education (Baxter Magolda, 1998a; Robinson, 2013; Wawrzynski & Jessup-Anger, 2014).

The Learning Partnerships Model has also been used in student affairs settings as an overall framework to structure the work of student affairs divisions (Baxter Magolda, 2007; Mills & Strong, 2004), to create community standards in residence halls (Baxter Magolda, 2003, 2007; Piper, 1997; Piper & Buckley, 2004), in conceptualizing developmental academic advising (Baxter Magolda, 2003, 2007; Pizzolato, 2006, 2008; Pizzolato & Ozaki, 2007), in providing a

basis for career advising (Baxter Magolda, 2007), as a focus for training honors councils that adjudicate academic dishonesty cases (Baxter Magolda, 2007), and in professional student affairs staff development (Baxter Magolda, 2007).

In the final chapter of *Learning Partnerships* (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004), King and Baxter Magolda (2004) offered a framework for educators to decide whether and how to use the Learning Partnerships Model. It includes questions to ask oneself when considering whether to use the model and also offers ten specific steps for its implementation.

Critique and Future Directions

As both Kegan (1994) and Baxter Magolda (2008) have effectively articulated, the complexities of today's society make self-authorship a necessity. This concept, introduced by Kegan in the 1980s, has gained new life with the ongoing work of Baxter Magolda and later researchers, including Pizzolato, Torres, and the research team on the Wabash study.

Kegan's (1982, 1994) theory offered conceptual breakthroughs, particularly with regard to the interconnection of epistemological, intrapersonal, and interpersonal components of development, as well as the role of the environment in shaping development. However, his writing is often dense and psychoanalytic in tone, qualities with which student affairs educators may have difficulty. Kegan was also vague about the research foundations of his work, which can lead to skepticism about its validity. In his 1994 book, Kegan offered more in the way of suggestions for encouraging development in educational settings than he had earlier. The concepts of holding environments, evolutionary bridges, and sympathetic coaches all have meaning for those who work closely with students.

The importance of Kegan's theory as a description of developmental evolution over the lifespan cannot be overstated. However, it has been the work of Marcia Baxter Magolda that has popularized it within educational circles. The power of Baxter Magolda's scholarship lies in her longitudinal approach, depth of analysis, and careful attention to application of theory in practice. In each of these areas, her work is exemplary.

No other student development theorist has even considered interviewing the same participants yearly for a period of over 20 years. As one reads their stories as told in Baxter Magolda's books and articles, they become real people facing challenging life experiences. As a result, it is easy to relate to their

circumstances and their meaning making. The shifts in perspective are clear as one follows them through time. The evidence from their narratives definitely validates Baxter Magolda's evolving theory. The narratives she provides and her careful grounded theory analysis have led to a carefully conceptualized theory that is easy to understand and therefore to use.

A major strength of Baxter Magolda's work is its utility. She and others have succeeded in explaining and giving guidance on ways in which her theory translates into practice, both in student affairs and in academic settings. The Learning Partnerships Model has been used in numerous settings and is making a difference in the lives of students, faculty, and student affairs professionals.

Research, including that described in this chapter, with samples more diverse than the one in Baxter Magolda's foundational study has overcome early criticism of self-authorship theory being based on a narrow population (white, mostly privileged individuals who were undergraduate students at Miami University in Ohio). Baxter Magolda (2004a) herself called for additional studies based on diverse populations of students in different institutional contexts, and she has conducted some of it in collaboration with a number of colleagues. Ongoing research into self-authorship and its development among diverse populations will further test and elaborate the model and its applications.

Discussion Questions

1. In what ways is a constructive-development theory similar to and different from the cognitive structural student development theories described in the previous chapters?
2. What features of contemporary collegiate and adult life require different responses at Kegan's different orders of consciousness? How would individuals in the second, third, and fourth orders respond differently to these features?
3. What is the relationship of Baxter Magolda's epistemological reflection and self-authorship theories to other theories that focus on cognitive and moral development (for example, Kohlberg, Gilligan, Perry, and Belenky et al.)?
4. Think about a key developmental issue in college that would facilitate self-authorship. What kinds of interactions might occur across the development of each dimension (intrapersonal, interpersonal, epistemological) of self-authorship?