

Engaged Learning: Enabling Self-Authorship and Effective Practice

David C. Hodge, President

Marcia B. Baxter Magolda, Distinguished Professor

Carolyn A. Haynes, Professor & Director, University Honors Program

Miami University, Ohio

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Recently, the Association of American Colleges and Universities' Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) project (AAC&U, 2007) has strongly championed the longstanding goals of liberal education and synthesized the college outcomes necessary for success in 21st century life: knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world, intellectual and practical skills (e.g., inquiry and analysis, critical and creative thinking), personal and social responsibility (e.g., intercultural knowledge and competence, ethical reasoning and action), and integrative learning. Keyed to work, life, and citizenship, LEAP argues that these outcomes are crucial to preparing graduates for effective practice in a complex world.

These outcomes are ambitious. They require complex ways of making meaning of knowledge (epistemological development), of one's identity (intrapersonal development), and of social relations (interpersonal development). Thus achieving them requires much more than information acquisition or even critical analysis. Rather it requires transformative learning, or learning "to negotiate and act on our own purposes, values, feelings, and meanings rather than those we have uncritically assimilated from others" (Mezirow, 2000, p. 8). Most importantly, transformational learning entails a shift from uncritical acceptance of external authority to critical analysis of authority in order to establish our own internal authority. Parks describes this as a distinctive mode of meaning making that emerges between ages 17 and 30 and includes, "becoming critically aware of one's own composing of reality" (2000, p. 6). Recognizing one's role in composing reality and establishing the ability to do so effectively is what developmental theorists call self-authorship, or the internal capacity to define one's beliefs, identity, and social relations (Baxter Magolda, 2001; Kegan, 1994).

Self-authorship not only entails epistemological maturity, it also requires cultivating a secure sense of self that enables interdependent relations with others and making judgments through considering but not being consumed by others' perspectives.

Kegan (1994) argued that self-authorship is the foundation for critical thinking, noting that it requires us to "take charge of the concepts and theories of a course or discipline, marshalling on behalf of our independently chosen topic its internal procedures for formulating and validating knowledge" (p. 303). According to him, self-authorship not only entails epistemological maturity, it also requires cultivating a secure sense of self that enables interdependent relations with others and making judgments through considering but not being consumed by others' perspectives. Conveying self-authorship as the integration of the epistemological, interpersonal and intrapersonal developmental dimensions, Kegan sketched the role of self-authorship in enabling effective parenting, partnering, work, citizenship in a diverse society, and even in achieving positive mental health. All of these arenas require the capacity to manage external realities using the compass afforded by our internally generated beliefs, identities, and social relations. The lack of internal authority on all three dimensions is one factor contributing to Robert Sternberg's observation of a weak correlation between student success in college and success in life after college (Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2008).

Widespread evidence suggests that college students struggle to achieve the learning outcomes identified by LEAP (e.g., Baxter Magolda, King, Taylor, & Perez, 2008; Blaich & Wise, 2008; King, Baxter Magolda, & Masse, 2008) in part because they have not yet developed the self-authorship capacities that undergird them (Baxter Magolda, 2001; Kegan, 1994). To excel in life as well as in college requires cognitive maturity, an integrated sense of personal identity, and mature relationships with diverse others (Baxter Magolda, 2004b). Unfortunately, Baxter Magolda's longitudinal study of college students (1992) found that the majority of college students had not achieved the necessary outcomes by the time of their graduation despite having succeeded academically in college. One participant in the longitudinal study, Gavin, shared an observation that sheds light on why the college experience may fall short in preparing graduates for the self-authorship needed to cope with complex everyday life. Speaking of dealing with problems in college, he said,

In college, if you had a bad class, you got a bad grade. That was just something that happened because you lived with all your friends and there were always things to put that aside. But when you deal with real-life situations, ... ups and downs are much, much more emotionally felt because it has a direct impact on how you live. In college you can't really see that. It's a lot more emotional learning once you get out [of college] because before you always knew you could always just give up and go home. Now you can't give up and you can't go home. (Baxter Magolda, 2001, p. 285)

In this paper, we advance a new model for a university-wide curriculum that we call the “Engaged Learning University” that we believe leads to deeper learning and better preparation for life success. Based upon research on student development, this model features principles and practices that lead students steadily toward genuine self-authorship in which epistemological, interpersonal and intrapersonal maturity are integrated. Before articulating details of this new curricular model, we describe self-authorship and the evolution of students' meaning making during and after college. Then, we offer an engaged learning philosophy to promote self-authorship and learning outcomes for success in and after college, and finally, we conclude with the description of our comprehensive developmentally sequenced curriculum designed to help students gain the intellectual and personal maturity to thrive in all realms of 21st-century adult life.

The Evolution of Self-Authorship

The concept of transformative learning and the distinctive mode of meaning making it entails are grounded in the constructive-developmental perspective advanced most notably by Jean Piaget (1950). This perspective's two primary ideas are that people construct reality by interpreting their experiences and the ways of constructing reality evolve according to regular principles of stability and change. We generate meaning making structures, or “rules,” based on our experiences about how the world works. We use these rules to interpret new experiences until we encounter experiences that cannot be explained via our rules. Initially we regard those experiences as exceptions (what Piaget called assimilation into our current meaning making structures). When too many exceptions overwhelm our current meaning-making structure, we adjust it to a more complex one that accommodates the new experiences. For example, if adolescents are socialized via their schooling to uncritically accept authority, they bring the meaning-making structure that knowledge is certain and possessed by external authority with them to college. They retain that meaning structure until they encounter sufficient dissonance to warrant reconsidering it. If they are challenged and sufficiently supported to learn to evaluate knowledge claims

and generate an internal belief system, they exchange their initial meaning making structures for increasingly complex ones.

Adopting increasingly complex meaning making structures represents the developmental growth that underlies transformational learning and assists students in achieving the complex learning outcomes of liberal education. It is, however, necessary to adopt increasing complex meaning making structures in all three developmental dimensions. For example, students who learn to critically analyze knowledge claims and generate their own ideas have achieved a self-authored epistemological structure. Yet, to achieve effective practice in life, they must also have a self-authored intrapersonal structure that enables them to register disagreement and argue for their perspectives. In addition, they need a self-authored interpersonal structure that values standing up for one's beliefs over gaining affirmation from others. To illustrate the need for all three dimensions for superior practice, consider the nurse practitioner that knows from his understanding of infectious disease that the doctor is prescribing an outdated and ineffective treatment but does not say so for fear of admonishment.

A carefully sequenced and developmentally appropriate curriculum can help students develop self-authorship while in college.

Evidence abounds that college students in recent decades have typically entered college relying on perspectives they have uncritically accepted from others and are not sufficiently challenged and supported to transition to internal authority during college (Baxter Magolda, 1992; Kegan, 1994; King & Kitchener, 1994, Perry, 1970). An exception is research with students who have experienced marginalization, which suggests that they may have progressed closer self-authorship prior to college or during college over other students, due to the challenges they face (Abes & Jones, 2004; Pizzolato, 2003, 2004; Torres & Hernandez, 2007). The possibility of developing self-authorship earlier than what has typically been observed implies that a carefully sequenced and developmentally appropriate curriculum can help college students develop self-authorship. Despite variations in pace and particular dynamics that vary by group, this collective research portrays the evolution of self-authorship as a journey from following external formulas, through a crossroads in which one's internal voice begins to unseat external formulas, to internally defining one's beliefs, identity, and social relations. Following Kegan's holistic portrayal of adult development, this research sketches the evolution of development in three dimensions. Table 1 illustrates the interrelated epistemological, intrapersonal, and interpersonal assumptions that constitute the three overarching phases of the journey.

Table 1: Developmental Journey toward Self-Authorship (Adapted from *Learning partnerships: Theory and models of practice to educate for self-authorship*, edited by Marcia B. Baxter Magolda and Patricia M. King (Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, LLC) with permission of the publisher. Copyright @ 2004, Stylus Publishing, LLC

Dimension	External Formulas	Crossroads	Self-Authorship
Epistemological	View knowledge as certain or partially certain, yielding reliance on authority as source of knowledge; lack of internal basis for evaluating knowledge claims results in externally defined beliefs	Evolving awareness & acceptance of uncertainty & multiple perspectives; shift from accepting authority's knowledge claims to personal processes for adopting knowledge claims; recognize need to take responsibility for choosing beliefs	View knowledge as contextual; develop an internal belief system via constructing, evaluating, & interpreting judgments in light of available evidence and frames of reference
Intrapersonal	Lack of awareness of own values and social identity, lack of coordination of components of identity, and need for others' approval combine to yield an externally defined identity that is susceptible to changing external pressures	Evolving awareness of own values and sense of identity distinct from external others' perceptions; tension between emerging internal values and external pressures prompts self-exploration; recognize need to take responsibility for crafting own identity	Choose own values & identity in crafting an internally generated sense of self that regulates interpretation of experience and choices
Interpersonal	Dependent relations with similar others are source of identity and needed affirmation; frame participation in relationships as doing what will gain others' approval	Evolving awareness of limitations of dependent relationships; recognize need to bring own identity into constructing independent relationships; struggle to reconstruct or extract self from dependent relationships	Capacity to engage in authentic, interdependent relationships with diverse others in which self is not overshadowed by need for others' approval, mutually negotiating relational needs; genuinely taking others' perspectives into account without being consumed by them

Epistemological assumptions include those regarding the nature, certainty, and limits of knowledge. These range from viewing knowledge as certain and possessed by authority to viewing it as contextual and constructed internally based on interpreting relevant evidence. Intrapersonal assumptions refer to how one sees oneself. These range from a lack of awareness of responsibility for one's values and social identity to crafting an internally generated value system and identity. Interpersonal assumptions refer to how individuals frame their role in relationships. These range from seeking others' approval to

balancing the mutual needs of all in the relationship. Lack of complexity in one dimension can inhibit use of complex meaning making structures in other dimensions.

Those who regard knowledge as certain, trust others more than they trust themselves, and seek others' approval follow external formulas. In learning contexts, they accept knowledge uncritically. An increasing awareness of uncertainty of knowledge, of the possibility of identifying in a way distinct from others' perceptions, and of the limits of dependent relationships prompts the crossroads. In learning contexts they rely heavily on external sources for knowing but are aware of the need to construct their own perspectives. Working through these tensions to view knowledge and identity as internally constructed and achieving the capacity for mutual negotiation in relationships yields self-authorship. Self-authorship in all three dimensions enables learners to critically evaluate information, form their own judgments, and collaborate with others to act wisely.

Narratives from Baxter Magolda's 22-year longitudinal study (1992, 2001, in press) illustrate these phases of the evolution of self-authorship and the kinds of experiences that prompt it. We use narratives from participants' post college lives to illustrate how they discovered the need to abandon external formulas and develop their internal voices. The curriculum described later demonstrates how to help learners make these discoveries during college.

External Formulas

Anne succeeded in college, obtained a good position as an accountant upon graduation, and continued to follow the external formulas that had served her well. For example, she accepted a promotion without really considering its implications. She reported, "I guess a position came open and they needed someone. My boss thought I would do a good job at it. I guess they figured that I had the most experience or the best experience or whatever" (Baxter Magolda, 2001, p. 79). Similarly, Anne began work on her CPA because "They want you to do it because they'll pay for it" (Baxter Magolda, 2001, p. 79). She also reported that she anticipated having her CPA would yield more respect and make her more marketable. Her comments focus clearly on what other people thought and offer no hint of her own beliefs. She accepted knowledge without question, had no clear sense of herself as a professional, and sought others' approval in relationships.

Before long, Anne made an important discovery:

I wish teachers wouldn't do so many multiple-choice questions and have some more thinking type things because life is not multiple choice. I've been realizing out here, I mean, there's so many things I have to think about and look up and research and think about more. It seems like in college and high school everything is just so multiple choice, "Memorize this and spit it out." And that's mostly all I ever did, memorize, memorize, memorize, and learn facts and just spit it out to someone and circle answers and that was it. I wish we'd done – I don't know – more thinking things or stuff like that. (Baxter Magolda, 2001, p. 193)

Having to think, research, and think further were new experiences for Anne – experiences that had not been required of her to succeed in college. She reported feeling embarrassed when she could not answer her boss's questions so she spent more time figuring out answers prior to meeting with him. She learned from the questions he asked how to think through problems and generate solutions. Because he coached her in thinking through issues and afforded her autonomy in her work responsibilities, she realized that

she would have to think for herself in order to be successful. Anne and her peers discovered that external formulas were no longer useful when learning and life were not multiple choice.

The Crossroads

Discovering the need to develop an internal voice does not immediately translate into the ability to do so. Cara described the situation as “an invisible force, I’m pushing against it, what is it? I don’t know, but it is there though” (Baxter Magolda, 2001, p. 118). Even when participants were able to identify the invisible force as external expectations, it was difficult to bring their developing perspectives into balance with external authorities. Laura gave up on external formulas but did not really know how to replace them:

I became very skeptical about what the “truth” was. It’s amazing how you can influence statistics. Statistics are supposed to be really the truth. You can’t manipulate statistics. But then I learned you really can manipulate statistics to have a point of view to be the truth. So I’ve come to see that everything’s relative; there’s no truth in the world – that sort of thing. So I’ve decided that the only person that you can really depend on is yourself. Each individual has their own truth. No one has the right to decide, “This has to be your truth, too.” If everybody is stuck on, “What do the other people think?” then you just waste your whole life. (Baxter Magolda, 1992, p. 136, 138)

Extracting themselves from what others thought was also a major challenge. Another participant, Kurt, struggled as a manager because he was constantly concerned with pleasing his boss and his employees because he did not have an internal belief system or identity to guide his work decisions. Those whose employers, colleagues, and families encouraged self-exploration and joined them in mutual decision-making were able to cultivate their internal voices and bring them to the foreground to coordinate external influences. Only then were participants able to critically evaluate information, trust themselves to decide what to believe, and be willing to stand up for their views – key ingredients for effective learning and practice.

Self-Authorship

Self-authorship is the internal coordination of meaning making on all three dimensions: one’s beliefs (epistemological), identity (intrapersonal), and social relations (interpersonal). Mark captured the essence of self-authorship in this comment:

Making yourself into something, not what other people say or not just kind of floating along in life, but you’re in some sense a piece of clay. You’ve been formed into different things, but that doesn’t mean you can’t go back on the potter’s wheel and instead of somebody else’s hands building and molding you, you use your own, and in a fundamental sense change your values and beliefs. (Baxter Magolda, 2001, p. xx)

This comment reveals that self-authored people take responsibility for analyzing how they have been shaped and for reshaping themselves based on that analysis. In other words, they shift from uncritically accepting external views of knowledge, identity, and social relations to generating belief systems, identity, and social relations internally. Mark elaborated on this as he described his approach to his position as a law clerk:

I've come to realize that I'm a lifelong learner and student – how I come to know anything is through that approach. I'm one hundred percent dedicated to improving self and learning more. ... Ultimately that will make me a better attorney. In order to learn you have to put yourself on the line, say what you believe, say when you don't understand. You're more likely to do this in classroom than in work. In classrooms you are supposed to ask and learn. In the work world, people get concerned with appearing to know so they don't learn. You should reach a point of maturity to ask questions for self-improvement. ...If I don't understand, a person may not think I'm very bright, but I still ask because my priority here is on education, not climbing the corporate ladder. For instance, when I was asked to write a position statement for a client to the EEOC, I asked to see one that the attorney who gave me this thought was good. I role modeled from it, changed it according to what I thought was best. Writing is a creative act, invest yourself in it. If you are not seeing yourself in your work, you are losing something. You were hired to put yourself into work. (Baxter Magolda, 2001, p. 64)

A learning partnership challenges learners to consider knowledge as socially constructed, to play a role in constructing their beliefs, and to participate in sharing authority with educators.

Mark demonstrated that he used the expertise evident in the position statement he was given yet he used his own judgment to write a new statement. He emphasized the importance of bringing himself to his work and saying what he believed, yet recognized that being a better attorney required asking for others' expertise as well. Thus effective practice required that he author his beliefs, be secure enough to risk asking questions, and work interdependently with others to produce the best result. Participants who trusted their internal voices and built an internal compass from which to operate were better able to do their work effectively and simultaneously continue learning.

Baxter Magolda's participants articulated the conditions in their employment, advanced education, and personal contexts that helped them work through real-life problems in ways that promoted self-authorship. Their stories during their twenties and thirties yielded the Learning Partnerships Model (LPM; Baxter Magolda, 2004a) that offers a framework for promoting self-authorship during college.

A learning partnership challenges learners to consider knowledge as socially constructed, to play a role in constructing their beliefs, and to participate in sharing authority with educators. The partnership simultaneously supports learners in facing these challenges by supporting their capacity to construct knowledge, situating learning in their experience, and defining learning as a mutual process. The challenges and supports in a learning partnership are tailored to learners' current meaning-making structures to form a developmentally appropriate learning experience that promotes transformative learning. In the following section, we use the Learning Partnerships Model to advance an educational philosophy of engaged learning that simultaneously promotes liberal education and prepares students for effective practice and action by cultivating students' self-authorship (Hodge, 2008; Hodge, LePore, Pasquesi & Hirsh, 2008).

An Educational Philosophy for Promoting Self-Authorship

The promotion of self-authorship entails a fundamental shift in how we structure and imagine the whole undergraduate experience. As an initial step, it requires that we shift away from what Barr and Tagg (1995) have termed an “instructional” paradigm that emphasizes instructors telling students what they need to know to a “learning” paradigm where instructors design active learning environments to encourage students to construct their own ideas.

Yet, we believe that an even more ambitious transformation that extends beyond Barr and Tagg’s “learning” paradigm must occur in order for students to construct new knowledge. To discover new ideas, learners need complex epistemological, intrapersonal, and interpersonal meaning making structures. They must possess an internal set of beliefs that guide decision-making about knowledge claims, an internal identity that enables them to express themselves in socially constructing knowledge with others, and be able to engage in mutually interdependent relationships to assess others’ expertise and jointly make sound knowledge claims. These capacities, we argue, cannot be cultivated solely by engaging actively with the raw materials and tools of the academy or participating in a student-centered classroom, although these are essential. Nor do these traits appear instantaneously after mastering key research-oriented skills. Instead, they emerge gradually when educators foster students’ holistic mental growth through continuous self-reflection, seamless and authentic curricular and co-curricular experiences that steadily increase in challenge, and appropriate levels of support.

Table 2 illustrates the key differences among the instructional, learning and, what we call, the “engaged learning” paradigms.

Table 2: Traits of Instructional, Learning and Engaged Learning Environments

Instructional Environment	Learning Environment	Engaged Learning Environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on covering disciplinary content and grading on content knowledge • Requires students to verify information previously communicated • Assumes students learn the nature of disciplinary discovery implicitly • Asks students to execute imposed lessons and inquiries, thus promoting the false idea that inquiry is a linear process and does not involve errors, uncertainty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on student learning and outcomes assessment • Encourages students’ questions, voices, and ideas • Assumes students learn through active engagement • Exposes students to the recursive process of inquiry; invites them to reflect on learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on students’ and educators’ capacity to discover, by promoting their intellectual and personal development • Offers authentic projects and problems necessitating ongoing and serious engagement and collaboration • Assumes students can develop into mature scholars and citizens if educators provide a coherent, sequenced curriculum and co-curriculum • Promotes the goal of students creating their own inquiries by offering them greater levels of challenge and agency as they develop cognitively, interpersonally and intrapersonally

The engaged learning university is not only an integrated learning environment where faculty, staff, and students work toward the same goal of self-authorship, but also a sequenced one where students are steadily offered higher levels of intellectual and personal challenge and varying types of support. The engaged learning environment fosters the epistemological, intrapersonal, and interpersonal

developmental capacities that enable learners to participate in discovery and interdependent knowledge construction.

Put succinctly, the key tenets of our intentional engaged learning philosophy are:

1. Guide students to develop an internally defined and integrated belief system and identity, which prepares them personally and intellectually for lifelong learning;
2. Actively engage students in discovering new knowledge in a sequenced, developmentally appropriate way to enable them to critically evaluate evidence, make informed judgments, and act ethically;
3. Create a vibrant campus learning community that blends curricular and co-curricular learning opportunities and capitalizes on all constituents’ (faculty, staff, and students) role in promoting students’ learning.

In order to achieve these tenets, educators must progress away from what Randy Mitchell (2006) calls *emanation* and toward *generation*. Whereas emanation radiates from and is dependent upon the original source—in much the same way that a river remains dependent upon a spring—generation creates something that will go forward even if the original source is lost—just as children eventually go forward without their parent. Mitchell’s two educational approaches are summarized and contrasted in Table 3:

Table 3: Emanative versus Generative Learning (Mitchell, 2006, p. 29)

Emanation	Generation
Taking care of students	Caring about students
Providing leadership for students	Developing leadership in students
Giving answers to students	Encouraging students to ask questions
Focusing on teaching	Focusing on learning and student development
Exercising authority over students	Sharing authority with students
Building reputations as expert teachers	Building relationships with students
Creating legacies for ourselves as teachers	Creating networks so that students can succeed

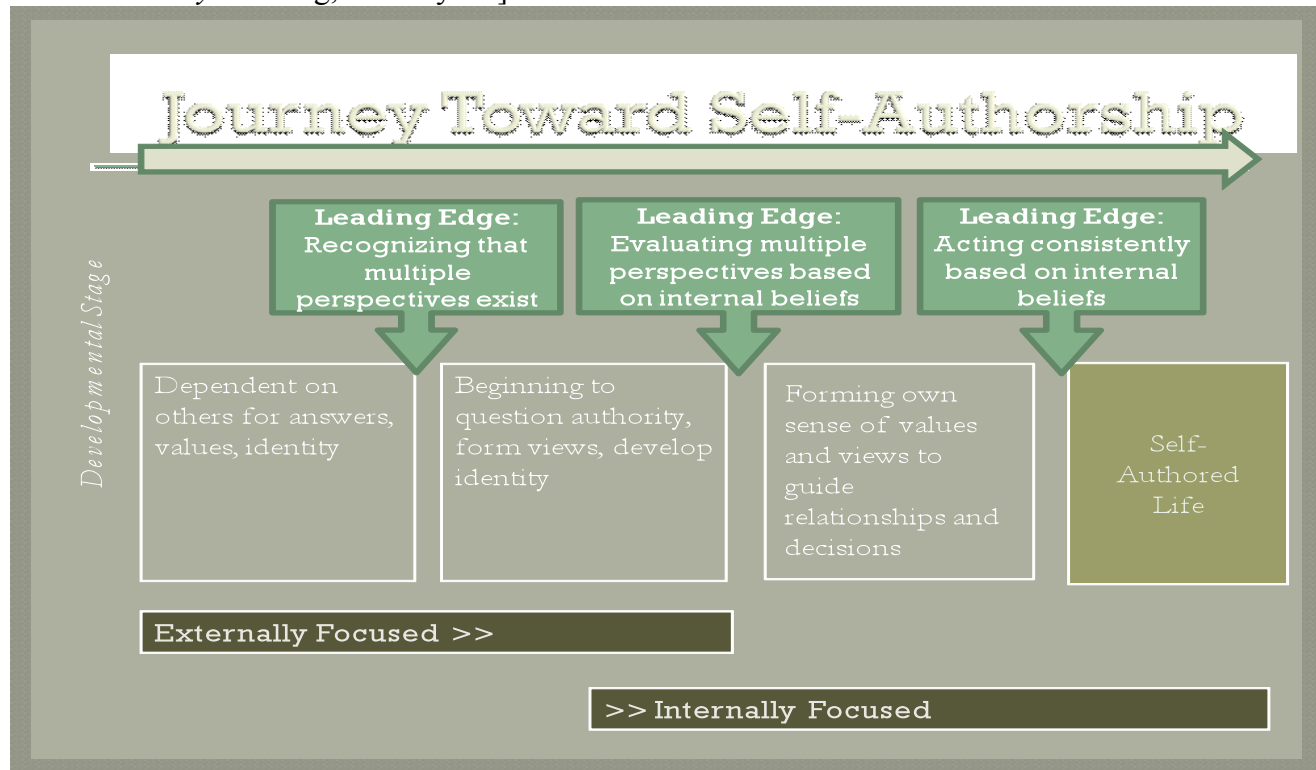
When shifting from an emanative to a generative learning environment, the roles and responsibilities of students as well as faculty and staff must evolve to form learning partnerships. Barr and Tagg have underscored the need for a transformation. According to them, in the learning or generative paradigm, the roles of all members of a University community “begin to blur. Architects of campus buildings and payroll clerks alike will contribute to and shape the environments that empower student learning.” In particular, faculty move from perceiving themselves as “disciplinary experts who impart knowledge” to “designers of learning environments” (1995, p. 20).

Certainly, the changes in roles Barr and Tagg describe must occur to enact the Engaged University, but we would emphasize the need to conceive all of our roles as educators and to perceive that the educator, like the student, undergoes a developmental process. Just as students’ roles and expectations evolve as they become more independent thinkers and learn to engage in mutually interdependent relationships, so too do the roles and expectations of faculty and staff, given that they must be attuned to students’ fluctuating developmental needs.

At first blush, the changing educator role sounds simple. As students gain intellectual and personal maturity, educators steadily relinquish authority and empower students to assume greater agency over the discovery process and learning environment. Yet, in practice, this educational philosophy requires intentional design; a shared sense of ownership and thus partnering among all faculty, staff and students; continuous critical reflection on the part of all involved; and heavy doses of patience and courage.

Although the Engaged Learning University aims to empower students as thinkers and scholars, it does not imply that educators must meet students’ every wish and whim. Nor does it mean that students and educators are friends. What it means is that educators must move away from the traditional role of the expert or the tendency to seek students’ approval and instead push students to gain intellectual, relational and personal maturity through continuous feedback, reflection, and high expectations. Educators can assist students to become more internally focused by validating them as thinkers and burgeoning scholars, presenting thorny problems and topics which lend themselves to multiple legitimate perspectives, introducing them to competencies needed to address those topics, and helping them to form, and accept responsibility for, their own decisions and actions in ways that are consistent with their own identities. Table 4 illustrates the students’ journey toward self-authorship.

Table 4: The Journey Toward Self-Authorship [Drawn from: Baxter Magolda, M. B. (2001) *Making Their Own Way*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.]



The power of this progression can be illustrated in the story of Jessica Reading who was recruited to our university four years ago as a member of the varsity field hockey team. When Jessica entered college, she—like most students following external formulas—opted to follow her parents’ advice in her selection of business management as a major. Her parents had stressed that if she earned top grades and gained practical skills, she would land a well-paid job upon graduation.

Her understanding of her educational path began to widen during her middle years of college when she was selected to join the Wilks Leadership Institute, a multi-year curricular and civic engagement program in which faculty and students come together to focus on an interdisciplinary topic of mutual interest. Jessica's cohort elected to focus on globalization. Through their investigations, they learned that globalization, rather than a distant and abstract phenomenon, is actually a complex interplay of factors that shape the way local community members view themselves and one another.

As a means of understanding the way globalization relates to the local community, they decided to investigate the recent influx of Mexican immigrants into the Midwestern United States. This topic was particularly timely because our county is home to Sheriff Richard Jones, who gained notoriety by taking aggressive action to curtail illegal immigration, including posting a large billboard outside the county jail that reads, "Illegal Aliens Here," with arrows pointing into the building. The sheriff's crackdown led to many in the local Hispanic community becoming fearful of police and other community officials and members. Ethnic tension among members of the Hamilton community was brewing, and local business profits were declining.

The Wilks scholars not only examined the historical, political and economic "push and pull" factors that led to this upsurge in Mexican immigrants, but they also investigated the diverse ways that various communities who experienced similar immigration patterns responded. Rather than tell students what the appropriate community response to new immigrants should be, the faculty provided the students with a range of different and legitimate responses by various US cities and towns, and they prompted the students to research, and develop their own viewpoints on, the major questions and fears about immigrants that had emerged in the local media: Why do immigrants live together? Why do they continue speaking in their native language? Should they be required to learn English to gain citizenship? Should they be able to hold jobs when native citizens are out of work? If they enter the country illegally, should they be allowed to attend public schools, hold drivers' licenses, or receive medical care? After reviewing the relevant professional literature on the topic, students were also asked to conduct one-on-one interviews with immigrants and community leaders residing in the local area to glean insights into this complicated issue. Through her interviews and study of immigration, Jessica began to question Sheriff Jones's response to immigrants in the local area and to wonder whether a better solution could be found. This shift in thinking demonstrates her movement to the crossroads phase.

Her ability to think critically about the sheriff's response was propelled by the fact that during this period Jessica was enrolled in courses for her business major. At first, the differences in tone and purpose between her business courses which focused on capitalism, profitability, entrepreneurship and the marketplace and the Wilks Institute courses which advanced the notion of a civil society and the importance of maintaining community amidst the flux of globalization befuddled her. She might have simply compartmentalized these different epistemologies and never attempted to integrate them, if she had not been given an assignment in the Wilks Program to complete the sentence, "This, I Believe," in relation to the local immigration issue. This assignment prompted her to form her own view that an inclusive and diverse community enhances—rather than deters—its profitability. That assignment encouraged her to integrate her knowledge of business, civil society, and immigration along with her capacity to relate interdependently with others gained through sport to take action to improve the relations among the local Hispanic community and the other residents in Hamilton, Ohio.

Jessica collaborated with local business leaders to establish *La Voz*, a Latino Business Association, whose mission was not only to give the Latino population literally “a voice,” but also to promote productive and healthy exchange among the Latino and white communities in Butler County. She identified key Latino community business leaders, brought them together to build relationships and network with one another, and then facilitated the creation of the association. Through her leadership, these business owners co-constructed a unique mission for their association; their goal was not simply to improve the productivity of their businesses but also to give back to the Hamilton community through service events and projects. She worked with these leaders to organize a clean-up effort of Hamilton’s fourth-ward district, a low-income area, as well as other community-based programming.

In reflecting on this final community engagement project, Jessica underscores the significance of her journey toward self-authorship:

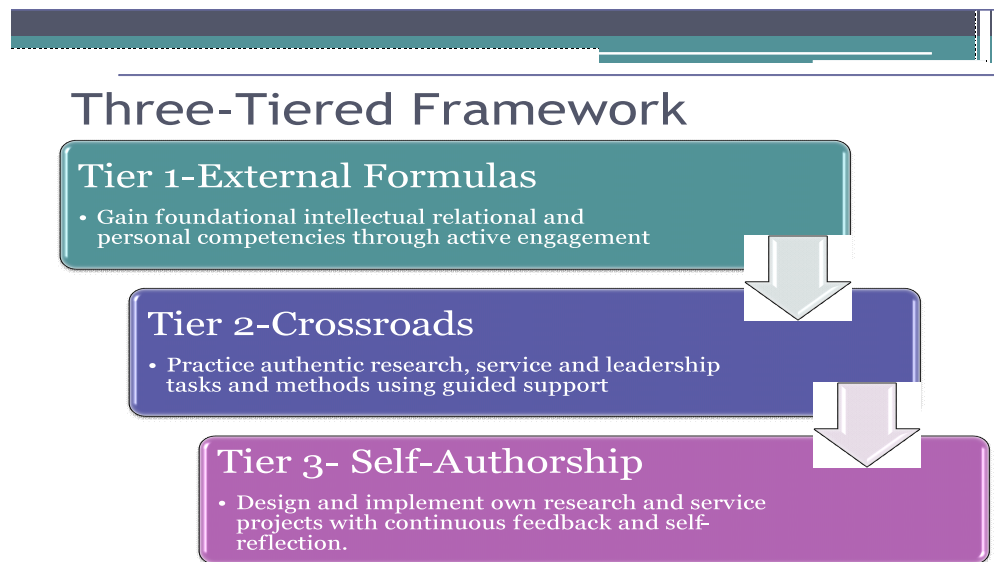
This process was not just a simple college service experience; it was truly an intellectual and transformative endeavor for both myself and those other individuals involved. *La Voz* has fostered my business education, communication skills, leadership competencies, risk-taking, and willingness to learn and adapt--qualities which are essential for lifelong success. . . . Through personal connection to the issues our society faces, I understand the need to *change*, rather than just *enter*, the workforce. . . . As college students move away from the security of the Ivy Tower and universities are scrutinized for their value to the public, it is imperative that students graduate ready to serve as true citizens of our communities. *La Voz* exemplifies the potential for student endeavors to go beyond PowerPoint presentations, books, and multiple choice tests and make an impact outside of the classroom.

A Three-Tiered Comprehensive Developmentally Sequenced Curriculum

Jessica’s transformation did not happen automatically. She was fortunate to have been part of learning environments within the academy, in the community, and on the athletic field that encouraged her intellectual and personal growth.

At Miami University, we have established a three-tiered framework to help our educators design learning environments and curricula that promote students’ development toward self-authorship (Taylor & Haynes, 2008). In this section, we use authentic examples from our institution to illustrate the principles and practices educators should use with students following external formulas (Tier 1), moving through the crossroads (Tier 2), and progressing toward self-authorship (Tier 3). Table 5 offers a brief summary of the three tiers.

Table 5: Summary of the Three-Tiered Framework [Drawn from: Taylor, K. B., & Haynes, C. (2008). A framework for intentionally fostering student learning. *About Campus: Enriching the Student Learning Experience*, 13(5), 2-11.]



Tier 1: Moving Beyond External Formulas

The first tier is designed for students who are generally new to the college experience, tend to view knowledge in absolutist terms, have a limited vision of themselves as legitimate authors of new knowledge, and thus rely on external authorities for guidance and approval. As exemplified in Jessica’s story, many students in this stage follow patterns, paths and beliefs prescribed by the authorities in their lives (e.g., parents, influential peers, clergy, or past educators).

According to Baxter Magolda (2004a), educators working with students in Tier 1 can help students move away from the “external formulas” stage by:

1. Validating them as potential scholars (e.g., memorizing first names or using name tents so that you can relate to them personally; teaching them how to ask viable scholarly questions; offering regular opportunities for them to offer input on learning material; pausing during lectures for them to share their thoughts with the entire class or with their neighbor; writing personalized responses on their work or discussion posts; encouraging them to differentiate their own view among many possible viewpoints related to a topic);
2. Situating learning in their experience (e.g., focusing courses and programs on open-ended questions and topics that intrigue students and relate to their experiences; using real-world cases or examples to illuminate concepts; involving students in certain decisions about the course or program such as asking input on the criteria to be used to evaluate an assignment);
3. Offering opportunities to mutually construct knowledge (e.g., presenting multiple legitimate perspectives on the same problem; puzzling aloud through problems or scenarios together; assigning structured or guided inquiries that students pursue together).

Janelle Sikorski, a professor in Geology, teaches an introductory geology course that meets a foundational liberal education requirement and focuses on US national parks. The unifying question of

the course is: “What is wilderness, and how safe is it or should it be?” Past versions of the course involved lectures heavily laden with content, textbook readings, and multiple-choice examinations. Unhappy with her students’ performance in the course, Dr. Sikorski decided to redesign the course to make it more engaged. In one portion of the newly designed course, students are given a series of readings which focus on the Glen Canyon Dam in Paige, Arizona, and offer key background and contextual information, such as the role of tourism near the Grand Canyon, prevailing climate conditions, and the role of dams in other national parks. Before discussing the readings, the instructor asks students to create an in-class individual written reflection on whether the Glen Canyon Dam is safe and should be maintained or dismantled. After collecting the reflections, she then divides the class into three groups—each representing a different interest (e.g., one in favor of keeping the dam, another against, and a third group representing local activists, business owners, residents and officials). The third group serves as a panel at a mock hearing and asks the members of group 1 and 2 to offer evidence for their positions.

In this activity, students are prompted to explore various legitimate perspectives and collectively address an authentic problem. Because the instructor assigns students particular positions, students are more open to test out ideas, raise probing questions related to their own and others’ stances, consider alternative viewpoints, and disagree respectfully with one another. After hearing evidence from both sides, members of the panel work toward a consensus solution, with the members of the other groups silently witnessing their deliberations. The unit concludes with a second written assignment in which each student revises their original reflection paper in light of their new insights on the topic. The second written reflection prompts students to recognize that one’s knowledge and belief system can not only be reshaped but also deepened through collaborative exchange and healthy disagreement.

The University Honors Program recently revised its approach to Summer Orientation when entering students visit campus with their parents to plan out their year’s schedule. The honors staff’s goal was to help students move away from depending so heavily on authority figures, such as parents, for their choices. Rather than simply give students a handout with a list of program requirements, advisors now ask students to engage in a series of reflective exercises prior to selecting their courses or co-curricular experiences for the upcoming year. Students, for example, write about the most significant learning experiences that they enjoyed in high school and articulate ideas for how they might seek out similar transformative learning opportunities in college. In addition, they write an imaginary dialogue about the college experience between themselves and a dominant figure in their life and then are invited to think about how they can fulfill what they seek in college while still maintaining a relationship with this important person. While students are meeting with advisors in small groups to discuss their reflections and ways that their beliefs and goals can be reflected in their first-year schedules, parents are meeting in small groups in another room engaging in reflections on their hopes for their student and their concerns about how best to support their students’ development. Advisors in the parent session discuss with parents ways that their role may need to shift in order to enable students to develop self-authorship.

Tier 2: Reaching the Crossroads

Because Dr. Sikorski’s activity and the Honors Program’s first-year advising approach encourage students to balance external authority and their own voices, they are pushing students to move toward Tier 2 or the “crossroads” stage. Students typically arrive at this stage when they begin to question external authorities’ definitions and beliefs, recognize that knowledge is not absolute, and begin to identify their own beliefs, interests and approaches to their personal and academic lives. As Baxter

Magolda (2001) discovered in her study of college students and graduates, this period is often fraught with challenges:

The process of developing internal sources of making meaning—or voice—was most often a struggle in light of concern regarding others’ expectations and how one’s internal voice would affect one’s relations with others. Conflicts between what participants were coming to determine they wanted and what they thought others expected of them were commonplace. (pp. 93-94)

Interestingly, educators can assist students in developing their ways of knowing and acting using the same three principles identified in the previous section focusing on Tier 1 (i.e., validating students, situating learning in their experience, and mutually constructing knowledge). However, when working with students in Tier 2, the strategies for implementing these three principles are more sophisticated:

1. Validating students as scholars and thinkers (e.g., inviting students to engage seriously in the discovery process with the instructor; exposing them to the insider’s view of scholarship; engaging in brainstorming and reflection sessions where the educator listens to and implements the best ideas to improve the learning experience or project; offering specific feedback on strengths and weaknesses of students’ work; teaching students to critically analyze and build on the work of peers and outside scholars);
2. Situating learning in students’ experiences (e.g., inviting students to choose among several possible approaches or methods when completing assignments; sharing authority with them in the discovery process; prompting them to identify authentic problems or questions to pursue related to the topic at hand; prompting them to apply academic learning to their own and others’ lives; asking them to reflect on their academic work as it relates to their own beliefs and goals);
3. Offering opportunities to mutually construct knowledge (e.g., studying and analyzing criteria for excellent work in one’s field; assigning sophisticated projects that require multiple perspectives and expertise; teaching students key methodological and scholarly processes and asking them to implement them to address authentic problems, questions or needs).

As the director of a residence hall for students in the middle stage of college, Matt Lewis had witnessed students complaining about the need for greater community in the upper-class residence halls, yet they failed to take active steps to enact a more inclusive, dynamic living learning environment. He decided to offer them greater levels of support and challenge to develop a community that would better align their beliefs with their actions. He created a “curriculum” for his residents that included studying multiple and diverse readings on leadership, identity, and community; developing a statement of one’s personal values and vision for a living learning community; and then facilitating group discussions and debates that led toward a consensus on the values of their community and the programming that they should implement. Rather than serve as the instigator of all programming in the hall, Matt reshaped his role as someone who would facilitate and guide students to become agents of their own programming and community. When roommate conflicts or other problems arose during the year, he brought the appropriate residents together so that they (rather than he) could make decisions based on the community values and curriculum they co-constructed, and he encouraged all residents to reflect regularly on how well their community environment and programming aligned with their consensus vision as well as their personal beliefs. Although not every program was perfectly conceived or implemented, Matt noticed that the complaints about a lack of community dissipated and the students’ investment in the hall and the well-being of their peers soared.

For years, Dr. Jeffrey Wanko had been frustrated by students' lack of passion for mathematics. One reason for their lack of interest was that they perceived mathematics as a set of complicated problems and formulas that others impose on them for evaluation. In other words, they did not possess any sense of mastery or ownership over the discipline; as a result, math was perceived too often as a liberal education hurdle to overcome rather than an opportunity for learning and enrichment. Yet, at the same time, Jeff was struck by his frequent observations of students in residence and dining halls mesmerized by Sudoku and other types of mathematical-logical puzzles. He designed a mathematics course where he and the students explored and applied various aspects of logical thinking and spatial reasoning to a variety of language- and culture-independent puzzles and then work together to design original puzzles. To help them create high quality puzzles, they worked together to develop a rubric for assessing puzzles made by other experts and themselves. Students also developed a written rationale for their intended audience and why the puzzle was suited to that audience, the underlying structure of their puzzle, the algorithms and procedures needed to solve it, and their process of decision-making and development.

Because Matt Lewis and Jeff Wanko offered students opportunities to make key decisions about the design and goals of the learning experience, they were fostering students' development toward self-authorship and their perception of themselves as budding scholars and mature citizens. In these experiences, students were able to learn key methods, theories, approaches and skills and apply them to an outcome aligned with their personal beliefs or interests. Moreover, their role as educator shifted from serving as the principal designer of the learning environment with the aim of actively involving students in the topic of study (which was appropriate for the Tier One context) to one who co-designs the learning environment with the students. This sharing of authority aids students in fashioning their own perspectives on learning and discovery and in feeling a sense of belonging in the scholarly and professional world.

Tier 3: Moving Toward Self-Authorship

When the internal voice overtakes external influences, students are moving toward self-authorship. Marcia Baxter Magolda (2001) found in her longitudinal study that this phase features adults who have:

shifted from 'how you know' to 'how I know' and in doing so began to choose their own beliefs. They acknowledged the inherent uncertainty of knowledge and took up the challenge of choosing what to believe in this context. They also attempted to live out their beliefs in their work and personal lives. . . This emerging sense of self required renegotiation of existing relationships that had been built on external approval at the expense of personal needs and the creation of new mutual relationships consistent with the internal voice. (pp. 119-120)

Although few participants in Baxter Magolda's study actually reached this phase while in college, we believe that with the appropriate levels of support and challenge, students can attain this level of development prior to graduation.

Educators can assist students who are in this stage by:

1. Validating students as scholars and professionals (e.g., assuming the role of a mentor or coach; setting high expectations together and working with students to reach those expectations;

- offering opportunities for students to undertake and assume responsibility for their own projects; discussing the social, cultural, ethical or political implications of their work);
2. Situating learning in students' experiences (e.g., engaging in continuous reflection on choices and whether they are aligned with one's belief system; encouraging the student to present his or her scholarly findings in public settings or apply knowledge to authentic situations; encouraging students to reflect on college experiences relate to one's career and life goals);
 3. Offering opportunities to mutually construct knowledge (e.g., encouraging student-designed and assessed projects, co-authoring work, submitting projects for publication, sharing work publicly; placing students' work in the context of other scholarship or professional practice; creating life and career plans that build on previous work).

A two-semester capstone experience offered by Dr. Osama Ettouney in the Department of Manufacturing and Mechanical Engineering is purposefully designed to replicate an authentic business or industrial environment. Students in this year-long course operate as design engineers in a multidisciplinary team with the faculty advisor serving as "consultant." Teams undergo all of the steps in the engineering design process—recognizing need, defining the problem, conducting research, synthesizing, analyzing and evaluating data, presenting the design and manufacturing the product. The most recent course focused on designing, fabricating and installing a human-powered water pump system for the village of Gwele Kona in Mali, West Africa so that an orphanage could be built.

Thorough research was conducted in the areas of technology, culture, and organization based on a conceptual model. Cultural considerations such as the literacy rate and socioeconomic conditions were taken into account for the design and implementation, and the team studied the native language of Bambara and French so that they could work directly with the villagers to install it and to help them to maintain it. As a result, the team decided to purchase a cistern tank and use stainless steel tubing for the posts because of structural efficiency. Using a design matrix and engineering analysis, a reciprocating positive displacement piston pump was chosen for its head range and simplicity. The team also decided that a merry-go-round would be the best option for a power source and for reliability and construction issues. They raised funds, packed and shipped the pump system to Mali and spent a week there to complete the installation. Unfortunately, the site selected by the local well drilling contractor yielded no water.

Given that water was not found, it may seem like the students' work was unsuccessful. However, in reality, this project and its challenges afforded students a wealth of learning opportunities as evident in an email sent by one of the instructors, Dr. Carter Hamilton, who accompanied the students to Mali. He noted that despite their inability to find water:

I am very proud of these students. Not only are they bright individuals, they are good people that handle themselves extremely well and are gracious to everyone they meet. To be honest, they could do this all on their own, but it has been a wonderful experience for me.

One of the Mali leaders sent an email to his pastor further detailing not only the challenges the team faced but also the gratitude of villagers for the students' efforts:

It is very hard for me to tell you that our drilling work has failed. . . Before drilling, we asked for a prospecting [in order] to be sure to find water, and we paid for that. . . . Some people of the

church and board want me to ask for a reimbursement, and some others [do] not. . . . The villagers are very sad and disappointed, and they think we failed because the land is haunted. They tried to make sacrifices to have the spirits' favor, but we stopped them. We are continuing to explain to them what happened, and we have planned a seminar there to speak about spirits and religion. . . . I was really downcast when I saw tears in people's eyes, but I could not show my anger because I had to strengthen everybody as a leader. . . . We praise the Lord for Mr. Carter and the Miami students who were here to install the pump. . . . Even if we have not found the water we were looking for, their names will be written in the story of these villages—the story of the heroes who have fought the battle for water, the battle for life. . . . We have seen their sacrifice.

As these testimonies show, the students learned to navigate and communicate across cultural barriers, integrate learning from a wide range of disciplines, confront emotional hurdles, and operate as an independent team to construct a new water system for others. Even more impressively they became so invested in the value of the project that they worked diligently to set up plans so that another capstone team could continue their efforts the following year. The faculty has promised that next year's team will build on the work that this first team completed, revise efforts and try again—just as scholars fill in gaps and build on the work of other scholars.

Like Jessica's founding of *La Voz*, the Latino Business Association, this team project would not have been possible for students to achieve in their first year or Tier 1. Students needed to have attained a certain level of personal, relational and intellectual maturity—a maturity made possible through supportive and challenging learning environments that gradually increased in sophistication throughout their undergraduate life. The table below summarizes the evolving partnership between students and educators throughout the trajectory of the undergraduate experience.

Table 6: Summary of the Engaged Learning University

<i>Stage</i>	Foundations	Intermediate	Capstone
<i>Student Traits</i>	Reliant upon external formulas	Questioning external authorities; developing own voice	Using internal voice to guide actions and work
<i>Educator Role</i>	Designs learning experiences to promote active student engagement	Co-designs learning experiences with students	Guides students in designing, implementing and reflecting on their own discovery projects
<i>Key Learning Goals</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Ask relevant questions ◦ Identify multiple perspectives ◦ Gain foundational knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Practice authentic tasks & methods ◦ Collaborate on diverse teams ◦ Connect inquiries to personal beliefs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Design and reflect on own inquiries ◦ Integrate learning from multiple domains ◦ Apply lessons learned to future goals
<i>Sample Assignments & Activities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Simulations ◦ Role-playing different perspectives ◦ Structured reflections ◦ Case studies, authentic scenarios ◦ Multidisciplinary panels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Service learning projects ◦ Student-led classes ◦ Faculty-student research teams ◦ Internships with ongoing reflection ◦ Faculty-student team-taught courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Student-designed inquiries & initiatives ◦ Portfolios ◦ Exhibitions, performances ◦ Conference presentations ◦ Publications ◦ Community engagement projects

Transforming the University: Transforming Ourselves

Generating the vision for Engaged Learning constitutes only the first step in a complex and challenging process of transforming the university to enact the vision. We must work with our colleagues in much the same way as we work with our students—that is, by applying the principles of the Learning Partnerships Model (i.e., validating them as fellow scholars and professionals; encouraging them to apply the principles in ways that are aligned with their particular disciplinary or other context; and exchanging ideas in order to learn and develop new ways of educating together).

Educators who have engaged in large-scale organizational transformation using the Learning Partnerships Model emphasize this point. Describing a three-year process of organizing the University of Nevada, Las Vegas student affairs division to focus on learning, Rebecca Mills and Karen Strong wrote, “Rather than senior officers ‘unveiling’ a plan for others to implement, they asked directors to actively participate in designing a new plan for the division in order to mutually construct the division’s future” (2004, p. 271). The staff spent two years defining the characteristics, values, and structures of the new organization they envisioned. Despite substantial success in collaboration to construct a new future, when it was time to implement the new organizational structure it became apparent that staff had not had sufficient opportunities to acquire the developmental capacities to “think, interact, and participate in” the new learning organization (p. 290). Thus another year of work on staff readiness preceded the successful implementation of the new vision.

Similarly, the leadership of California State University, Northridge spent the last five years guiding CSUN toward becoming a learning-centered university. Using a collaborative vision and shared construction of learning outcomes led to substantial university-wide collaboration focused on improving student learning. However, collaborative partnerships were difficult to achieve due to the challenge of overcoming functional silos (Koester, Hellenbrand, & Piper, 2008). The five vice presidents developed an approach to this issue that resulted in “effective ongoing partnerships between the divisions of student affairs, academic affairs, information technology, administration and finance, and university advancement” (p. 15).

Terry Wildman, in telling the story of using the Learning Partnerships Model to reframe faculty development and general education at Virginia Tech, noted that,

...old designs run deep. Indeed they are embodied in the classrooms where knowledge is *delivered*, in the curriculum practices where requirements are *checked off*, in the space utilization policies where time is *parsed out* in small manageable chunks, in the textbooks where knowledge is carefully *scripted and decontextualized*, and even in the organizational structures where disciplines can be *isolated* and protected within their own departments. (2004, p. 250-251, italics in original)

Thus designing an engaged learning university requires rethinking educational vision, educational practice, and longstanding structures that guide our work. The magnitude of revisioning educational practice to focus on engaged learning requires time and learning partnerships among faculty, staff, and administrators to learn new ways of constructing the complex work involved in engaged learning.

At Miami, we plan to build on the lessons learned at these three institutions and focus on the following strategies for institutional transformation:

1. Make concerted efforts to conceive of all faculty, staff, and parents as educators and partners in students' development, and forge partnerships among these constituencies to shape and reshape a vision of engaged learning.
2. Engage educators in transforming the university culture through what Peter Senge calls "learningful conversations" (1990, p. 9) in which educators share success stories of student learning and development as a means of identifying and reinforcing best practices and increasing enthusiasm for engaged learning.
3. Support new forms of collaboration across traditional boundaries.
4. Use evidence of student learning to guide practice.
5. Involve a wide range of constituencies in reviewing and reimagining existing policies and practices, particularly moving away from a focus on customer satisfaction, checklists, and formulas toward an emphasis on authentic reflection, development, and learning.

We have already taken concerted steps to advance institutional transformation, including offering grants to transform our highest enrollment liberal education courses. The "Top 25 Project" asks faculty to redesign their courses away from "telling students what they need to know" and toward sparking "their curiosity to drive their learning" (Office of Liberal Education, 2009). A new faculty and staff learning community focusing on engaged learning involving 15 departments is also underway.

Our aim is to clarify and deepen as well as foster enthusiasm for a coherent educational vision of engaged learning by promoting learning everywhere and with everyone. Faculty, staff, and committee meetings must become open sites of learning where our mental models and deeply ingrained assumptions about education are uncovered, scrutinized, and re-imagined; innovation and experimentation are encouraged; and members engage in continuous assessment and reflection.

A vision that is founded on the development of students depends upon the willingness of educators to engage in lifelong learning and development. Although this may seem like a tall order, viewed from another perspective, the task is relatively simple. It means that we must remind ourselves to focus on what universities do best: advance the learning of all.

The Promise of Engaged Learning for Student Success

Sternberg reminds us that the current educational practice does not adequately prepare graduates for the demands of adult work and life after college. As we have demonstrated in this paper, successful learning results from appropriately sequenced curricula that promote cognitive, interpersonal and intrapersonal growth. Jessica's story illustrates that students who achieve self-authorship do not simply enter the workforce, but participate in social change, shaping society and contributing as effective citizens. Research demonstrates that self-authorship benefits all learners because they are able to manage complex intellectual, work, and personal challenges (Baxter Magolda, 2001; in press), overcome the effects of oppression, racism, and marginalization (Abes & Jones, 2004; Pizzolato, 2003; Torres & Hernandez, 2007), and engage in authentic, interdependent relationships with diverse others (Yonkers Talz, 2004). Thus the Engaged University offers the transformative learning necessary to achieve the goals of liberal arts education.

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