

Many graduate students need—and learn to acquire—more mature intellectual perspectives.

Developing Self-Authorship in Graduate School

Marcia B. Baxter Magolda

Adults in contemporary America are expected to be productive citizens who can manage their own affairs. They are expected to make informed decisions for themselves and their fellow citizens, appreciate diverse perspectives, manage conflict appropriately, and act responsibly in their communities. They are expected to be lifelong learners in the face of constant change and increasing complexity. Meeting these expectations requires the ability to develop one's own perspective—the capacity for *self-authorship*.

Self-authorship requires complex assumptions about the nature of knowledge, namely that knowledge is constructed in a context based on relevant evidence, that evaluating evidence is necessary to decide what to believe, and that each individual has the capacity to make such decisions. Furthermore, self-authorship requires a sense of identity through which individuals perceive themselves as capable of knowledge construction. It also requires interdependence with other people to gain access to other perspectives without being consumed by them. As a result, self-authorship is more than a skill; it is a way of making meaning of one's experience.

My longitudinal study of college students' assumptions about knowledge revealed that 2 percent of the seniors and 12 percent of the participants one year after graduation used contextual knowing (Baxter Magolda, 1992). *Contextual knowing* includes viewing knowledge relative to a context, understanding that some knowledge claims are more valid than others, and using informed judgment to determine what to believe. Similar research on reflective judgment showed that college seniors used reasoning characterized by the assumption that knowledge claims are personal opinions, and thus were unable to explain the role of evidence in making interpretations (King and

Kitchener, 1994, p. 167). Graduate students in master's programs and early phases of doctoral work tended to view knowledge contextually and use evidence to interpret, yet did not fully use reflective thinking in which knowledge claims must be evaluated in the context in which they were generated and remain open to reconsideration (King and Kitchener, 1994). Thus self-authorship is rarely fully developed by the senior year and often is still in its early stages in graduate school. Understanding entering graduate students' ways of knowing and teaching in ways that help them learn to author their own knowledge is essential to help them meet expectations held for them as adults in contemporary society.

This chapter explores the graduate experience of sixteen students who were interviewed annually about their learning experiences, their ways of knowing, and their development during graduate school. They are participants in an ongoing longitudinal study that began during their first year of college in 1986. Their stories help educators conceptualize graduate education in ways that promote self-authorship.

The Evolution of Students' Ways of Knowing

I began my longitudinal study of college students' intellectual development in 1986 with 101 first-year students at Miami University. Miami University is a public, four-year institution with a liberal arts focus. In annual interviews I invited students to talk freely about their role as learners, the role of instructors and peers in learning, their perception of evaluation of their work, the nature of knowledge, and educational decision making. These interviews yielded their assumptions about knowledge, and experiences that affected those assumptions throughout their college experience. Eighty students participated through all four years of college.

During college, three ways of knowing were evident in this group. *Absolute knowing*, or the assumption that knowledge is certain and known to authorities, was prevalent in the first two years. *Transitional knowing*, or the assumption that knowledge is partially certain and partially uncertain and known through following a learning process, existed for some students in their first year and was the predominant way of knowing in the remaining three years. Fewer students used *independent knowing*, or the assumption that knowledge is uncertain and everyone has their own biases, during college; this became the prevalent way of knowing during the fifth-year interviews (Baxter Magolda, 1992).

Continuing this study into the years following college graduation made it possible to explore the evolution of assumptions about knowledge in work and advanced educational settings. Seventy participants continued in the postcollege phase of the study. Of that group, only two were members of underrepresented groups. By year eleven, or seven years after graduation for most participants, forty students remained in the project. Their occupational fields include insurance, sales, accounting, computing, teaching, mental health,

advertising, communications, business, banking, real estate, retail management, airline services, and government services. Annual interviews in the post-college phase were informal conversational interviews (Patton, 1990) in which participants described important learning experiences in their work, academic, or personal lives, and how these experiences affected their thinking. These sixty- to ninety-minute telephone conversations yielded an ongoing account of participants' ways of knowing during their twenties. (All were traditional-age students in college.)

Sixteen of the postcollege participants entered graduate school: seven immediately after college, eight more in year six, and one in year eleven. Of this group, nine were women, eight attended full-time, and one student entered a doctoral program after completing her master's degree.

The Emergence of Self-Authorship in Graduate School

Rather than recount brief stories of all sixteen graduate students here, I chose to tell three students' stories in some detail to illustrate the difficulty of moving from embracing multiple perspectives to constructing self-authored perspectives. (All research subjects' names have been replaced by pseudonyms throughout this chapter.) Two students, Lowell and Alice, recount graduate experiences that actively promoted their development of self-authorship. A third student, Cara, shares her struggle toward self-authorship in the context of more traditional educational settings. Experiences of other students, including those in professional schools, are available elsewhere (see Baxter Magolda, 1996b).

Exploring Multiple Perspectives. Lowell was already an independent knower on entering his graduate program and thus was amenable to exploring multiple perspectives. Reflecting on his undergraduate experience in our fifth-year interview, he noted that learning had become a process of really trying to think and seriously consider others' points of view. His graduate program furthered his emerging self-authorship through its focus on class discussion of the implications of the readings for national security and evaluation based on that discussion and papers. Lowell perceived this format as "focused on learning." He explained:

It's the sort of class that builds upon itself, so that every time we talk about something, if you've forgotten what we talked about earlier, then you're going to miss the point. But if you attend class and do the readings, then you're not going to miss it because it doesn't repeat itself but it shows its face in different ways. It is like building a brick wall, you need all of it to make intelligent statements and to think about the things that happen.

Lowell also viewed the short papers as a way to think about the material:

They all go back to take the basic model or different tools to look at a situation, and compare it to different situations—we talked about the Iran Contra affairs

and the Marines in Lebanon—different issues that have come up in our national security, and can you explain them. You’ve got the basic tools and you try to manipulate them and see if they work. And if they don’t, why, and if they do, why? So you really have to be thinking; you have to be on your toes. So it’s not by any means easy.

The basic model and different tools Lowell refers to here form a framework for thinking about issues. Exploring how these models and tools relate to different contexts is the process through which Lowell and his classmates try to make intelligent statements and think about national security issues. This process goes beyond applying a formula to students’ forming their own opinions. This is evident from Lowell’s description of the teacher and class discussions. Of one professor he said:

Our professor starts off the class with some anecdote about his experiences, not in a joking manner, just very straightforward. They’re often funny, but that initiates discussion. And he sort of acts as referee, and we kind of throw arguments back and forth at each other. He’ll summarize things and say “Okay, here’s this, this and this,” or he’ll tell us a fact that he’s seen because he’s worked so closely with it. And then we discuss it and say, “Ah, well you know, that’s wrong,” or “they shouldn’t have done that.” It is a different type of learning.

Lowell’s professor initiated the discussion, inserted his perspective in the midst of the students’ exploration, and entertained their commentary on his own experience. Debating multiple views was a mainstay of the class discussion. Lowell reported:

I enjoy taking the argumentative side if there is one; if someone is speaking conservatively, then I take a liberal view. And if the opposite is the case, I take the opposite view. But it’s fun; I enjoy, not arguing, but discussing. If they come to arguments, then we’ve failed. Mulling over an issue or a topic and trying to get all perspectives that are possible—I really enjoy that.

Lowell acknowledged that this discussion led him to debate with himself what to think sometimes:

. . . especially when people bring up facts that I didn’t know. You are going to have a theoretical opinion and that hopefully is based on facts that you have learned. In the Soviet Union class there are a lot of things now that I’m learning that I didn’t know and that makes what my answers would be different. So I don’t think, I guess, my beliefs or values haven’t changed, but if you know something to be a fact and it is different from what you believed, if you don’t change, if you are not pragmatic, then you’re just going to sink. And if you close your eyes to the truth or what other people see as truth, then you’re going to fail. That’s when arguments happen [when people don’t consider other perspectives].

Lowell's focus in these discussions was to access as many perspectives as possible. He noted that opinions need to be based on facts, yet at the same time stated that closing your eyes to what others see as truth is dangerous. How these experiences in his first year of graduate school affect his learning comes through in his comments on how he approaches learning:

I am more thoughtful. I guess before it was getting a lot of the facts down. And now it's, like with the national security, you truly try to analyze, try to really think. For example, in my Soviet Union class, we're taking facts that we've hopefully learned and applying them and [are] always open to new facts if we find them. That doesn't mean closing our mind to facts.

At the end of his first year of graduate school, Lowell described himself like this:

I think I'm more patient. I'm more willing to open myself up to other sorts of experiences, other people's points of view, more open-minded I think. I don't want to give the impression that it's wishy-washy, just more open-minded. I still like, as I say, to discuss. And I do enjoy taking a position and sticking by it or trying to. And perhaps I learn more when I'm forced not to stick by it, hopefully.

Lowell embraced the thinking process emphasized in his classes and embraced trying to merge the facts with others' perspectives. Although he was learning to construct his own perspective, I had the sense that he was focused more on a process for knowing than on committing to a perspective. We explored this idea further during his second year. When asked whether he needed to decide on his own views in his graduate work, Lowell responded:

Oh, I don't think so. I don't know. Sometimes it's hard to come to a conclusion because there aren't really any good answers. Otherwise we'd be sitting in the White House or in Congress. I think it's good the way it is. I don't think it's bad not to have the answers. It doesn't mean—. If a decision has to be made, you're going to have to make it; if it really, truly has to be made. Someday something will come your way and you'll have more of an opinion about something or a belief that what you now believe is really the truth or whatever. I don't think it has to—you know, there is no one truth. So I don't believe that you have to come to a decision.

Lowell conveyed that decisions are possible, and implied that he might be capable of making them, but he clearly was not pushed to do so in his graduate work. In this same conversation Lowell advanced the notion of acquiring a cohesive view at the end of a course. I asked him to describe how he achieved that view if one does not have to come to a conclusion. He said:

I think everyone has, especially at our age, their own set of opinions, or beliefs. And in doing the readings, that's a big way of picking up other things to agree

with or refute your own beliefs. In class there's really not time to pull out numbers and so forth to the arguments. But the books provide a wealth of information.... so from the readings and also from the class discussion, listening to people. You are hopefully going to have people of different opinions so that you can have a sounding board and they can question you and you can question them. Through these two routes, it is possible, and I think I will be able to come up with some better, if not the perfect one, understanding of the topic. I might change my views; might keep them the same; might make them stronger.

Lowell used the readings either to support or to negate his views; similarly, he used classmates' perspectives to work out his arguments. Knowing that the "perfect understanding" of the "final view" is not possible, he worked toward a view he could effectively argue. His graduate program promoted his self-authorship in terms of engaging him in the process of exploring multiple perspectives and building arguments, but it did not force him to choose what to believe. His awareness that decisions would have to be made materialized in his foreign service work after his graduation. In that work context he was able to analyze situations, make his own decisions, and stand up for what he thought was right even in the face of disagreement from his supervisor.

Doing What Feels Best. Alice's master's program in counseling, like Lowell's program, emphasized multiple perspectives and thinking for oneself. In contrast to constructing arguments about issues, however, her program focused on experiencing counseling work as a way to arrive at one's perspective. The experiential emphasis was evident in both classroom and internship dimensions of Alice's graduate work. She described the majority of her classes like this:

We did a lot of videotaping and audiotaping that were reviewed with the professor and kind of critiqued, you know, that type of thing, with different counseling styles. And I thought that was real helpful. I guess just memorizing the concepts and writing them down is one thing, but then practicing them is a whole different ball game. And it helped me, I think, to find out which styles felt more natural for me, and it has kind of helped me evolve into what theoretical background that I kind of adhere most strongly to. Like I said, by the lecture, "This sounds a little better than this one," but by doing it some of them really feel better, seem to fit better than others. And the actual doing them on tape really helped in that process, I think.

The tentativeness in Alice's language—"kind of helped me evolve into what theoretical background that I *kind of* adhere . . . to"—revealed the newness of thinking for herself. Alice entered graduate school holding some transitional assumptions about knowledge and looking for information and practical skills to help her function effectively as a counselor. Her graduate program encouraged her toward self-authorship through the program's focus on developing one's own theoretical foundation via experience. She explained further how this took place:

Well, you read all these hundreds of different counseling theories and it's just real overwhelming and confusing. They tell you at these orientation things that they want you to kind of work with it and develop your own—you know, not that you have to pick one theory and say, "I'm this," and never do anything else. But they kind of want you to have in the back of your mind that you should be trying to evolve and select one that you feel is going to work best for you. You know, just try them on and see which ones fit your own personal philosophy and things like that. And by actually doing them and seeing them on tape, that helped me to do that process.

Pressing Alice for how she made such decisions, I received this response:

I guess it just went with my personal philosophy, the way that I kind of view the world anyway or view people anyway. Like I said, it just felt better. I felt like I was able to be more genuine using that group of techniques and that type and style of counseling.

Her faculty openly stated that she should try various approaches and determine which ones fit best for her. They offered opportunities for her to engage in this process and critique the results with them. Her criteria for deciding on a theoretical foundation, however, was limited to what felt natural. Alice's criteria for constructing her own perspective developed further during internship experiences her second year. Describing this work, she offered:

I have a site supervisor who I review all my cases with pretty regularly, a couple of times a week really. And then once a week I'll be driving to meet with my advisor, who will also be supervising me as far as going over my cases as well. So it seems like it's going to be real tight supervision really. I'm glad it is. I would feel like I was floundering without it. It's definitely something that they see as a real important component. They can give me some insights or different strategies that they feel might be effective. And a lot of times what they're doing is just kind of letting me flounder through it and go through the process myself. And while that's hard, it's just like with anything else. I remember it and use it better if it's something that I came up with than if they just told me, "Use this technique; this works best for this."

A subtle shift is apparent in Alice's recounting of her internship; she is coming up with something by going through the process herself and using supervisors' insights as input. The details of how this moved beyond what felt right became more clear as she explained a change in thinking about her counseling work:

The hands-on experience through my practicum and internship has made me realize nobody else is in this room with me when I'm doing this counseling session. And so, for me to be clear on these issues I need to figure them out for myself. Not to say that I'm ever going to figure them out, but to know where I

stand on them and to think them through. And I think that's kind of encouraged that process. It's you and your client sitting there. I feel like if I'm not sure where I stand or I'm not clear on what the issues are and what the arguments are both ways and process that myself, then I don't see how I can be of any help at all to this client. So I think that's really encouraged me to do that.

Like Lowell, Alice sees the need to think things through and figure things out for herself, even if a perfect answer is not available. The immediacy of sitting with her clients did prompt her to need to know where she stood. Her responsibility to her clients, even in an internship setting, pushed her to take a stand. Her need for clarity on “what the arguments are both ways” implies that she was moving toward evaluating evidence to decide on her stance. Asked how all this affected her, she said:

I think that I'm more independent; I'm more of a self-thinker, if that makes sense. I'm questioning things more, and I'm not taking—just because I take notes and then that's the way it is and that's all that's been written and that's law. I'm finding that I'm really questioning things and issues. Like with the dual diagnosis. I'm really sorting stuff out for myself instead of just taking notes about everybody else's opinion. In that way I think I'm a lot different.

Although the conversation did not produce the specific criteria Alice used to “sort stuff out” for herself, it is clear that she was engaged in self-authorship. The experiential component of her program, along with processing that experience with faculty, helped her move in that direction. Alice's professional work after graduating continued to promote her self-authorship. She found herself making decisions about her clients that she felt were right for them given the context, and she acted ethically despite potential risks resulting from disagreements with others.

Struggling Toward Self-Authorship. In some graduate programs self-authorship was not directly encouraged. Cara's master's program in clinical psychology is an example of how difficult achieving self-authorship is when the environment does not support it. Cara was disappointed as she began her work because her peers were very competitive and her classes focused on memorization. She explained:

I thought [the program] would be a little more intellectual and kind of like group studying and people sharing ideas. It's much more competitive. Everybody wants to get the A. If you know something, you only share it with a few people because you don't want anyone else to do better than you. And everyone's—I guess psychology graduate schools are like this—everybody has the Ph.D. on the brain. You pretty much walk in and you take a lot of notes and you leave. And it's run like a drill sergeant; he's like “We're going to do this, this, and this.” It's not how I thought it would be. I thought we'd be more on the same level. In the Ph.D. program at [another school] I know that they're more on the

same—they are treated more adult-like in their classes. And their views are—I mean, they sit around and talk. They study and learn. I personally learn better when I am able to just understand everything and when I know all the whys in understanding it. This atmosphere is the “what.” “Can you memorize everything in your chapters? You don’t need to understand it.” I don’t think that is right at this level. It’s like a cow; I’m chewing up information and then spitting it back. That’s all I’m doing. But I do know it.

Despite “knowing it,” Cara was not sure this knowledge would stick with her. At this point Cara was a transitional knower who wanted to understand instead of memorize. When she did encounter multiple perspectives, her transitional tendency to follow the instructor’s lead was reinforced. For example, she described one class like this:

We’re learning to do diagnosis. There are so many different perspectives. But we’re just following his perspective for the moment. He said, “This is going to be a biased class. You’ll think of it in my perspective.” I mean, he told us that. He wasn’t worried about it. And I have no perspective, so it doesn’t bother me.

Because she had no immediate perspective of her own and was not encouraged to construct one, Cara’s transitional way of knowing was encouraged.

The lack of stimulation in her program led Cara to take a part-time and eventually a full-time job. She reported that success in her program required minimal work and consequently she felt she learned very little. Her lack of interest resulted in dragging out her thesis for a year. Her thesis was the first component of her program she felt was a useful learning experience, primarily because two of her coworkers were open to talking through her work with her. Although she judged this to be a good learning experience, she told me, “The more I think about it, I have not applied this learning to get ahead.” Cara’s lack of self-authorship and its de-emphasis in her master’s program resulted in her going through the motions without being sure why she wanted this degree. Her reasons for choosing it were to avoid other options that seemed undesirable and to achieve financial benefit and respect. Her two years in a master’s program and a thesis had brought her no closer to a self-authored vision of her career goals.

Cara’s doctoral work proved to be more encouraging of self-authorship. Cara reported that her classes were seminars in which “we are all on same level of knowledge.” Classes focused on reviewing journal articles and discussing them in class. She reported that teachers were not defensive in responding to students’ ideas and questions. Despite these dynamics, Cara still struggled in some ways in the seminars due to what she called “lack of social preparation.” She described the class atmosphere like this:

Some people like competitiveness to make them work harder—I am mildly competitive, but more into doing for myself. I don’t like the feeling—“what did you

get?”—not helping each other; that makes me tense, and interferes with my learning. The program is small; that is better for me because I’m not a big speaker in class. I’m more likely here to get involved. The only problem with small is you have to get along—there is nobody else. I am clicking with some, but there are no women [in the program]. In psychology there were a ton of women. I would be more comfortable if there were more women.

Part of Cara’s discomfort stemmed from what she viewed as the male students’ style in interaction. Her account demonstrates that it was not a knowledge issue. She reported:

Socially I wasn’t prepared to be a good interactor in these classes. I knew I was smart enough. Others had no problem; I would wait, didn’t want to cut others off, felt unsure, and my thoughts were not completely formulated. Others didn’t [hesitate]—men in particular. People said I needed to participate. Ph.D. seminars were totally different than what I had experienced, and I struggled with the lack of direction. It was hard until I got comfortable with people, then I could get in more. I am still less vocal; this has to do with being female. Men cut people off; they don’t care. They want to tell what they know. Some are from MBA backgrounds; they are not introspective. I wasn’t fitting in with this Ph.D. environment, but was just as knowledgeable; I wasn’t expressing it their way. I have made an effort to move toward this. I have tried to change; I noticed I cut people off more; it is not a conscious choice, I just jump in. Before I would have said, “I’m sorry.” I don’t state the obvious [because] I feel like that is boasting. Why would I tell someone what they already know?

Initially Cara’s hesitation stemmed from being unsure of her thoughts and inexperienced in seminar discussion. Yet even when she felt as knowledgeable, she was careful about how she approached others. Cara saw herself as capable of constructing knowledge at this point but did not feel comfortable telling other people what she knew. She acquired some feedback about this issue via a group project. She explained:

I worked with a guy on a project in a statistics course. I had already had a lot of it, and he hadn’t. We had a computer project. I knew the package and he wanted to practice. I would say, “Why don’t you try this?” the translation being, “This would work.” Sometimes he would and sometimes he wouldn’t. When it worked, he would act surprised. I said to him that he didn’t trust that I knew this. He got upset! He said he couldn’t tell from my tone of voice if I knew it. I hadn’t thought of it that way. It was eye-opening. Wow! He is one of first people I questioned about it, and he was honest and told me.

Cara discovered that her way of communicating mediated others’ perceptions of her knowledge. This occurred in Cara’s third year of doctoral work. After five years of graduate study, she was still struggling with the issue of self-

authorship. She was disadvantaged in her doctoral seminars by the traditional teaching in her master's program and an environment dominated by students with styles different from hers. The stress of this environment led her to reevaluate her approach. She reported this change:

I have had a good intuitive sense but have ignored it; like in bad relationships, my stomach would clench. Then I'll have a logic or rational voice saying you are overreacting. In the last six months I've tried to listen more; I spend 20 minutes a day doing breathing exercises. I am used to running around, reading to help myself; read what someone else is saying rather than listening to myself. I started having health problems; the doctor said it is related to emotional issues or stress and anxiety. The more I'm listening to myself, I'm allaying fears. I'm paying more attention to me than other people. I made some bad decisions as a result of listening to others. For example, I changed my major to psychology to stay at home with a boyfriend. I am sick of listening to others!

Cara is beginning to trust herself. Her sense of her own ability to self-author has emerged slowly because of the nature of her experience. Her experience causes me to wonder what would have happened had she attended Alice's master's program instead. That issue is taken up next in the analysis of these students' experiences and principles for promoting self-authorship.

Creating the Conditions for Self-Authorship

The master's programs that Lowell and Alice attended illustrate the characteristics that were common to all but two of the master's programs (Cara's and one MBA program) attended by my sixteen longitudinal participants. Cara's doctoral program also illustrates these same characteristics. These programs create conditions for self-authorship through teachers' assumptions about knowledge, their assumptions about students, and how they act on the two sets of assumptions to create teaching practice. An analysis of these three factors and their effect on students' self-authorship creates a structure for promoting self-authorship in graduate education.

Graduate faculty in these programs conveyed three assumptions about knowledge to their students. These included knowledge as existing in a context, constructed by individuals, from multiple perspectives. Multiple perspectives were introduced and explored in areas ranging from social work issues, counseling theory, and pedagogy to economic theory, business practices, and government policy. Faculty encouraged exploration of these perspectives in various contexts, including one's clients or customers, current economic data, and events around the world. Faculty conveyed, often directly, that students would be responsible for deciding what to believe for themselves.

These assumptions about knowledge were related to faculty members' assumptions about graduate students. With few exceptions, they assumed that graduate students were capable of reading the material in the field of study,

processing its multiple perspectives, thinking about the material for themselves, and developing their own perspective in light of the contexts under study. This may have been an overestimation of students' ways of knowing at least upon entrance to graduate school. Because students still held some transitional assumptions and were developing independent assumptions, they were stronger in exploring ideas than in bringing evidence together to form conclusions. Faculty assumptions did welcome students' independent assumptions, however.

The learning environments students described revealed how faculty assumptions guided pedagogy. Classes were predominately seminars in which students were encouraged to process the readings and think about their implications. Faculty welcomed student participation and exchange of ideas among peers. Faculty participated in discussions but did not dominate them. These dynamics are similar to those of the community of learners described elsewhere in this volume by Conrad, Duren, and Hayworth. Faculty's simultaneously sharing their expertise and valuing students' perspectives and experience led students to feel treated as adults in the learning environment. A few students like Andrew in his MBA program and Sandra in her social work program reported being pushed to defend their positions on various issues (compare with Conrad, Duren, and Hayworth's critical dialogue notion). The more typical situation was that students were not pushed to use evidence and come to conclusions, much like Lowell's experience. The push to decide occurred more readily when students had direct experience as in Alice's internship and in full-time work settings outside of graduate school. These data are consistent with Conrad, Duren, and Hayworth's data on the value of powerful professional development experiences.

These educational practices engaged students' emerging independent knowing and created conditions for its expansion. Students embraced multiple perspectives and thinking for themselves, even though they were more enamored with the process than with struggling to make decisions. At the same time, they did become aware of the central assumptions of contextual knowing, namely using evidence within a context to formulate one's own perspective. Their learning environments more often offered them practice in exploring perspectives, however, than in evaluating them. Thus students moved into contextual knowing in terms of understanding that some knowledge claims are better than others, that this judgment depends on evaluation of evidence in a context (for example, Alice working out her stance), and that one must support one's judgment by articulating this evidence (for example, Lowell honing his arguments). Students' ability to act on this way of knowing remained limited by lack of practice.

The graduate learning environments described here used the three principles for promoting complex ways of knowing that emerged from these students' undergraduate experiences: validating students' ability to know, situating learning in students' experience, and engaging students in mutually con-

structuring meaning (Baxter Magolda, 1992). The first two principles were mainstays of most graduate experiences. More attention to the third, however, would have strengthened students' self-authorship.

Most of these students further developed self-authorship in their work experience after graduate school. Using the ninth- and tenth-year interviews with my longitudinal participants, I identified four dimensions of self-authorship: trusting one's ability to make knowledge claims, establish priorities, and commit to both; the emergence of a solid sense of confidence to direct one's life; learning to balance external forces with one's own perspective and knowledge; and developing an internal identity that supports acting on one's knowledge and priorities (Baxter Magolda, 1996a). Both Lowell and Alice demonstrated growth in these dimensions, primarily from encountering situations in which they had to use their knowledge, take a position, and act on it in their work setting after graduate school.

These students' stories show that many graduate programs do promote self-authorship by respecting students' thinking, engaging students in exploring multiple perspectives, and conveying that students must construct their own perspectives by using the evidence of their discipline. These settings welcomed students' current ways of knowing. Settings that did not welcome students' ways of knowing, such as Cara's master's program and to some extent her peers in her doctoral program, did not promote self-authorship. The stories also convey that more emphasis on how to construct one's perspective, how to balance it with external forces, and experience that strengthens confidence and internal identity is needed. Attention to these components would stretch students' ways of knowing and develop their contextual knowing capacity further. Most graduate faculty hope their classrooms will be consumed by mutual dialogue, exploration of complex ideas, and mastery of the complexity of their discipline. Faculty insight into students' ways of knowing helps create conditions for students to engage in this kind of learning. Conveying the need for self-authorship must be accompanied by learning how to self-author one's perspective during graduate study.

References

- Baxter Magolda, M. B. *Knowing and Reasoning in College: Gender-Related Patterns in Students' Intellectual Development*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1992.
- Baxter Magolda, M. B. "Developing Self-Authorship in Young Adult Life." Paper presented at the Association for the Study of Higher Education Conference, Memphis, Tenn., Nov. 2, 1996a.
- Baxter Magolda, M. B. "Epistemological Development in Graduate and Professional Education." *Review of Higher Education*, 1996b, 19(3), 283–304.
- Boyer, E. "The Educated Person." In J. A. Beane (ed.), *Toward a Coherent Curriculum*. Alexandria, Va.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1995.
- Glaser, B., and Strauss, A. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Chicago: Aldine, 1967.

King, P. M., and Kitchener, K. S. *Developing Reflective Judgment: Understanding and Promoting Intellectual Growth and Critical Thinking in Adolescents and Adults*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994.

Patton, M. Q. *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 1990.

MARCIA B. BAXTER MAGOLDA is professor of educational leadership at Miami University, Ohio. Her teaching and scholarship focus on epistemological development in college and young adult life.