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HOW FACULTY PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-AUTHORSHIP

AT A PRIVATE, FAITH-BASED INSTITUTION

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A thesis

Presented to

The School of Graduate Studies

Department of Higher Education and Student Development

Taylor University

Upland, Indiana

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Higher Education and Student Development

_____

by

Heather Jane Tyner

May 2013

Higher Education and Student Development
Taylor University
Upland, Indiana

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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MASTER'S THESIS

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This is to certify that the Thesis of

Heather Jane Tyner

entitled

How Faculty Promote the Development of Self-Authorship
at a Private, Faith-Based Institution

has been approved by the Examining Committee for the thesis requirement for the

Master of Arts degree
in Higher Education and Student Development

May 2013

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to understand the elements of self-authorship and the methods faculty used to promote self-authorship at a private, faith-based institution. Self-authorship is a developmental theory and framework that explores how people develop cognitively, intrapersonally, and interpersonally. In self-authorship, individuals move from externally defining who they are, what they believe, and how they relate to others, to internally defining their identity, beliefs, and relationships. The capacity to internally define one's identity, beliefs, and relationships is essential in order to live an intentional, purposeful, and meaningful life.

Higher education institutions are ideal environments for the development of self-authorship in students. Students are in the midst of discovering who they are and who they desire to become. During this time, faculty have the opportunity to support and challenge students to internally define their identity, beliefs, and relationships. Research in the process and outcomes of self-authorship is relatively new, and a gap exists regarding the development of self-authorship within a private, faith-based institution (PFI). Therefore, this study was guided by the following two questions:

1) Which elements (processes and outcomes) of self-authorship do faculty at a PFI seek to promote?

2) What are the methods faculty use that are most helpful in promoting these elements of self-authorship in their students?

A phenomenological, qualitative study was utilized in answering these questions. Findings included the elements of self-authorship faculty desire to instill in students, the methods they use to develop these elements, and the influence of faculty traits and motivation in their teaching and relating with students. Implications and recommendations for practice followed and focus on the importance of hiring faculty who demonstrate traits found to foster self-authorship in students, as well as a faculty development program that instructs faculty and student development professionals in the foundation, processes, and outcomes of self-authorship.

Acknowledgements

"Wherever you turn your eyes the world can shine like transfiguration.
You don't have to bring a thing to it except a little willingness to see.
Only, who could have the courage to see it?"
Marilynne Robinson, *Gilead*

To those who have given me courage to see the beauty and wonder of life and of my place in it. Thank you again and again.

My family: All my life I have had love and goodness from you. I am here today because of your encouragement, example, and prayers. Thank you for being you, and for helping me to be me. I thank God for you.

My dearest friends: How can I describe the countless ways you have shown me love? Thank you for doing daily life with me, for seasons of joy and sadness, and for teaching me how to live a deeper, fuller, richer, crazier life. I have delighted in stepping into the newness of each day with you and am changed for the better because of your love. Thank you for being who you are.

My professors, past and present: The gift of an enlightened mind and liberation from ignorance is one that will increase in reward for me day by day. You taught me by your words and you taught me by your life. Thank you for the way you let your life speak and for having a vision for my life when my imagination could not grasp it.

My God: Life with you has taken away the scales from my eyes and heart, allowing me to see and to feel. The world is indeed transfigured, and it is your beauty that washes over it and over me. I thank you for the gifts you give, but even more for the

greatest grace of being with you.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Background

Higher education intends to be an environment where knowledge acquisition

occurs. Though this was previously a sufficient outcome, currently students are entering a

world where knowledge alone will leave them unable to stay afloat in a very demanding

work place (Baxter Magolda, 1999, 2008; Kegan, 1994). What is needed within higher

education is a teaching-learning framework that goes beyond knowledge acquisition; one

that equips students to know who they are, what they believe, and how to form authentic

relationships in a diverse society. One helpful framework that promotes these outcomes is

self-authorship, one of many helpful pedagogical constructs. A better understanding of

what self-authorship is, how to promote it, and how it may be integrated in faith-based

education provides faculty with a strategy for teaching that prepares students for life

beyond graduation.

How Students Learn Influences What They Learn

The classroom is a key environment for most students and holds tremendous

potential as a place where students learn not just what to think but how to think. This

process begins with faculty meeting students at their current stage of development and

helping them connect what they are learning with their lived experiences (Baxter

Magolda, 1999, 2000, 2003; Baxter Magolda & King, 2007; Creamer, 2005; Gamache,

2002; Kegan, 1982, 1994; Tagg, 2003). This kind of learning requires a specific manner of teaching, for in order to connect knowledge with lived experience, it is not enough for faculty to simply disseminate knowledge. According to Kegan (1994), psychologist, author, and professor of adult development at Harvard University, "It is not enough for us to know what our students understand…we must also know the way he understands it" (p. 278). Such a philosophy of teaching is built upon the developmental construct known as meaning-making, which examines the evolution of how people organize their experiences (Kegan, 1994; Piaget, 1950). How people cognitively interpret and organize what happens to them has a powerful influence on how and what they learn (Baxter Magolda, 2007b; Piaget, 1950; Tagg, 2003).

The Potential Within Good Teaching

What students learn is influenced by the teaching they experience. It is therefore critically important to learn what kind of teaching promotes meaningful and lasting learning. Studies have shown that good teaching focuses on the holistic growth of students and understands that development "occurs in context, in interaction with the environment" (King, 2009, p. 613). This idea is a foundational element of a psychological framework called constructive-developmentalism. In this framework, it is understood that people construct meaning from their experiences, which occur within a particular environment/context, and how they interpret those experiences. They then gather these interpretations and organize them according to what they have previously experienced. Growth in development depends upon what people have experienced and their ability to incorporate new ways of understanding their experiences into their thinking and living (Kegan, 1994).

The constructive-developmental framework is important to understand because it demonstrates the significance of faculty knowing where students are in their cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal development in order to help them toward more complex ways of knowing and relating. Once current developmental stages are known, the constructive-developmental perspective asserts that development "evolves through eras according to regular principles of stability and change" (Baxter Magolda, 1999, p. 23; Kegan 1982). For faculty, this idea has profound implications. It presents a dilemma in that it is impossible to know each student's unique experiences and how these mediate their learning. However, opportunity arises from the fact that if development occurs "according to regular principles" in relationship with the environment, then educational environments may be created to meet and expand students' developmental capacities at particular stages (Baxter Magolda, 2000; Pizzolato, Nguyen, Johnston, & Wang, 2012).

The above framework differs from traditional pedagogy which typically "centers on students' acquiring knowledge without regard to how their own lives and experience mediate their beliefs" (Baxter Magolda, 2003, p. 232). Constructive-developmental pedagogy goes beyond content mastery and integrates "how we view knowing and knowledge (epistemological dimension), how we view ourselves (intrapersonal dimension), and how we view others (interpersonal dimension)" in the learning process (Baxter Magolda, 2008, p. 271). Teaching in this holistic manner has the tremendous potential to aid students in "internally determining their beliefs, identity, and social relations," all of which are components of self-authorship and necessary elements for understanding one's identity and place in the world (Baxter Magolda, 2008, p. 281).

Self-Authorship: A Developmental Theory and Outcome

As mentioned previously, teaching in a way that incorporates cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal development requires a new way of understanding the teaching-learning process. It must go beyond critical thinking and seek to help students be "self-initiating, guided by their own visions, responsible for their experience, and able to develop interdependent relations with diverse others" (Baxter Magolda, 2008, p. 269). These qualities are not just helpful in academia, but are essential for living well outside of school and after graduation. These outcomes are evoked when professors teach for self-authorship, or the "capacity to define one's beliefs, identity, and social relations" (Baxter Magolda, 2008, p. 269; Kegan, 1994). Though easy to define, self-authorship is a complex and continually evolving process within a student, and many do not evince these capacities until their late twenties or early thirties (Baxter Magolda, 2001; King & Kitchener, 1994).

Self-authorship also may be understood as a shift from reliance on external authorities (e.g., parents, peers, professors, media) to define one's identity, relationships, and values to a self-chosen and internalized identity, relationships, and value system (Baxter Magolda & King, 2012). This process may be understood within the meaning-making framework as the ability to choose how one assimilates and organizes what one experiences, rather than passively absorbing those experiences. As students grow in the development of self-authorship, they increase their appreciation of diverse perspectives, the ability to form authentic relationships, collaborate well with others, evaluate and assess knowledge, "think independently, and establish and defend one's own informed views," among other important outcomes (Baxter Magolda, 2003, p. 233; Hodge, Baxter

Magolda, & Haynes, 2009). Since these capacities are important for life post-graduation, it is crucial to foster their development during the college years (Baxter Magolda, 2008).

Teaching for Self-Authorship

Though normally students do not evince qualities of self-authorship until their late twenties or early thirties, some studies have shown that becoming self-authored is possible before and during the college years (Abes & Jones, 2004; Pizzolato, 2003; Torres & Hernandez, 2007) "if the appropriate challenge and support are available to enable it" (Baxter Magolda, 2008, p. 271). The potential for self-authorship to emerge in college gives faculty an enormous opportunity to help foster its growth and development within their students. As a common context for most students, the classroom can serve as a conduit for the development of the cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal dimensions of students.

However, little research has been conducted on the development of self-authorship within a faith-based university. As explained previously, self-authorship is both a process and outcome. Therefore, the elements of self-authorship which faculty promote are made up of both processes and outcomes. The elements of self-authorship are usually desirable within students, but do these elements look differently within a context of faith? Are all of them desirable? For the elements that are desirable, how do faculty promote them? The present study sought to answer these questions.

Research Questions

The purpose of the current study was to examine which elements of self-authorship are promoted by faculty at a Private, Faith-based Institution (PFI), as well as the methods that faculty within the institution used to promote them. The questions that

guided the research and methodology of the study focused on faculty perspectives for self-authorship, pedagogy, and the resulting characteristics of students who may demonstrate attributes of self-authorship that are deemed desirable at a PFI (e.g., ability to define and understand one's values, beliefs, identity, form authentic relationships with others, think critically and engage with diverse perspectives—all of which were mentioned previously). The questions were:

- Which elements (processes and outcomes) of self-authorship do faculty at a PFI seek to promote?

- What are the methods faculty use that are most helpful in promoting these elements of self-authorship in their students?

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Holistic Development of Students

One of the major goals of the college experience is for students to develop

holistically (Baxter Magolda, 2003; Holmes, 1987; Tagg, 2003). Particularly within faith-

based higher education, this goal is paramount. In his classic work, *The Idea of a*

Christian College, Arthur Holmes (1987) stated, "The question to ask about an education

is not 'What can I do with it?' but rather 'What is it doing to me—as a person?'

Education has to do with the making of persons" (p. 25). In "the making of persons," it is

not simply knowledge acquisition that must occur, but "knowledge framed in the context

of what [students] really believe and find meaningful" (Tagg, 2003, p. 70). Holistic

development is uniquely suited within faith-based institutions as an education "that

cultivates the creative and active integration of faith and learning, of faith and culture"

(Holmes, p. 6).

Faculty who teach at PFIs (private, faith-based institutions) teach for holistic

development. Teaching in a way that cultivates holistic development is inextricably

linked to the outcome of self-authorship within students. Students who grow in self-

authorship are empowered to define who they are, what they believe, and how they may

relate meaningfully with others. Understanding the theory and best practices that develop

self-authorship, as well as which elements of self-authorship faculty at a PFI seek to

promote, is one way faculty may engage with students toward meaningful learning that integrates who they are with what they know about the world around them.

The Current Educational Paradigm

As stated previously, holistic education is a key goal of faith-based higher education institutions. However, for many students this pursuit is hindered by the current educational paradigm. According to Baxter Magolda (1999a), Gamache (2002), and Hodge, Baxter Magolda, and Haynes (2009), research has shown that the development of self-authorship is often neglected due to systems in higher education that inhibit the role of the learner as an active agent in the meaning-making process, as well as placing knowledge in a sphere easily accessed only by the professor. The paradigm "reinforces students' role as passive-fact-absorbers," and as a result students leave higher education unprepared for the adult demands that are quickly placed upon them (Gamache, 2002, p. 281).

In Barr and Tagg's (1995) research on education, they identified the current educational paradigm as the Instruction Paradigm. This paradigm influences many higher education institutions and states the purpose of education "is to deliver instruction and transfer knowledge from faculty to students through offering courses and programs" (p. 232). The underlying assumption of the paradigm is that learning is often a passive activity focused on the mastery of objective content (Baxter Magolda, 2003; Gamache, 2002; Palmer, 1990). One of the dangers of the paradigm lies in its tendency to discourage curiosity, an important ingredient of life-long learning (Tagg, 2003). Shor (1992) explained this well when he argued that "people are born learners and that their natural curiosity is stifled by educational environments in which they are expected to

memorize rules and existing knowledge" (Baxter Magolda, 1999a, p. 38). Within this framework, faulty pedagogy may occur if faculty incorporate "misguided assumptions about learners," believing their passivity in the classroom to be an indicator of lower developmental capacity (p. 233). However, low student engagement may be a fostered by the Instruction Paradigm that reinforces students as passive absorbers of information (Baxter Magolda, 1999a).

Changing the Current Paradigm

Various teaching-learning theories and models have emerged over the last twenty years to counteract the Instruction Paradigm. These theories offer a vision for faculty in creating environments that encourage essential outcomes in students and cultivate their ability to be life-long learners. One recent theory that is in direct opposition to the Instruction Paradigm is *deep learning*. Deep learning is

> learning that takes root in the apparatus of understanding, in the embedded meanings that define us and that we use to define the world…In a deep approach to learning, the learner is the agent, an agent in motion, moving through, using and shaping the object of learning. (Tagg, 2003, p. 71)

Another theory is *transformative learning*. Transformative learning

> refers to the process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action. (Mezirow, 2000, p. 7-8)

Both deep and transformative learning, much like self-authorship, provide a framework for *how* to learn and not just *what* to learn (Baxter Magolda, 1999a). These

are two of many teaching-learning theories that present a different way of understanding the teaching and learning process. According to Tagg (2003), these theories help students "connect new learning with prior knowledge" (p. 71) so that they may be "inspired to go on learning long after college days are over" (Boyer, 1990, p. 12). These theories provide a foundation for teaching and learning within higher education by reinforcing the idea that

> if students do not learn well, it matters really not at all how many tests they pass, how high their grades, how much data they cover. It will all be lost and meaningless if it is not rooted in understanding. (Tagg, 2003, p. 86)

This is where the goal of self-authorship aligns with deep and transformative learning by emphasizing the opportunity faculty have to promote more than the ability to accumulate information, but also the ability to understand and connect it with their students' lived experience (Baxter Magolda, 1999a).

Private Faith-Based Institutions and Self-Authorship

Self-authorship goes beyond the cognitive and pragmatic dimensions of transformative and deep learning (Baxter Magolda, 2002; Hodge et al., 2009; Creamer, 2005). As mentioned in the previous chapter, self-authorship also seeks to develop the intrapersonal and interpersonal domains of students. The development of these domains supports the goal for whole-person education for students within PFIs. Holistic education is supported by self-authorship's framework for transitioning students from passive knowledge accumulation to "true understanding" (Tagg, 2003, p. 86). Helping students come to a "true understanding" of what they know, believe, and how they relate to others may be understood through self-authorship's emphasis on enabling students to become

knowledge constructors. Knowledge constructors are individuals who have the ability to know and form what they believe and value, why they believe it, how to relate to others who may think differently, and finally how to integrate their learning into daily life (Baxter Magolda, 1999, 2008; Kegan, 1982, 1994; Piaget, 1950).

Self-Authorship as a Process and Outcome

Though complex to understand and promote, self-authorship and knowledge construction cultivate essential developmental capacities in students. As students grow in their ability to construct knowledge, they become "thinkers capable of gathering, interpreting, and analyzing information in order to form sound judgments about what to believe" (Baxter Magolda, 1999a, p. 254). These abilities are evidence of "critical thinking, the most agreed-upon goal of higher education" (Baxter Magolda, 2003, p. 233). Critical thinking "requires the ability to define one's own beliefs in the context of existing knowledge" (Baxter Magolda, p. 233). This ability forms the heart of self-authorship as students shift from following others' practices and perspectives, to subsuming them into one's own, to finally coordinating one's own perspective and practice with that of others (1999a). Through evaluating and constructing knowledge, students form the beliefs, values and relationships that will guide their lives.

As development toward self-authorship continues, a person will grow in the ability to "evaluate information critically, form their own judgments, and collaborate with others to act wisely" (Hodge et al., 2009, p. 18). These outcomes are not only important for a successful college experience, but vital for an independent and thriving place in one's work and personal life post-college (Baxter Magolda, 1999a, 2002; Kegan, 1994).

In a world that is diverse and constantly changing, these abilities give students the resources, knowledge, and skills to shape their identities and relationships.

Foundation of Self-Authorship

Now that the importance of self-authorship has been articulated, as well how the outcomes it promotes are desirable within higher education and particularly within faith-based education, some of the foundational elements of self-authorship must be explained. As previously stated, self-authorship is rarely seen until the late twenties and early thirties (Baxter Magolda, 2001). The delay in developing complex ways of knowing and relating has been connected to "social and educational environments that reward reliance on authority" (as seen in the current Instructional Paradigm); however, research has suggested that "college students can operate at more complex levels of development than educators typically see if the context supports this more complex functioning" (Baxter Magolda, 2003, p. 236; Creamer 2005). Education that promotes development is not "simply presenting adequate information in an effective manner; it is a process that must incorporate the developmental readiness of the student" (Johnson & Hooper, 1982). Therefore, the purpose of the present study was to determine what instructional practices faculty at PFIs used to advance the development of self-authorship in undergraduates.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, self-authorship is grounded in constructive-developmental philosophy, a framework that focuses more upon the structure of knowledge than the content (Baxter Magolda, 1999a). Constructive-developmentalism views knowledge as socially constructed and development as the active participation and understanding of one's role in knowledge construction (Baxter Magolda, 1999a; Piaget, 1970, 1977). Because of this perspective, the "self" is always central in the meaning-

making/knowledge construction process. For faculty, this means that helping students to bring their beliefs, values, and relationships to the learning environment encourages "a critical awareness of one's role in composing their own reality" (Baxter Magolda, 2003, p. 237).

However, the statement of "composing their own reality" ought not to be mistaken for a relativistic "anything goes" mentality. Simply stated, the constructive-developmental stance is one way of explaining that each person perceives and experiences reality differently. To help balance the self and its perceptions and interpretations of reality, self-authorship also assumes that, though the self is central in knowledge construction, it is not isolated; because interactions with others and relationships are a guarantee in life, knowledge is inherently mutual in its construction (Baxter Magolda, 2003). This means that people affect and impact one another, thereby influencing one another's perspectives and experiences. This outlook has significant implications for students and faculty and makes the teaching-learning process a mutual journey (Baxter Magolda, 2002).

Phases of Self-Authorship

A dynamic, mutual relationship among students and faculty in the teaching-learning process is crucial for self-authorship to occur. According to Baxter Magolda (2002; 2003) and Pizzolato (2005), for many college students the journey toward self-authorship will likely be a difficult one. Most students enter higher education with the typical epistemic (one's beliefs about the nature of knowledge) assumption that knowledge is certain and possessed by authorities (Baxter Magolda, 1992; Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; King & Kitchener, 1994; Perry, 1970). As

students progress through their college years, this belief will hopefully change as they begin to move from "external to internal self-definition and authority" (Baxter Magolda, 2000, p. 92).

Self-authorship cannot be understood as a "simple linear trajectory" (Baxter Magolda, 2008, p. 281). The movement from external to internal self-definition is a process that "evolves in its complexity but does not arrive or end at a set level….Ultimately the journey described…takes a cyclical shape in which stages overlap and intersect" (Taylor, 2008, p. 232). This complex and cyclical development involves three major phases: "following external formulas, the crossroads, and self-authorship" (Baxter Magolda, 2009, p. 629). By entering into higher education, many students are given the opportunity to encounter these phases as they leave their pre-college environments, guidelines, and structures behind. This can be an overwhelming process, but one that is greatly helped if faculty meet students where they are currently in their developmental journey and support them in continued growth (Parks, 2011). Joining with students in a mutual partnership to help them define their beliefs, identity, and relationships internally is essential in advancing self-authorship.

External formulas. The first phase of self-authorship is the external formulas phase, when one assumes "authorities had the answers, identifies one's self through external expectations, and defers to others in relationships" (Baxter Magolda, 2009, p. 18). Transitioning students from this phase may be challenging since many students were taught by others how to think and what to think. Much of what was internalized was accepted without critical examination. Living in an uncritical assimilation stage may work for awhile, but eventually one encounters situations that are unexplainable in one's

current developmental framework. This recognition is usually disequilibrizing, and presents the choice to remain dependent on external influence or begin to question one's current beliefs, identity, or relationships (Baxter Magolda, 2009).

The crossroads. The self-questioning that occurs forms the next phase: the crossroads. The process is characterized by a tension "between internal and external influence where learners struggle to sort through multiple perspectives to choose their own beliefs" (Baxter Magolda, 2007, p. 493; Piaget 1970, 1977). The crossroads phase is often evoked by a "provocative moment" (Pizzolato, 2005; Pizzolato et al., 2012). A provocative moment, according to Pizzolato (2005), is an experience that results from a student's way of knowing being significantly challenged and leading to the formation of internal commitments. Before this provocative moment students may encounter many disequilibrizing situations that make the crossroads a process rather than a one-time event in the life of a student (Baxter Magolda, 2009).

Encountering diverse perspectives at the crossroads stage can be very uncomfortable for students, even with adequate challenge and support. The discomfort partly "stems from the knowledge that one needs to construct one's own beliefs and values yet at the same time one has not formed internal criteria to use to do so" (Baxter Magolda, 2009, p. 630). For faculty, helping students sift through and discern what they have uncritically accepted and what they truly believe is an essential element for students to reach the next stage: self-authorship.

Self-authorship. Self-authorship is the ability to internally define one's beliefs, identity, and relationships, thereby encompassing the cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal dimensions in human development. The shift from the crossroads to self-

authorship requires a reframing of external formulas, placing what a student has accepted unconditionally into a context that is understood through the lens of their own experiences and beliefs. This shift occurs as students reframe what they have been told until they take ownership of it and choose what to believe. In the words of other scholars on the subject, "Right answers are replaced by right thinking" (Olsen, Bekken, Drezek McConnel, & Walter, 2011, p. 142). Often this happens as students live out their internal values in their experiences.

Because self-authorship does not happen after one given experience, it may be understood as a "relatively enduring orientation toward disequilibrizing or provocative experiences that involves (a) recognition of the contextual nature of knowledge, and (b) balances this understanding with the development of one's own internally defined goals and sense of self" (Baxter Magolda, 2001; Kegan, 1994; Pizzolato, 2003; Wawryznksi, 2006, p. 677). As this process unfolds, one comes to form their "values, beliefs and interpersonal loyalties and intrapersonal states internally rather than depending upon external authorities to decide them" (Baxter Magolda, 2008, p. 270).

In conclusion, the phases of external formulas, the crossroads, and self-authorship form a developmental journey informed by numerous other theorists and provide both methods and outcomes for student growth (Baxter Magolda, 2001, 2007a, 2008, 2009; Kegan, 1982, 1994; Piaget, 1970, 1977; Perry, 1970; Wildman, 2007).

Pedagogy Advancing Self-Authorship

Teaching for self-authorship creates a unique framework for education, one that Baxter Magolda (1999a) described as "the process of developing one's own perspective

in the context of existing understandings of the world" (p. 38). Gregory (2008) described

the process with regard to knowledge absorption versus knowledge accumulation:

> Knowledge that gets absorbed shows up not as knowledge but as features of
>
> mind and character that are much more valuable than mere information.
>
> Information we can always look up, but when a thing gets absorbed, it turns into
>
> ideas and skills, and it turns into forms of socialization and cognition that shape
>
> students' intuitions and that strengthen their powers of language, imagination,
>
> judgment and reasoning. (p. 33)

To teach in such a way, educators must "move away from the traditional role of the

expert or avoid the tendency to seek students' approval and instead push students to gain

intellectual, relational, and personal maturity through continuous feedback and high

expectations" (Baxter Magolda, 2002, p. 19).

Faculty who promote self-authorship help students "understand the basis for their

decisions, explore alternative bases and approaches, and consider the criteria used to

compare the quality of alternative explanations" (King, 2009, p. 599). Educating for self-

authorship requires a certain kind of pedagogy, one where faculty and students create a

"mutual partnership characterized by mutual respect and active change of perspectives"

(Baxter Magolda, 2002, p. 8; Parks, 2011). By promoting critical reflection and

expressing a genuine interest in students' current place of development and knowledge,

faculty can "encourage thoughtful consideration of knowledge claims in place of passive

assimilation" (Bryant, 2011, p. 18).

Faculty who teach beyond content mastery and "passive assimilation" give

students the capacity to learn beyond the classroom and prepare them for life post-

graduation. When faculty promote self-authorship it enables students "to know the state of their own knowledge, and [only then] can they effectively self-direct learning to the unknown," (Hacker, 1998, p. 13). Though evidence has been presented for its numerous benefits, a gap yet exists in the research on self-authorship's relationship with faith-based education and pedagogy.

Self-Authorship within Faith-Based Institutions

It is yet unclear if promoting self-authorship ought to be a premier goal for students within faith-based institutions. The beneficial outcomes of self-authorship have been articulated, but the assumptions upon which it is grounded may not mesh with some of the tenets at most PFI's. The placement of self at the center of the developmental process may conflict with a PFI's philosophy that "prioritizes interdependent relationships with God and community" (Bryant, 2011, p. 29). Instead, research in the combination of self-authorship and PFI's has led some scholars to wonder if "'authorship' may not be primarily attuned to self, but may invoke a blend of divine, community, and individual voices" (Bryant, 2011, p. 29). What this looks like has yet to be studied.

This gap in the self-authorship literature presents the opportunity for new, dynamic pedagogy to be developed. For both students and faculty at a PFI, self-authorship can help with what many hold to be a worthy aim of religious education: literally "making up one's own mind" (Baxter Magolda, 1999a, p. 6). Coming to know what one believes and why is essential if one is to know and follow Christ in a genuine and personal way. Though belief in Christ is communal, knowing one's beliefs, or as Baxter Magolda said, "making up one's own mind" with regard to one's identity in

Christ, is necessary so as not to solely rely upon the beliefs and values of others. Perry (1981) supported this when he said, "It is in one's way of affirming commitments that one finds at last the elusive sense of 'identity' one has searched for elsewhere" (p. 97).

The ability to know one's beliefs and identity, especially within a community of believers, has the potential to make one "simultaneously more flexible and more grounded" (Baxter Magolda, 1999b, p. 20). For faculty, self-authorship can provide a means to help students "maintain convictions concerning the truth of central tenets of evangelical Christianity, as well as evidence an awareness of differences in interpretation on debatable issues" (Baxter Magolda, 1999b, p. 21). Research has also demonstrated that the goal of developing

> self-authorship benefits all learners, because they are able to manage complex
> intellectual work and personal challenges (Baxter Magolda, 2001, 2009);
> 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). (Hodge et
> al., 2009, p. 22)

All of these qualities are desirable within a person who is striving to be a disciple of Christ, and PFIs have the opportunity to incorporate teaching techniques that advance these by promoting self-authorship in students. Therefore, the purpose of the present study was to determine what methods faculty at PFIs use to advance the development of self-authorship in undergraduates.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Methods

The primary purpose of the study was to understand how faculty at PFIs promote self-authorship in their students. With this in mind, a phenomenological design was utilized. In a phenomenological study, the researcher seeks to describe a particular and shared phenomenon based upon the "specific statements and experiences" of those they interview (Creswell, Morales, Plano & Hanson, 2007, p. 252). Within a phenomenological design, the assumption is that perception and understanding are a direct result of lived experience (Husserl, 1970). A phenomenological study is then interested in how individuals experience the phenomenon through their own perception, as well as the essence of the phenomena itself (Husserl, 1970; Patton, 1990).

In the study, the ways in which self-authorship was taught was a phenomenon best understood by studying it through the perceptions and experiences of faculty. To draw forth the richest descriptions from the participants, purposeful sampling was used. In this kind of sampling, a "researcher intentionally selects individuals…to learn or understand the central phenomenon" (Creswell, 2008, p. 214).

There are a variety of effective strategies that faculty use to promote self-authorship. These techniques are designed to promote the holistic growth and development of students (Baxter Magolda, Haynes, & Hodge, 2009; Haynes & Leonard, 2010). As such, the researcher identified eight faculty members at a PFI who were known

for providing opportunities for critical analysis, reflective thinking, inviting multiple perspectives, and validating their learners as capable of knowing; all of which are elements that provide a context for self-authorship (Baxter Magolda, 2003).

Participants

In order to provide a multifaceted view on self-authorship at the PFI, the following inclusionary criteria were used in the selection of the eight faculty: (1) men and women equally participated, (2) all participants taught a different discipline from within all four schools in the university, (3) all had taught for a minimum of five years, (4) and all had been reviewed by the Dean of Faculty Development as individuals who were known for outstanding teaching. Each participant adhered to an orthodox understanding of the Christian faith and affirmed the mission and purposes of the institution.

After the faculty were identified, they received an e-mail explaining the study and inviting them to participate in an interview. The institution from which the participants were selected was a small, private liberal-arts institution with a non-denominational religious affiliation. It was committed to whole-person education as evidenced through its mission to integrate faith and learning in curricular and co-curricular experiences.

Interview Protocol

As previously stated, self-authorship is a relatively new framework and theory that has become more prominent within literature and research in the last twenty years. In order to not lead participants, but also to adhere to the goals of the interview, the concept of self-authorship was clarified and discussed in the middle of the interview. This was done to prevent confusion surrounding terminology and with the understanding that the concept of self-authorship may be utilized within the classroom under various names and

processes. Because of this, connections arose naturally between the participant responses and the concept of self-authorship.

A pilot interview was given to aid in the formulation and refinement of questions. The interview helped the researcher in preparing questions that were easily understood and provided valid data on the phenomenon of self-authorship in the classroom. The interview questions may be found in the Appendix. Some of the questions were sent prior to the interviews in order to provide faculty with adequate time to develop their responses.

Procedure

The eight participants were given an informed consent agreement prior to their interview and a description of the interview protocol. The interview protocol included the content and purpose of the study, described and clarified the time needed to interview (approximately sixty minutes), and explained that all information disclosed would remain confidential. During the participant interviews, the context and purpose of the study was reviewed. With their permission, all eight of the interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded. The coding process was an essential element of the data analysis as it helped narrow the scope of information from the interviews until some common themes were revealed. The common themes were categorized and formed the basis of the study in relation to the research questions.

Chapter 4

Results

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to reveal which elements of self-authorship select faculty at a private, faith-based institution promoted in their students and the methods they used to promote these elements. For the purposes of the study, self-authorship was defined as the ability to internally "define one's beliefs, identity, and relationships," (Baxter Magolda, 2008, p. 269; Kegan, 1994).

As stated in the previous chapter, a phenomenological study was utilized to gather data. In a phenomenological study, a researcher describes the essence, or the fundamental nature, of a particular phenomenon. Because of this design, the experiences and perception of the participants are paramount in understanding the phenomenon. In the present study, the essence of self-authorship and how it was promoted within a private, faith-based institution was a phenomenon best understood by studying it through the perceptions and experiences of faculty.

Data analysis from eight interviews with select faculty provided rich and multifaceted information on the essence of self-authorship and its promotion at a PFI. The themes revealed elements of self-authorship which faculty in a PFI desired to instill in students, how they instilled these elements, and how personal traits of the participants influenced their teaching and relating.

Findings

  Elements of self-authorship faculty sought to promote. Eight of the eight participants expressed a desire for their students to experience meaningful learning. Through their teaching and relating, these professors hoped to provide opportunities for students to engage in learning that has an all-encompassing and practical effect on their lives. One professor said, "I hope [the learning students receive in my classes] is more than just intellectual stimulation or a religious ritual; that it is in fact the standard for their thought world, their practice, the way they live, relate to other people, worship God…" The participants articulated three specific elements they hoped students would exemplify as a result of meaningful teaching and learning. These three elements formed the themes in response to the first research question: through their teaching and relating, participants sought to promote in their students (1) faithfulness to Christian beliefs, (2) critical thinking, and (3) life-long learning.

  Faithfulness to Christian beliefs. Eight out of eight participants described how they hoped to teach in a way that empowered students to live compelling lives grounded in Christian beliefs. Through their teaching, participants helped students understand how to actively and intentionally integrate biblical values and precepts into their daily life. Faithfulness was not something the participants thought was easy to instill, nor easy for students to practice; instead it takes "a lot of thought and effort and a lot of rolling up your sleeves and messing it up." By promoting faithfulness to Christian beliefs, participants presented students with the opportunity to courageously explore what they believe and why. Through this process, participants hoped to equip students in stewarding the talents and responsibilities they possess for the good of themselves and others.

Critical thinking. Eight out of eight participants stated that the ability to think critically was a skill they hoped to instill in their students through their teaching and relating. Participants described critical thinking as students' ability to see connections between what they learn and experience, think for themselves, "own" their beliefs, and create their own ideas and opinions. One participant defined critical thinking as the ability to "analyze the information, synthesize it, put it together, discard what is not useful or false, and put other people's ideas together to formulate your own opinion." Participants desired students to grow in critical thinking, so they would be enabled to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize divergent information in their search for truth.

By growing in this ability, one participant described how students would be empowered to bring their experiences and identity to the learning process. As a result, students would have "a lot more confidence in their voice, saying, 'These are my ideas. This is who I am. This is what I care about.'" Participants described how critical thinking, or the process of analyzing, evaluating, and forming one's identity and beliefs, was constantly incorporated in their teaching and relating in some manner.

Life-long learning. Four out of eight participants mentioned that they promoted genuine, unquenchable curiosity about the world. One participant stated that he hoped his students "want to keep learning, want to keep knowing, to know that what they have learned in these four years is not going to be enough, and they like that, they want to learn." The participants expressed how they hope what students learn in the classroom fuels a desire to learn throughout their lifetime.

In order for students to desire and be enabled to learn throughout their lifetime, one participant mentioned how it was crucial for students to realize

…that knowledge isn't something that these smart people at college are talking

about and handing out to them; that in their time here, they have learned to learn

for themselves, learned to think for themselves, they have learned to construct

their own ideas.

Participants described how the element of life-long learning included awareness of how

little one knows, but how this awareness ought to be framed as an exciting opportunity

for students to continually grow and develop.

Other elements mentioned by select participants. Four participants offered

various elements that are relevant to the first research question. Two participants

expressed their hoped that students would develop the ability to make wise choices. One

participant created and discussed a list of ten traits she strived to cultivate in students:

maturity, self-awareness, compassion demonstrated in service, leadership, humility,

social intelligence, biblical wisdom, personal responsibility, eagerness to learn, and a

"really strong sense of the meaning of grace and awareness of its enormity and filled with

its mystery and wonder." Another participant desired for students to "be able to develop a

skill set that demonstrates excellence…that ties back to their value system and who they

are." Each of these elements, along with godliness, critical thinking, and lifelong-

learning, spoke to the holistic development the participants desired students to experience

through the participants' teaching and relating.

Methods for promoting self-authorship. Analysis of participant responses

revealed how they taught so students formed connections between their current learning

and prior experiences and knowledge. According to one professor, "That is the key—

connecting what [students] already know and who they are, including the ideas that they

care about, to something that is academic." The idea of connecting self to learning is an important facet of self-authorship. Four themes emerged regarding the methods participants use to help students connect their lives to their learning and foster the development of self-authorship: (1) integrating faith into current learning, (2) providing opportunities for students to evaluate their current beliefs and analyze issues from diverse perspectives, (3) establishing meaningful relationships with students, and (4) reflection.

Integrating faith into current learning. Eight out of eight professors integrated principles of Christian faith in their teaching to help students think from a theological perspective. Integrating faith and learning was a new experience for many students: "For a lot of them, they have never thought about their work as a student as being a part of living out their Christian life." Instead of incorporating faith as a separate dimension into their classroom, participants understood faith as an inextricable part of everything they do. One professor said, "I don't want [students] to separate faith from anything that they do…I want to teach everything as if it is a way of thinking theologically." Because participants desired students not to view learning and faith as separate entities, they taught in a way that seamlessly integrated faith with course content.

The participants understood the integration of faith and learning as essential in comprehending the purpose of education. One professor stated,

> I think the understanding of what is at stake in education comes from a faith vantage point: the belief that students are created in the image of God, that their minds are a gift, that their life is a gift; and they have the potential to steward those gifts in ways that they can't fully perceive yet, but in ways that are going to be way more productive than they can imagine.

Because faith was the lens through which the participants perceived their students and teaching, they created an environment where faith was infused in the classroom assignments, dialogue, group work, and professor-student relationships.

Encouraging students to evaluate beliefs. Six out of eight participants used classroom techniques that helped students temporarily suspend their own judgments and evaluate their current beliefs. "Wherever your students are when they come to you," said one participant, "they are coming with some false information, false assumptions…there needs to be some unraveling and putting back together." The process of "unraveling" began by examining what students currently knew and believed through a variety of methods: giving controversial dilemmas for students to discuss and debate, presenting students with multiple perspectives through group assignments, and participants discussing their own beliefs and thought processes in class. Through the use of these methods, students were encouraged to evaluate their own beliefs and assumptions.

Five out of eight participants stated that they incorporated challenging questions for students, requiring them to analyze issues from multiple perspectives. They desired their classroom to be a place where multiple perspectives could be voiced, discussed, and thoughtfully evaluated. One participant said he "tries to create an atmosphere and environment where students have the comfort of knowing that different perspectives will always be respected." Teaching was less about giving answers and more about "allowing students to ask big questions…To enjoy the messiness of the learning process." None of the participants conveyed a desire for students to adhere to their personal beliefs or values simply because they were the professor. They recognized how, as one participant said, "Dogma almost never prompts real conviction." Through these methods, participants

described how evaluating assumptions and engaging with multiple perspectives were crucial aspects of helping students navigate diverse information and form their own beliefs.

Establishing meaningful relationships with students. Five participants revealed that developing relationships with students both inside and outside of the classroom was a significant motivation for their teaching. The desire to form meaningful relationships with students arose from their understanding that "there is a lot more to us as human beings than just the intellect." Because of this, intentionally investing in students both inside and outside of the classroom was an important aspect of participants' teaching. Another said,

> If a student is interested in getting together, I always try to be available for that. I try to be true to my office hours—that is very important. I have done things like serve tea in class and just try to create an environment that is not quite as stifling and intimidating.

Forming mutual relationships allowed students to feel more comfortable in the classroom and with the professor, an outcome that one participant said "increased students' academic accomplishments."

However, participants did not state that academic success was the primary goal of establishing meaningful relationships with students. Instead, they described these relationships as personally meaningful and significant, stating, "As I continue my journey of life-long learning, these mutually beneficial relationships, [these students], end up teaching me as much as I teach them." Three out of eight participants viewed the

relationships they formed with select students as mentoring relationships, describing these relationships as invaluable.

Reflection. Four out of eight participants stated that they provided opportunities for students to practice reflective thinking through their teaching. One stated how her students "do some reflecting. For them personally, how does Scripture relate to [the] content? How do they see the connection?" Furthermore, these participants indicated that they ask questions, utilize reflective papers, assignments, group work, and connect Scripture with course content in order to promote reflection. Similar to their desire to evaluate current beliefs and critical thinking in students, participants desired to encourage reflection by "asking a lot of questions that [I] don't necessarily have the answer to." These methods cultivated greater self-awareness in students and provided opportunities for them to evaluate their beliefs and intentionally shape their behavior.

Additional themes. Two major themes emerged from the data that cannot be specifically tied to either research question. The first finding that emerged was related to the participants' motivation for teaching. The second finding identified personal traits of participants that influenced how they taught and related with students. These themes revealed how the motivation and identity of the participants permeated their teaching and relating and impacted how and why they promoted self-authorship in their students.

Motivation for teaching. Six out of eight participants stated that they became a professor due to the influence of a positive role model in their life, typically a high school teacher or college professor. They each named a specific individual who they desired to emulate. Participants described their role model as having characteristics of: "welcoming, authentic, godly, enthusiastic, and transparent" in their interactions with students as well

as their families. One participant stated, "The ones that I admired the most were the ones who welcomed students into their lives. They were fairly transparent…authentic, and hospitable, gracious…" The researcher noted that participants expressed gratitude, joy, and inspiration when discussing their role models and the significant impact they made on the participants' lives.

Typically, the model was someone who believed in them and often acted as a mentor in their lives. As the participants talked about their models and why they entered teaching, they described the ways their model/mentor related to them as an example they follow in relating to their students. One stated, "[My model's] love for students was just incredible…And I thought, 'Ok, that is the kind of teacher I want to be.'" Participants stated how their models' passion and authenticity continued to impact their lives, particularly the way they taught and interacted with students. Participants desired to emulate how their role models taught students as more than passive fact absorbers and instead demonstrated genuine care for their holistic development.

Another motivation arose among participants as three out of eight participants described a desire to teach with excellence in order to overcome feelings of inadequacy in relation to their teaching. One professor described this feeling as an "imposter syndrome," and another stated, "You better know what the heck you are talking about." These participants believed that the talent of an educator did not matter; there is always room for improvement. Because they thought in this way, they stated how they were motivated to teach with excellence and from their strengths.

Traits informing teaching and relating. Four traits were revealed from the data as influential in participants' teaching and relating, and impactful to student learning.

These traits were (1) humility, (2) a desire to intentionally invest in students, (3) authenticity, and (4) compassion.

Humility. Eight out of eight participants described various experiences when teaching transcended their plans, abilities, and expectations. As they discussed these situations, the participants described feelings of participating in something larger than themselves. This realization created both a feeling of wonder and humility. One participant said,

> You get these moments and you just feel a bit overwhelmed to have been a part of it and to not even have known…There is a wonder to it, an awe that I think is a great gift of teaching…It was just so amazing to me to not realize the ripple effects of our lives.

Participants explained how they understood that what happens in their classrooms was only a small part of what was happening in their students' lives. This realization created a sense of urgency to use the short time they had with students in a way that impacted their lives. Knowing they have the opportunity to impact students was "humbling and scary, and will keep you coming back day in and day out."

Intentional investment. Six out of eight participants described their teaching as a highly relational experience. They desired their teaching to be more than imparting information to students, but also intentionally investing in their lives. One participant said, "I can tell you what I like about teaching: I like coming alongside students—that is the best." Another said of his teaching, "I look at [my job] as primarily in terms of mentoring and impacting people's lives. The teaching is just an aspect of that, a major

aspect." Participants described a desire to relate to students and be available to them both inside and outside of the classroom.

The desire to relate to students both inside and outside of the classroom was also a result of how participants perceived their role in the teaching-learning process. The participants did not want to be perceived as unapproachable. Instead, one participant described how "[I] give my insight and recognize that I may not be right. But I like to give, I don't want to be the sage on stage…I would like to be perceived as a person who is a comfort." Teaching with this perspective conveyed care for students and their lives outside of the classroom, a trait that directly related to participants' methods of establishing meaningful relationships with students and also fostered self-authorship.

Authenticity. Five participants described themselves as honest and open. These participants expressed a desire to cultivate authenticity in their students and did so by modeling it in their teaching and relating. One participant said he invited students to his home, because "When students come into your home, they see you for who you really are." Another said he often "gets asked questions that I have no idea about…And I am trying to be more comfortable saying, 'I have no idea. You guys, what do you think?'" By demonstrating authenticity, participants expressed a desire to guide students in their development and learn alongside them, rather than seeing themselves as the expert on a given topic. Participants stated that aligning their actions with their words was imperative if they wanted students to develop authenticity as well.

Compassion. Four out of eight professors described their desire to affirm students' unalterable identity as inherently valuable individuals. During the interviews, participants were passionate about "respect[ing] students…as valuable individuals that

are significant, that have purpose…They are image-bearers [of God]." One professor said she "helps students see who they are by just demonstrating love." Participants revealed how they saw students as more than minds in a classroom, but as people of worth, potential, and significance. Perceiving students in this way impacted how participants taught and related with students, and cultivated relationships of mutual respect and care.

Conclusion

Participants identified three primary elements related to the promotion of self-authorship in students: godliness, critical thinking, and life-long learning. Four participants also revealed additional elements they strove to cultivate in their students through their teaching and relating in order to promote self-authorship.

Participants also identified four methods they used to promote these elements in students: integrating faith into current learning, aiding students in evaluating current beliefs and encouraging diversity of thought, establishing meaningful relationships with students, and reflection.

Lastly, two themes emerged from the interviews that were indirectly related to the research questions and thus relevant findings to the study. These two themes were the motivation for teaching and traits of participants. By analyzing and evaluating the coding, both themes influenced participants' teaching, relationships with students, and the promotion of self-authorship.

Chapter 5

Discussion

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to discover what elements of self-authorship faculty at a PFI were promoting, as well the methods used in promoting them. According to the literature, self-authorship is the ability to internally define one's identity, relationships, and values, instead of relying on external authorities to define them (Baxter Magolda, 2008; Baxter Magolda & King, 2012; Kegan, 1994).

According to the literature, self-authorship is very important to promote in higher education in order for students to live meaningful, purposeful, and responsible lives post-graduation. However, a gap exists in current literature with regard to the elements and methods faculty use to promote self-authorship within a PFI. This section discusses the responses of eight faculty members at a PFI in comparison to the literature regarding elements of self-authorship and methods used in promoting it.

Elements of Self-Authorship Promoted by Faculty

Though many elements of self-authorship were discussed in the literature, the four most common elements included critical thinking, mature decision-making, appreciation of multiple perspectives, and interdependent relationships with others. However, in the present study participants revealed three key elements they hoped to instill in students

through their teaching and relating: (1) faithfulness to Christian beliefs, (2) critical thinking, and (3) life-long learning.

Faithfulness to Christian beliefs. All the participants emphasized the importance of cultivating faithfulness to Christian beliefs in students, or the active and intentional integration of biblical values and precepts into their daily life. The participants responded that by promoting faithfulness in students, they hoped to aid students in discovering what they believe and why. In this process, participants desired to instill a thirst for Truth in students that went beyond what a student could know or create on their own. In the words of one participant, by aiding students in owning their beliefs and integrating biblical precepts into their daily life, they develop "a sense of openness to whatever God has for them and whatever their life experiences would offer them."

Though this is similar to self-authorship's aim of internal definition, the specific attribute of "faithfulness to Christian beliefs" did not appear in the self-authorship literature. By instilling this element, however, participants empowered students to develop their identity and beliefs, which are two aspects of self-authorship. The desire participants had for students to be faithful to Christian beliefs created a unique combination of faith and self in the learning process. This combination was distinct from the literature and gave a unique perspective for how self-authorship may be incorporated at a PFI.

Critical thinking. Self-authorship literature repeatedly emphasized critical thinking as a core outcome of self-authorship and a necessary element in healthy, responsible, adult living. Participant interviews revealed a similar perspective. Participants defined critical thinking as the ability to create and form one's own thoughts,

beliefs, and opinions. They did not advocate for students to uncritically assimilate the professor's beliefs and ideas as their own. As one participant stated,

> Students have to own [their beliefs and values]. It can't be something that I just
>
> tell them or share with them…It has to be theirs because they need to have
>
> thought through [it] significantly, so that when they are in the moment…it is just
>
> a knee jerk reaction in terms of how they respond.

The idea expressed above corresponded with elements of self-authorship found in the literature: it is desirable for students to develop critical thinking in order to evaluate and understand what they believe and why. As they develop greater critical thinking capacity, students are equipped to integrate what they have learned into daily life, evaluate and assess knowledge, "think independently, and establish and defend one's own informed views," and better relate to those who think differently (Baxter Magolda, 1999a; 2003, p. 233; Hodge et al., 2009).

Life-long learning. The self-authorship literature did not specifically mention the element of life-long learning in the development of one's internal definition of self. However, four of the eight participants enthusiastically discussed the promotion of life-long learning in their classrooms. They articulated how cultivating life-long learning begins with an awareness of what one already knows and how this is not sufficient for a holistic comprehension of self and the world. Participants desired students to grow in curiosity and hoped what students learned in the classroom would be the beginning of a lifelong pursuit of knowledge.

Encouraging student curiosity and students' abilities to learn throughout their lives revealed an important participant perspective: participants did not view their role

solely as distributors of information, nor students as passive absorbers of that information. As previously discussed, the perspective was found to greatly discourage student engagement with learning and meaningful integration of learning into their life (Barr & Tagg, 1995; Baxter Magolda, 2003; Gamache, 2002; Palmer, 1990; Shor, 1992; Tagg, 2003). Desiring to instill life-long learning in students validates them as capable of knowing, an important concept in self-authorship literature (Baxter Magolda, 2003).

Other elements mentioned by participants. As noted in the Results section, some participants discussed elements that were important to the development of self-authorship, but not as frequently mentioned as faithfulness to Christian beliefs, critical thinking, and life-long learning. Specifically, wise decision-making was mentioned by two participants as an element they hoped to instill in students. Making wise decisions demonstrates students' capacity to form their own beliefs and align their decisions with those beliefs. Because of this, the ability to make wise decisions characterizes students who are growing in self-authorship.

Methods for Promoting Self-Authorship

The literature revealed a variety of methods faculty used to promote self-authorship in their students, including: the establishment of mutual partnerships with students (Baxter Magolda, 2002; Parks, 2011); asking reflective questions with the purpose of challenging students' current thinking in light of alternative perspectives (Bryant, 2011; King, 2009); expressing genuine interest in students' current place of development and knowledge (Bryant, 2011); "moving away from the traditional role of the expert" (Baxter Magolda, 2002, p. 19); and providing students with "continuous feedback and high expectations" (Baxter Magolda, 2002, p. 19).

In the present study, participants identified four methods they used to promote the development of self-authorship in students, including (1) integrating faith into current learning, (2) providing opportunities for students to evaluate their current beliefs and analyze issues from different perspectives, (3) establishing meaningful relationships with students, and (4) reflection.

Integrating faith into current learning. All the participants spoke of the importance of integrating faith into the learning process. Throughout the interviews, it became clear that faith was not a separate dimension or an add-on to daily assignments and discussion; rather, faith informed the way participants viewed the students, the subject, and themselves. Participants shared how faith, or the fundamental beliefs that shape how one understands meaning and purpose in life, was never in opposition to what they taught in the classroom. Instead, the participants explained how their Christian faith guided their teaching and provided a clear and holistic understanding of their discipline. With regard to faith and teaching, one participant stated,

> One major dimension of repentance is a change of mind—a change of thinking with respect to truth and reality—that is necessary for everybody. So as we grow closer to God, our mind transforms…Being transformed in the renewing of our mind is a huge part of what we do.

Teaching students how to think rather than what to think was one way participants used the integration of faith into current learning to support students' cognitive development.

Self-authorship literature advocated the development of one's internal definition of self through a variety of methods, but not specifically through the integration of faith in current learning. Participant interviews helped in identifying the importance PFI

faculty placed on the method and the way the approach fostered the growth of self-authorship in their students.

Encouraging students to evaluate beliefs. Providing opportunities for students to evaluate their current beliefs and analyze issues from diverse perspectives were two methods participants used to help students define who they were, what they believed, and how they formed authentic relationships. The strategies varied, including: 1) asking students to prepare an argument to support an issue with which they disagreed, 2) using group projects as a way to incorporate diverse student personalities and perspectives working to achieve a common goal, and 3) asking students to analyze and discuss a controversial issue in class. By teaching in this manner, participants demonstrated a willingness to address controversial topics and provide students with opportunities to utilize critical thinking and inquiry within the context of a Christian worldview.

Participants did not incorporate these methods into their teaching to manipulate students' beliefs. Instead, through these methods they desired to support students in analyzing, evaluating, and forming what they believed to be true. The methodology the participants revealed was closely aligned with the methodology in the literature; specifically, the importance for faculty to provide students with opportunities to challenge their assumptions, encounter diverse beliefs, and in the process be confronted with some faulty presuppositions and gaps that may exist in their belief system (Baxter Magolda 1999, 2000, 2002, 2003; Bryant, 2011; Gamache, 2002; King, 2009). In self-authorship, this process marks a transition from external formulas into the crossroads, a potentially uncomfortable and challenging time for students (Baxter Magolda, 2009). By

utilizing this method, students may confront their faulty presuppositions and identify areas in their belief system that need development or correction.

Establishing meaningful relationships with students. Participant interviews demonstrated the importance of establishing meaningful relationships with students. Participants perceived students as inherently valuable individuals, creating a genuine and caring interest in students' lives and in their holistic development. By taking a genuine, caring interest in students' lives, participants sought to form positive, mutual, and meaningful relationships with students. These relationships transformed learning from a purely intellectual experience to a holistic process that impacted students' self-understanding and led to increased awareness of their identity.

Self-authorship literature supported this method in its encouragement of teaching within the context of mutual relationships between professor and student (Baxter Magolda, 2002; King, 2009). Mutual relationships between faculty members and students incorporate not only the subject being taught, but also a genuine interest in students' current developmental stage and experiences (Baxter Magolda, 1999; 2002; Bryant, 2011; Kegan, 1982). When this perspective is present, educators view themselves as partners with students in learning. Participants established meaningful relationships with students, a method which aligned with best practice advocated by the self-authorship literature.

Reflection. Reflection was revealed as an important method participants used to develop self-authorship in their students. Participants incorporated reflection by asking challenging questions, assigning work that required development of students' self-awareness, and providing controversial topics for students to discuss. Integrating

reflection into the classroom encouraged students to form connections in their current thinking, interactions with Scripture, and their lives. The self-authorship literature indicated that reflection facilitates self-knowledge and awareness.

Additional Themes

Participant interviews revealed themes that were not specifically tied to the research questions, but which illustrated how participants promoted elements of self-authorship in their students. The two themes, the motivation for teaching and traits of participants, influenced the way PFI faculty taught and related with students.

Motivation for teaching. Six out of the eight participants indicated the influence that a positive role model or mentor made in their decision to become a college professor. These role models, as stated in the Results section, were typically college professors or high school teachers who deeply impacted the participants' lives due to their genuine care for students, their authenticity, hospitality, and godliness. In short, participants not only learned about a specific discipline from their role models, but saw an example of how they wanted to live their own lives. Participants were grateful in remembering how their role models served as mentors to them and other students.

It is important to note that participants remembered and were motivated by their role model's character and how they interrelated with others. Brilliance, eloquence, lecture material, or class sessions were not the primary characteristics participants remembered from their role model. What they did remember was that their role models demonstrated transparency, enthusiasm, and faithfulness to Christian beliefs to their students and their families both inside and outside of the classroom.

Participants were deeply impacted by the lives of their role models. Through their role models, participants experienced a personal relationship with someone who loved God and others deeply, and who inspired participants to do the same. The investment the role models made in their students shaped participants' beliefs and identities, and gave them a model and vision of who they could become. The legacy of their role model continued to motivate participants to live godly lives and make a similar investment in their own students.

Traits which inform teaching and relating. After analyzing the interviews, the investigator identified four participant traits, or character qualities, faculty exhibited, including: (1) humility, (2) a desire to intentionally invest in students, (3) authenticity, and (4) compassion. The prevalence of these traits shaped the way they taught and interacted with students.

Humility. Humility was a trait found in all of the participants. Throughout the interviews, participants spoke with gratitude and sincerity about the ways God had blessed them with the opportunity to teach and relate with students, as well as the benefit of learning from students inside and outside of the classroom. They acknowledged that their time with students was limited and one portion of the students' total college experiences. Because of this, participants were intentional with how they used their time with students in order to positively impact their lives. Participants' humility was also apparent in their desire to support students' holistic development by being accessible and available to them inside and outside of the classroom.

Self-authorship literature did not specifically mention humility as a key concept in understanding and developing self-authorship in students. However, a similar concept in

the literature, sharing authority in the classroom, was shown to promote self-authorship. "Sharing authority" referred to teaching that "aids students in fashioning their own perspectives on learning and discovery and in feeling a sense of belonging in the scholarly and professional world" (Hodge et al., 2009, p. 21). Humility, like sharing authority, required faculty to engage students in learning in ways that enabled them to assume greater personal responsibility in the teaching and learning process. In so doing, students were supported in developing self-authorship.

Intentional investment. Participant interviews revealed a strong desire and ability to intentionally invest in students' lives and create meaningful relationships with them. For many of the participants, relating to students in this manner was an essential part of their teaching. One stated, "I think students benefit a lot from that sense of community that plays out in the classroom and through the relationships that develop with faculty." By creating a classroom that facilitates relationships between faculty and students, faculty created opportunities to invest in students and support them in their cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal development. However, this participant trait was demonstrated as an end in itself, rather than as a means to an end. Participants genuinely enjoyed and treasured time with students, and made intentional efforts to invest in them inside and outside of the classroom.

Self-authorship literature discussed the importance of establishing meaningful relationships with students through "mutual partnerships," which was similar to faculty intentionally investing in students (Baxter Magolda, 2002). This was especially apparent in the literature's description of mutual partnerships involving faculty expressing "genuine interest in students' current development," as well as cultivating "mutual

respect and active change of perspectives" (Baxter Magolda, 2002, p. 8). By intentionally investing in students, participants were forming "mutual partnerships," and therefore creating an environment that fostered self-authorship in students.

Authenticity. The interviews revealed that authenticity, or openness and honesty, was a prevalent and important trait in participants. One participant stated that interacting with students informally outside of the classroom "underscores a certain reality or authenticity that I suppose you could fake if you wanted to...That a [student] might not recognize if it is just you there in the classroom." This statement revealed how participants perceived teaching and learning as more than an intellectual process, but a process that benefited from the establishment of authentic relationships and investment in students' lives.

Authenticity is a significant concept in self-authorship. Authenticity is a vital element that advances interpersonal development (Baxter Magolda 2008; Baxter Magolda & King, 2012; Kegan, 1994). By teaching and relating authentically with students, participants provided a model of authentic relationships and promoted interpersonal development in students.

Compassion. Compassion, or an empathetic and high regard for others, was identified as a key trait in participants. Participants demonstrated compassion through their Christian worldview, and their understanding that all people were inherently valuable and created for a purpose. Participants perceived students as inherently valuable, and demonstrated compassion to students in ways that impacted how students perceived themselves. According to one participant, "If [students] are affirmed that they have innate, God-given intellect, then that helps them to see themselves in a different light."

Participants' compassion impacted the way they taught and related with students, making the classroom and professor-student relationship a more hospitable context for students' engagement with the learning process.

Compassion was not a trait specifically mentioned in the literature. However, the literature revealed a similar trait that promotes self-authorship: the importance of understanding students' current development stage and experiences, and mediating what students learn (Baxter Magolda, 2007b; Kegan, 1994; Piaget, 1950; Tagg, 2003). Being compassionate, or understanding and empathizing with students' current situation and development, facilitates self-authorship by meeting students at their current developmental stage and supporting them in continued holistic growth.

Limitations and Future Research

First, a qualitative, phenomenological research design inevitability includes bias. The investigator had but one perspective, which affected the way the literature and participant interviews were understood, analyzed, interpreted, and reported.

Second, the selection of participants in this study allowed for an imbalanced and biased perspective. As discussed in the Methodology section, selective sampling was used in the choice of participants. Selective sampling included participants who, according to the investigator, would provide the richest understanding of the topic. Selected participants were award-winning faculty known for their outstanding teaching. Because of this, their responses were not indicative of the overall faculty population at a PFI.

Third, only eight participants were involved in the study. This limited the scope, depth, and understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Furthermore, given the above limitation, the ability to generalize the findings of this study was limited.

Further research that incorporates a more representative faculty population, as well as a greater number of participants, is recommended. Including student participation at a PFI would help in developing a more comprehensive understanding of best practices in how faculty cultivate self-authorship in students. Also, further research that specifically examines the traits and motivational factors of faculty on developing self-authorship in students could prove helpful for faculty who desire to foster self-authorship through their teaching and relating with students.

Implications and Recommendations for Practice

Implications. First, the characteristics and traits of PFI faculty appeared to be closely related to the development of self-authorship in their students. This finding bears significant implications for institutions committed to the holistic development of students, including facilitating the goal of self-authorship in their graduates. Essentially, this finding implies that the traits of a professor greatly influence the way they teach and relate to their students, thereby impacting student engagement and development.

Second, the responses of the participating PFI faculty reflected a range of understanding related to the concept of self-authorship and how to develop it in students. Since self-authorship is a relatively new development theory, this finding is not surprising. Though participants were unaware of self-authorship's concepts and process, it appeared that high-performance faculty used instructional methods described in the literature that fostered student growth in ways that helped them understand who they

were and what they believed. However, given the importance of self-authorship in the holistic development of students, the opportunity exists for all faculty to know the concept of self-authorship and intentionally connect their teaching methods with this important outcome. Doing so could enhance the practices many professors already utilize, as well as promote continued excellence with teaching-learning processes.

Recommendations. First, when hiring faculty, institutions who are committed to the holistic development of students need to take into consideration not only the applicant's degrees earned and experience demonstrated, but also their personal traits. Faith-based, liberal arts institutions must make hiring for mission a priority by providing models who embody the Christian faith and integrate it in their teaching and learning practices.

Second, it is also recommended that institutions incorporate a mentoring focus or program within their departments. By intentionally investing in students, establishing mutual relationships, and providing them with an example of godly, faithful, and authentic living, faculty can support students who are developing their identity, beliefs, and relationships.

Third, institutions interested in fostering the holistic development of students, including self-authorship, can facilitate the accomplishment of this goal by providing a professional development program for their faculty. The curriculum could focus on the elements of self-authorship, methods that promote it, outcomes associated with self-authorship, and how these can be integrated with liberal arts outcomes at a PFI. It is recommended that the curriculum focus on the methods outlined in this study, including, (1) integrating faith into current learning, (2) providing opportunities for students to

evaluate their current beliefs and analyze issues from different perspectives, (3) establishing meaningful relationships with students, and (4) incorporating opportunities for student reflection throughout their classroom experiences.

Fourth, the process for a faculty development program could be a "trainer of trainers" model, where faculty instruct one another in the elements and methods of self-authorship. This process is based on the rationale that colleagues learn best from colleagues, and that learning would occur more readily when faculty learn from others currently practicing and applying the theories of self-authorship within their own classroom. Also, the trainer of trainers model would be most effective if those who train faculty embody the traits of authenticity, humility, a desire to intentionally invest in students, and compassion. As noted previously, a professor's identity impacts his or her teaching, thus it would be important for the trainer to model the traits to other faculty that foster the development of self-authorship in students.

Summary

Self-authorship is a relatively new developmental theory and provides a paradigm for teaching and learning in higher education institutions. Focused on students' intrapersonal, interpersonal, and cognitive development, self-authorship promotes student development by shifting from external definition to internal definition of self. Research shows the ability to internally define one's identity, beliefs, and relationships does not typically occur until a person reaches their late twenties or early thirties (Baxter Magolda, 2001; King & Kitchener, 1994). However, research indicates that self-authorship may be cultivated in educational environments that understand the elements of self-authorship and implement methods that promote it. Increased understanding of the elements and

methods of self-authorship can aid and equip students in living intentional, meaningful, and responsible lives post-graduation.

The present study narrowed the gap in current literature pertaining to how faculty promote self-authorship at a PFI and what elements they seek to promote. Participant interviews revealed three elements faculty at a PFI seek to promote in students: godliness, critical thinking, and life-long learning. They promote these elements through specific teaching methods: integrating faith into current learning, providing opportunities for students to evaluate their current beliefs and analyze issues from diverse perspectives, establishing meaningful relationships with students, and reflection. The study also revealed important information on faculty traits and motivation for teaching, and how these traits influence their teaching and relating with students. Participants were motivated by positive role model in their lives, typically high school teachers or college professors. The role models cultivated a desire in participants to teach and make an impact in students' lives. Common traits in participants included humility, a desire to intentionally invest in students, authenticity, and compassion.

In conclusion, the information revealed in the current study provided increased understanding on how to promote self-authorship at a PFI. The study demonstrated that promoting self-authorship in students at a PFI is not only possible, but beneficial in helping students internally define their identity, beliefs, and relationships. Further research, as well as faculty development in the understanding and incorporation of self-authorship in teaching, could provide PFIs with a dynamic and meaningful framework for student development and pedagogy.

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Appendix

Interview Questions

1. What were some things that motivated you to become a professor?

2. As a faculty member, when you think of a student graduating, what would be some ideal attributes found in that student?

3. What are some ideal attributes you hope to see in your students at the end of your courses? (Please provide an example of a student who demonstrated these in your classes.)

4. Explanation of self-authorship. Are there elements in your teaching and relating that foster these things (self-authorship) in your students?

5. What approaches have you found helpful in growing these attributes?

6. In what ways does your faith impact the way you teach and relate to your students?

7. How do you gauge where students are developmentally and guide them to where you want them to be at the end of the course?