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INTEGRATING SOCIAL, MORAL, AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENTAL THEORY: IMPLICATIONS OF JAMES FOWLER'S EPISTEMOLOGICAL PARADIGM FOR BASIC WRITERS

> Into every act of knowing there enters
> a passionate contribution of the person
> knowing what is being known....This
> coefficient is no mere imperfection but
> a vital component of his knowledge.
> —Michael Polanyi

Too little is known about the psychology of composition, especially as it applies to basic writers. Writing researchers have been concerned with error analysis, syntactic maturity, linguistic and semantic ability, and the nature of the writing process. Few, however, have looked at writing from a cognitive-developmental perspective to assess whether writing ability changes structurally over a lifetime and particularly during a person's educational experience.

The theory that people develop in stages intellectually, morally, and socially is not new. Jean Piaget, the Swiss psychologist, posited the theory that people developing logical abilities move in describable, sequential stages from infancy into early adulthood. Lawrence Kohlberg researched the logic of moral decision-making in an attempt to make educators aware of the implications of moral development for classroom materials and teaching methods. Like Piaget and Kohlberg, William Perry also developed a theory of intellectual growth based on identifiable stages. Working at Harvard, Perry studied the growth of students' understanding of "knowledge" and of themselves as a part of the knowledgeable community.

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Erik Erikson, who posited a stage-based model of adult psychosocial development, concluded that as adults deal with crises, they move from stage to stage.

In the works of all four of these researchers, the stages are seen as universal—applicable everywhere—and sequential: individuals must move through each stage sequentially before they can enter the next stage. Moreover, movement in the early stages is correlated strongly with maturation; in the latter stages, however, development results, not from maturation, but from interaction of individuals with their environment.

While stage theory, particularly as derived from Piaget's research, has had an impact on some areas of American education, its application to composition theory and pedagogy has been limited. Although Piagetian-based programs in science and mathematics are not uncommon, such programs in composition are rare. The composition programs at, for example, the University of Nebraska, Illinois Central College, and Passaic (NJ) Community College are among only a handful of programs with a Piagetian orientation. Joining this group, a recently developed, Piagetian-based, basic writing program has been developed at Georgia State University with support from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE). While the theories of Piaget served as an important contribution to the program, and while developmental theory has shed light on the nature of maturation in writing, the findings of the project suggest that focusing on analytic logic alone does not explain fully the pattern of student growth in composition.

It is understandable that the work of developmental theorists has limited applicability for college-level basic writers, for neither the population nor the content of the research by Piaget, Kohlberg, Perry, and Erikson was directed toward this group. Piaget studied primarily children's and adolescents' development of mathematical, analytic logic. The work of Kohlberg and Perry is similarly limited by focus on the development of logic and by population: both included only males in their initial research population, and Perry's subjects were all Harvard students. It is precisely the narrowness of such populations that has limited the findings.

Disquieting anthropological and educational research suggests that differences in growth based on culture, on social background, and on gender have also been inadequately reflected in developmental theory, particularly in those studies assessing logical growth. Rosalie Cohen and Janice Hale indicate that Black children have a different cognitive style from White children. Cohen argues that children operate from two basic cognitive styles: the analytic style and the relational style. She has found that, while White children are generally analytic, Black children are basically relational. That is, Black children tend to attribute significance to objects and events only in relationship to specific contexts. American education tends to foster analytic growth in those children who bring analytic skills to school. However, children who are basically relational in style do not meet the assumptions the school has made; they, therefore, do not fit neatly into the school's curriculum. Likewise, most stage theories have defined development as linear progress in the development of analytic skills; they

have not considered that individuals from varying cultures may progress somewhat differently within the model because their culture values other aspects of growth. Consider the value ancient Greece placed on the ability of its seers to memorize, recite, and contribute to its narrative epics. Such abilities are important in the life of certain African and Native American tribal groups also, but this skill is much less valued in American schools than is analytic logic.

Moreover, Carol Gilligan, a member of Kohlberg's research team, perceived that his theory better described the moral decision-making processes of men than those of women. In conducting extensive research with men and women, she discovered that the processes for resolving dilemmas do indeed differ by gender. The now-classic dilemma of Heinz, posed by Kohlberg to men and boys and subsequently by Gilligan to women and girls, focuses the differences. Heinz must decide whether to steal a drug which his cancer-striken wife requires if she is to recover. The druggist, the sole distributor, demands $2,000 for a small dosage. Heinz has raised $1,000 but neither has nor can raise the additional money. The dilemma: should Heinz steal the drug?

Gilligan cites the responses of two eleven-year-olds as representative of two distinct ways of approaching a solution. Jake responds that Heinz should steal the drug because:

For one thing, a human life is worth more than money, and if the druggist only makes $1,000 he is still going to live, but if Heinz doesn't steal the drug, his wife is going to die. (Why is life worth more than money?) Because the druggist can get a thousand dollars later from rich people with cancer, but Heinz can't get his wife again. (Why not?) Because people are all different and so you couldn't get Heinz's wife again (1982, 26).

Amy, on the other hand, gives this response to the question, "Should Heinz steal the drug?"

Well, I don't think so. I think there might be other ways besides stealing it, like if he could borrow the money or make a loan or something, but he really shouldn't steal the drug—but his wife shouldn't die either....If he stole the drug, he might save his wife then, but if he did, he might go to jail, and then his wife might get sicker again, and he couldn't get more of the drug, and it might not be good. So, they should really just talk it out and find some other way to make the money (1982, 28).

Gilligan concludes:

Thus in Heinz's dilemma these two children see two very different moral problems—Jake a conflict between life and property that can be resolved by logical deduction, Amy a fracture of human relationship that must be mended with its own thread. (1982, 31).

Gilligan's broader research has led her to conclude that, while males structure moral decisions on the basis of fairness and justice, females focus on responsibility and care. The findings of Cohen, Hale, and Gilligan, therefore, which have focused on the discrepant findings from earlier theoretical work, encourage developmental researchers to reexamine

growth by culture, race, and gender.

Just as significantly, the earlier theorists are limited by their exclusion of the notion of "imagination" from their models. They address only the aspects of meaning-making associated with logical development. Obviously imagination and creativity, along with linguistic and semantic ability, must be reckoned with in any theory of composition. Yet, developmental theory is often misused or overused in pedagogical settings. Mike Rose (1983) warned that too many developmentally based writing programs are making unwarranted assumptions about their students based solely on the students' analytical skills as manifested by the writing of these students in academic settings on unfamiliar academic tasks. Specifically, Rose warns that teachers of basic writers may infer that their students are stuck at the concrete operational level, because that is all the teachers see in the classroom, yet these same students clearly demonstrate formal operational skills in their everyday activities. Earlier, Noam Chomsky taught us—when looking at linguistic ability—not to confuse competence with performance; Rose catches us guilty not only of confusing analytic competence with analytic performance but also of substituting a partial and limited view of human development for a more holistic one. Michael Polanyi's comment, which serves as the headnote, is a haunting caveat to developmentalists who would focus too narrowly on analytic skills in constructing a model of writing development, forgetting the passionate contribution of the knower, his vital personal coefficient in knowledge.

Although not written specifically for composition researchers, James Fowler's recent significant work in epistemology focusing on developmental theory promises to help us understand the developing individual. Fowler published the results of a major study which integrates and broadens earlier stage theories. His book, *Stages of Faith Development: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (1981), describes the development of epistemological systems. Fowler stresses that the way we structure meaning is a human activity which is not dependent on given cultural or religious presuppositions: we all make meaning of our world, regardless of our belief system. Rather, he says, meaning-making is dependent on developmental stage. "Faith is an orientation of the total person, giving purpose and goal to one's hopes and strivings, thoughts and actions" (14).

Having distinguished faith from belief, Fowler then defines faith as relationship and as imagination. He defines the "others" in meaning-making relationships as "centers of value and power." These centers may rest in transcendent values. Or, they may rest in one central but finite focal point (e.g., causes or jobs), or they may rest in many minor centers of worth (money, travel, clothes). Fowler further defines faith as imagination:

> Faith, then, is an active mode of knowing, of composing a felt sense or image of the condition of our lives taken as a whole...the image unites information and feeling; it holds together orientational and affectional significance. As such, images are prior to and deeper than concepts (25-26).

It is on this point that Fowler is reminiscent of Polanyi.

Fowler traces the development of this "faith"—epistemological meaning-making—using interviews with four hundred individuals (including young children and old people, Whites and Blacks, males and females). Thus, unlike Piaget, Kohlberg, Erikson, and Gilligan, who have isolated one dimension for charting development, Fowler has developed a multidimensional definition for his six stages and has thereby created a paradigmatic conception of human development. Diagrammatically, Fowler's theory can be envisioned as a two-way contingency table with stages being the rows and with various dimensions, or aspects, as Fowler calls them, the columns. The first three columns (logic, social perspective-taking, and moral judgment) represent the work of earlier theoreticians which Fowler has reexamined in the light of the role of imagination or "faith."[1] The four others have been developed from Fowler's own interviews. (See Figure 1.)

Fowler's paradigm, because it includes not only a dimension of logical growth, but also six other dimensions, is more encompassing and may allow a more comprehensive view of human development. Moreover, it provides a way of assessing whether some cultures foster some aspects of development more readily than other aspects, and whether these cultural differences enhance or inhibit overall developmental growth. He describes his stages of human development with respect to these seven aspects.

1. **Form of Logic:** Closely tied to Piagetian theory, this aspect describes one's thinking about the object world. To Piaget's four stages of child and adolescent development (sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational, formal operational), Fowler has added two which account for adult cognitive development: a dialectical form of reasoning (in which things/ideas fit into categories) and a dialogical form of reasoning (in which things/ideas can be seen as fitting simultaneously into more than one category).

2. **Social Perspective-taking:** Extending Robert Selman's work, Fowler shows how a person learns to move from an egotistical "me-centered" perspective to a more dispassionate point of view which allows him to see himself, to see others, and to see others seeing him. The more advanced stages allow the self to construct the interiority of the other (to imagine accurately what another person knows and feels and how he perceives the world); intermediately, adolescents discover that they see others seeing themselves (that they see others constructing *their* interiority).

3. **Form of Moral Judgment:** Borrowing heavily from Kohlberg's theory of moral development, Fowler's "form of moral judgment" is characterized by the answers one gives to the question, "What is the nature of the claims that others have on me, and how are these claims to be weighed?" It involves patterns of moral reasoning and grounds of moral justification. It

Figure 1

Fowler's Paradigm[2]

ASPECTS

STAGES	Form of Logic	Perspec-tive Taking	Moral Judg-ment	Social Aware-ness	Locus Author-ity	World Coher-ence	Sym-bolic Function
I. Intuitive-Projective Stage							
II. Mythic-Literal Stage							
III. Synthetic-Conventional Stage							
IV. Individuative-Reflective Stage							
V. Paradoxical-Conjunctive Stage							
VI. Universal-izing Faith Stage							

revolves around the issues/situations which the individual sees as moral problems. Central to development is the manner in which individuals structure moral dilemma situations and the degree of objectivity in deriving solutions. Preschool children, for example, are unable to structure moral judgment in terms of the intentionality of the actors: for them, it is worse to break four glasses accidentally than to break one on purpose in a fit of anger. In addition, young children assume that the basis for acting

morally can be equated to avoiding punishment. That is, a right act is one that does not bring punishment, and a wrong act is one that does. Only at a later stage can they understand "doing right" as a basis for a workable social system. The Golden Rule or Kantian categorical imperatives thus guide only those at a stage sufficiently advanced to understand the universal ramifications of moral behavior.

4. **Bounds of Social Awareness:** This aspect describes the mode of group identity. Of what groups does the person claim membership? How wide and how inclusive is the social world? How does the individual define groups? Fowler explores how people move from valuing only their immediate family to valuing other, like, persons (from the same race, class, religious background) to an awareness of the rightness of viewpoints outside their own immediate familial, racial, social, or religious communities.

5. **Locus of Authority:** Fowler outlines the stages through which people pass as they move away from a dependence on external, unquestioned authority. The relevant issues are how authorities are selected, how they are held in relationship, and whether the responses to them are internal or external. Young children accept unquestioningly the fact that adults have the "truth" which the children have only to "learn." Later, as adolescents, they come to discover conflicting authority, believing that their role is to discern which authority is "correct." Only later do they come to recognize that complex issues cannot be understood in terms of correctness and that authorities on the issue may differ in their perspective. The role of the learner, then, is to weigh the position of authorities against internal criteria: one must come to a position that accounts for as much external evidence as possible while maintaining a consistency with personal experience.

6. **Form of World Coherence:** Fowler identifies a pattern of movement from seeing events as a simplistic and unrelated series of episodes to seeing events as an interrelated part of a continuum of richness, diversity, oppositions, and unity. Important here are how individuals construct the object world, how they make sense of things, how things "fit together" for them. Early stages involve an episodic, then narrative, view of the world. In later stages, the world view is understood in both symbolic and conceptual terms. When we examine reader responses to *The Canterbury Tales*, for example, we see that people at an early stage of forming a world view can appreciate the tales simply as isolated stories. At a later stage of development, the moral of the stories emerges as significant to the reader; when the reader has matured even further, he/she can appreciate the tale is part of the system used to explain human interaction, can understand the psychosocial behaviors of both travelers and tale-characters, and can think of modern parallels for the tales. Thus, the individuals maturing in their "form of world coherence" move from a view of events as random and disconnected to a view in which they perceive (i.e. impose) coherence and meaning in events—to Ulysses' view: "I am a part of all that I have met."

7. **Symbolic Function:** This aspect helps us describe how symbols are understood and used. Significant here is the source of the power of the symbol—whether emotional, conceptual, or both. For young children, the national flag itself is revered. As children experience situations involving the flag, they come to associate it with various ritualistic and emotional responses, and the flag itself begins to evoke these responses. Adolescents come to a position of demythologizing the "thing" itself, but recognize it as representing ideas. Those in a more developmentally advanced stage join the emotional and conceptual meaning of the flag: they accept that the "thing" itself invokes both the affective and cognitive domains, and that the richness of the symbol lies in its interplay between these domains. Only at the later stages can a person recognize the power of other flags for other peoples.

In his scoring manual, "Faith Development: A Manual for Research" (1983), Fowler describes the stages globally, providing a definition of each that touches on the salient tasks individuals face in each stage.

Individuals at Stage I, intuitive-projective, are marked by egocentric thought and make virtually no distinction between fantasy and reality. Self and others are not differentiated, reality is moment-to-moment, and attachments are to caretakers.

At Stage II, mythic-literal, patterns begin to emerge making relationships and classification possible for individuals. They become interested in the physical, concrete properties of the world and are able to abstract time and space. They become interested in narratives and take them literally. They do not, however, differentiate self from the stories. Their values are based on reciprocity and their logic is based on "everyone-would-agree."

At Stage III, synthetic-conventional, individuals learn to synthesize meaning based on the "felt sense" of others. Relationships become extremely important and are valued for their own sake; the person is unable to differentiate self from the relationship. To maintain interpersonal relationships, individuals rely on conventional authority derived from composite views of significant others.

At Stage IV, individuative-reflective, individuals are able both to distance themselves from social relationships and to adopt conventional values. Meaning and values are derived more from within than from external sources. There develops a perspective on relationships and meaning, such that individuals see self as both within and separate: formal operational logic allows a self-consciousness to emerge. The notion of "philosophy of life" becomes important at this stage. Also, symbols take on conceptual meaning, no longer merely standing for concrete objects.

At Stage V, paradoxical-conjunctive, individuals seek understanding more than explanation. Symbols take on multiple conceptual and affective meanings held in a tension, creating about them a sense of richness and depth.

Individuals at Stage VI, universalizing faith, are rare, becoming as Fowler explains, "more a teleological extension of the theory" than an empirically grounded phenomenon. They are characterized by a negation of self in favor of an identification with the "whole of others" and loyalty

to the "principle of being." Fowler suggests Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Mother Theresa of Calcutta as three of the rare individuals at this stage.

A number of parallels between stage theory and rhetorical development are immediately obvious. Related to the movement away from "me-centeredness," both in terms of perspective-taking and bounds of social awareness, is the writer's growing sense of the audience and its needs. Related to the individual's growth in perception of the nature of authority is the writer's sense of "sources" of valid information and confidence in self as knower. Related to the individual's attained view of world coherence is the writer's ability to adapt to various modes of discourse (narration, exposition, argumentation, etc.) to express various ideas. A student who has not worked out the bases for moral decision-making, a hierarchy for reconciling competing claims, or a conceptual system that admits of mixed results or paradoxical truths will be seriously hampered in trying to write effective persuasive prose on a complex issue.

While most composition researchers have not applied a comprehensive developmental theory to rhetorical development, a number of researchers have investigated isolated aspects of the development of writing skills and have thereby established a body of research which can be examined in developmental terms. James Moffett, for example, follows students' growing sense of audience as they move away from addressing only themselves-as-readers to considering the additional needs of an unknown audience. James Britton focuses attention not only on audience but also on the writer's purpose, particularly on his evolving ability to handle increasingly complex types of writing, as required by the expressive, transactional, and poetic aims of writing.

Janice Hays, at the University of Colorado, is now looking developmentally at three aspects of writing. She has applied William Perry's developmental stages to writing and is focusing on the development of the aspects of authority, perspective-taking, and moral development as reflected in writing. She is trying to determine whether significant differences exist between the analytic writing of good and poor writers, whether a sequence of stages (and substages) can be established, and whether a correlation exists among age, educational level, disciplinary background, and prior writing experience. To this end, she is analyzing the writing of 150 high school seniors and a range of college undergraduates, examining their kind of argument, multiplicity of perspective, and text discourse patterns. Hays is hypothesizing that her students' development, as measured in writing, can be described by Perry's model of intellectual development, that is, that the arguments these students bring to a persuasive essay will reflect their developmental stage. Those at lower stages will reflect less ability to see multiple perspectives, to see beyond the morality of absolutes, and to appreciate conflicting sources of authority than will their counterparts who are at higher stages.

Hays' progress encourages us to look deeper into Fowler's paradigm. By applying Fowler's model, writing researchers can now draw rhetorical connections from the broader context of epistemological research. In short,

Fowler's analysis of epistemological development provides us with a new way of looking at rhetorical development, allowing us to integrate the work of stage theorists with that of composition researchers. Thus Fowler's theory, so rich in philosophy as well as psychology, is likely to have broad implications for theories of learning and knowing. His paradigm helps us frame better questions as teachers and researchers. Two sets of such questions seem particularly pertinent:

I. How does a Fowler-like paradigm apply to writing?

In relating the development of writing to Fowler's paradigm, we must decide whether to consider writing another *aspect*—an eighth aspect—of meaning-making, or as another *dimension* which must serve as an overlay on Fowler's framework. It may be more useful to reconceive Fowler's 2-way contingency table as a 3-way contingency cube with "stage," "aspect," and "rhetorical development" as the dimensions. The manner in which one delivers meaning will likely have to be conceived as a different kind of ability than the way one structures the meaning. It is clear, however, that rhetorical development will be intricately tied to the concepts of stage and aspect.

We need to determine whether writing ability is chiefly a means of "expressing" already-made meaning and therefore a construct that typically lags behind epistemological development or whether, simultaneously, writing can be used to foster discovery and growth. The view of rhetorical development as a dimension of a complex paradigm raises questions about what triggers the growth from stage to stage, and whether movement within the system is more dependent on some "aspects" than on others. It may be that writing provides a unique context for initiating developmental growth both because it requires concentration, attention, and precision, and because it interacts so intimately with the "aspects" of meaning-making that Fowler identifies—the ability to assume a perspective other than one's own, the ability to posit the self as authority and knower, the ability to hold opposite or paradoxical truths in balance—to name a few.

II. Are there other considerations (aspects or dimensions) that need to be addressed for a model of this kind?

We need to learn how culture, intelligence, race, and gender affect ways of "knowing" and therefore affect understanding of the development of writing. We need to find out whether some aspects are "dominant" and therefore tend to trigger or obstruct growth in other areas and even to trigger or obstruct stage change; if so, might these dominant aspects differ by culture? Finally, we need to consider whether some cultures enhance full development in all aspects before triggering stage change while other cultures de-emphasize certain aspects and require stage change to occur without development in certain areas.

These questions may best be answered by applying the work of James Fowler to the actual writing of our students. Such an application will help us gain a clearer understanding of the stages through which writers must pass as they develop mastery of the art. We hope it will also contribute to

improving our methods of teaching writing. As teachers attempt to foster the progression from one stage to the next, they need to follow a natural progression, one natural to the ability level, age, gender, and culture of the student. Teachers must not only understand how to help their students write at the level on which they are presently operating, but must also be able to recognize when a student is ready to be challenged and stretched into the next. Piaget's notions of accommodation and assimilation suggest how stage transition occurs. Learners either "assimilate" (or take-in) new information into existing structures of meaning or they "accommodate" (alter) their existing structures based on new information and experience. It is the latter process that moves individuals vertically on the paradigm toward more sophisticated epistemological constructs and triggers stage transition. While many developmental theorists argue that teachers cannot manipulate vertical stage transition, certainly they can provide experiences which enrich students within the aspects of the stage in which the students find themselves. Thus, as all aspects within a stage reach a new level of maturation, vertical transition may occur. If Fowler's paradigm of meaning-construction informs our model of rhetorical development, teachers will be provided a rich and comprehensive schema from which to work. Such a schema will help teachers develop and refine a writing curriculum closely suited to the stages of their students.

Until such time as research findings are available, Fowler's "aspects" of development which impinge on writing ability may serve more or less as an inventory of the sources of both problems which retard progress and of opportunities for growth. That is, they may serve as a basis for determining assignments for students who struggle with a writing task unsuccessfully or superficially. How the student places and relates to authority, the sophistication with which he reacts to symbols, whether he can project himself into someone else's perspective, whether he is deeply (overly) emotionally invested in a particular issue, whether the student is sufficiently knowledgeable in an area to feel authoritative—all are telling developmental indices of a student's maturity.

With an understanding of "aspects of development" or "potentials for growth," the teacher can design a variety of classroom activities that allow a student to draw on and to enrich the strengths of his stage. For example, in SYNAPSE, a FIPSE-supported project at the University of Georgia under the direction of Don Rubin, the students take each of three positions in a situation. In one such exercise, students explore the ramifications of cheating on three students who took a test in the same class. The first is the student who studied hard and made an "A"; next is the student who relied on cheating to achieve his grade of "B"; and finally is the student who studied hard but failed (and whose grade was affected by the curve established by the cheater's "B"). In changing roles, the students experience differing perspectives, thinking and talking through the logic of the problem as it reflects the views of each hypothetical test-taking student.

In another exercise in "aspect enrichment," a student might examine the opinions of differing experts in order to assess the truthfulness of claims,

or the completeness of information, or its consistency with his own experience.

Or, students at similar developmental stages who take a different stand on some issue might be encouraged to engage in small group discussions in which they would be asked to try to reach consensus, or they might be asked to engage in structured debates.

Or, the teacher might decide that students must develop some real depth of knowledge about a subject by sticking with it for several weeks or months, seeking through ongoing discussion to develop in each student legitimate confidence in the self as knower.

A teacher who is able to recognize the logical stage at which a student is thinking, will then be able to provide writing assignments appropriate to that student's particular stage. For example, students at Stage II will find the chronological organization of a narrative fairly easy to manage. On the other hand, students able to handle formal logic can manage the analogic patterns required in comparison-contrast essays or the analytical thought processes required for tautological essays. Thus, Stage II students might be asked to write about "The best Thanksgiving I ever had," but those at a later stage could be expected to manage a contrast of Thanksgiving and Christmas or perhaps even a topic such as, "why Americans value holidays." Teachers who are aware of the students' thinking patterns will notice that some fall into narrative despite the apparent need for a more complex organization. These students may be relying on a strength they have developed in an attempt to manage a task which they find difficult.

In addition, teachers who are aware of the student's developmental stage will understand why basic writers see no need to develop a generalization. When they write "I enjoy going to my grandmother's for Thanksgiving," they feel no requirement to elaborate. Since "everyone-would-agree" logic prevails, there is no need to convince the reader. There is no understanding (without broad ability to take perspectives) that all grandmothers are not alike and all grandmothers' Thanksgivings are not alike: comments about turkey and dressing and warm embraces with seldom-seen cousins are not considered necessary to the Stage II basic writer. Thus, awareness of the logic typical of a particular stage may help an instructor understand why basic writers often overgeneralize and may allow the instructors to assign writing tasks suitable to the writers' logical stage.

Just as understanding the students' logical stage development can help instructors determine which students can handle different modes of writing, so can such an understanding help differentiate those ready for more advanced perspective-taking. Instructors who understand the nature of Stage II teenagers, will expect very few of them to be able to juggle abstractions, such as value systems outside their own: to expect them to adopt the perspective of the middle-aged in topics such as "Should eighteen-year-olds be allowed to purchase liquor?" or the perspective of alien governments in topics such as "Should the British have fought for the Falkland Islands as they did?" One teenager's analysis of the Falkland Islands crisis, for example, reduced itself to recommending that the British

"blow up the whole thing" because the Argentines had no right to invade. He did not clearly see the issue from either the British or Argentine perspective, and certainly did not recognize the human loss which would have resulted from such an overt military act. Even in conference, his sense of retributive justice and egocentric world view limited his ability to anticipate or weigh consequences or to consider the economic and historical precedents which had precipitated the crisis.

Teachers, then, are challenged to provide topics which match the students' maturity, which account for their logical development, which allow them to tap into their experience, which stretch their perspective, and which provide concrete data from which to build generalizations. This stance, far from watering down expectations, requires teachers to challenge students who have mastered chronological (or analogical) structures to attempt more sophisticated forms. Those who are exploring perspectives outside their own community must be encouraged in their exploration and teased to stretch toward an even broader view. Likewise, students need to be exposed to the richness of the culture's heritage in its tales and symbols, even though the students are not able to appreciate them in ways that the teacher might. In this way, the teacher's assignments can provide a substantial foundation for the student's development, rather than an empty, frustrating experience for both teacher and student.

Understanding the stages and aspects of basic writers can help us as instructors to nudge them toward better writing. For building upon Fowler's paradigm and recognizing the "passionate contribution of the person knowing," we can design appropriate curricular models to move students smoothly and confidently from stage to stage, competent in all aspects of each previous stage, and motivated to face new challenges.

NOTES

[1] Jean Piaget, Robert Selman, and Lawrence Kohlberg, respectively.

[2] Fowler's complete paradigm includes careful definitions for each of the categories of the paradigm. *See Stages of Faith,* 243.

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