The Growth and Development of College Students

This chapter considers the biological, psychological, and social development of traditional-aged college students—those between the ages of 18 and 24. The focus is on "normal" development during these years. Normal means the average behavioral changes, or those that the majority of college students experience. If you think of a normal distribution curve, the term includes those responses that fall within one standard deviation above or below the mean for any particular group.

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Each person moves through development at his or her own pace. Maturation is influenced by individual differences that may accelerate or retard the process of development. Social factors, biological factors, and experience all play roles in the pace at which one matures.

Biological Development

During the years of young adulthood, men and women biologically are becoming adults. Women begin puberty somewhere between the ages of 8 and 13, and men start puberty approximately two years later—between the ages of 10 and 15. Puberty

is the period when a person becomes physically mature enough to reproduce. It involves developing secondary sexual characteristics associated with gender and with hormonal changes in the body.

Physically, women reach their full height at about the age of 17. Men lag behind and do not reach their full height until about the age of 21. Men and women grow differently during this period of adolescence. Men's shoulders grow wider, their chest cavity expands, and their legs and forearms grow longer. Women grow wider in the pelvic area, ostensibly to enhance their ability to bear children, and their breasts, legs, arms, and torso develop.

Uneven Growth Patterns

Growth is not necessarily proportional throughout the entire adolescent period. Different portions of the body grow at different rates; therefore, some portions of the body may reach maturity faster than others. Typically the extremities, head, hands, and feet reach maturity prior to the legs, arms, and trunk of the body. This constantly fluctuating size leads to a decrease in motor skill coordination because individuals are learning to adapt to the changing size of their body. The description of the "awkward adolescent" is a reflection of this uneven growth toward maturity.

Recent generations have seen a trend (known as the secular trend) toward increasing size and earlier sexual maturity. Zastrow and Kirst-Ashman noted that sons are likely to be as much as one inch taller and 10 pounds heavier than their fathers, and daughters will be between one-half to one full inch taller than their mothers and approximately two pounds heavier. Menstruation is occurring in women of the current generation about 10 months earlier than it did for their mothers. The secular trend is worldwide. The reason for this trend appears to be related to better nutrition, better standards of living, and possibly the dominance of genes for tallness and rapid maturation. For the time being, this trend for increased size seems to have stabilized in the American population.[1]

During college, men and women approach their physical prime, reaching their full muscular development generally between the ages of 25 and 30. Top physical speed, dexterity, and overall strength generally continue to increase until about the age of 30, when a gradual decline begins. Eyesight and hearing continue to improve and are best at about the age of 20.[2] For the most part, college students are in good health and generally have a high energy level.

Health issues that interfere with good health are heavy drinking, drug use, and stress. The major causes of death among college students are auto accidents and suicides. In a high percentage of cases, alcohol use is involved with both causes of death.

Psychological Adaptation to Physical Development

In 1981 Blyth, Bulcroft, and Simmons conducted a study in Wisconsin on early and late maturation. They found that boys who matured early had a higher self-concept, were generally less satisfied with their overall physical development, tended to be more popular with girls, and participated in more school activities during high school. The same study found that early maturing girls were also less satisfied with their bodies than late maturers, were more often in dating relationships with boys, and had more behavior problems during middle school.[3]

The short-term implications of early and late maturation appear to affect self-concept and early identity formation. Early maturers generally had greater self-esteem, and some evidence indicates that early maturers may have been pushed prematurely into decisions about identity.[4] These differences appear to be short lived. By the age of 30 there are generally no significant differences in physical size, educational attainment, marital status, socioeconomic status, or the number of children per family unit. One benefit to late maturing may be that late maturers are forced to deal with ambiguity in adolescence and to develop an increased tolerance for uncertainty. As a result, they tend to be somewhat more flexible.

Psychological Development during the College Years

One of the most dynamic periods of psychological growth occurs during the college years. In this period, young adults begin to integrate their identity, enhance their intellectual development, and internalize a personal set of beliefs and values. As people mature, they change. Sanford defined change as "a system that is altered from a previous state."[5] Two forms of change take place as a person matures. The first is growth, which Sanford described as an expansion of the personality by addition of parts or expansion of existing parts. The second is development, defined as the process of organizing with increasing complexity. Both forms—growth and development—occur simultaneously throughout a person's life.

Development is driven by two forces: epigenesis and social role expectations.[6] Epigenesis is an internal evolutionary "clock" that biologically and psychologically pushes us toward maturity. Puberty is one example of this clock or internal force that drives the individual forward. Social role expectations are behaviors that are culturally associated with a person's age and gender. As we grow older, society expects us to be increasingly independent, less impulsive, and more in control of our lives. When a person's behavior conflicts with the social role expectations at a particular age, the person experiences a developmental crisis. These crises are good. They force people to evaluate their current behavior and pattern of thinking and

General Characteristics of Development

1. Development is continuous.
2. Development is a process, not a state.
3. Development has order.
4. Development moves from general to specific and from simple to more complex.
5. Development has characteristics associated with specific age levels.
6. Both heredity and the environment influence development.
7. Development occurs in the context of interactions between the individual and the environment, rather than through internal processes of maturation alone.

to adjust them to meet new social role expectations. All this simply means that society has come to expect more mature behavior from people as they grow older, and that society defines how people are expected to behave at different periods in their lives. Epigenesis complements this process.

Development follows a logical sequence of stages. At each stage, people work to resolve the same or similar issues. These issues are referred to as developmental tasks, and they have a logic to their progression. For example, when children are very young, parents establish and enforce a bedtime. As a child grows older, this bedtime may be moved to a later time of the evening, but is still enforced. By the time the child reaches high school, typically parents no longer enforce any bedtime and leave this decision to the child. However, parents of high school students usually establish a curfew for when their children must return home. As the child grows older, the curfew is generally withdrawn, and the time in which a single person may be expected back in the parents' home is left to the discretion of the young adult, with the understanding that some basic courtesies are respected in the family home.

The culture in which psychosocial development occurs influences the individual. Because cultures vary widely, different social influences may accelerate or retard different forms of development. Environment and social role expectations combine to influence development. For example, it is unusual to find a young man at the age of 17 living in a midwestern town who does not have a driver's license. Having a drivers' license is one of the first symbols of entering adulthood, and it provides the opportunity for greater freedom. However, it is not at all unusual to find a young man from New York City, Queens, or Brooklyn who does not have a driver's license. Public transportation in New York City is such that a driver's license is not a necessity, and the environment does not demand that families own automobiles. Freedom may come earlier as parents permit their children greater liberty in the use of the subway system and other public transportation. Thus, the issue of autonomy can be advanced or retarded by the interplay of the social and physical environment and its influence on the individual.

Development changes qualitatively as well, meaning that it is not simply an adding on of more responsibility; the complexity of organization also increases at each stage in development. Psychosocial stages are also concerned with content issues. Experience with certain social issues such as dating, defining appropriate sex roles, marriage, and family influences a person's development.

Although some of this discussion may seem to indicate that development is segmented—that is, one part of the person develops while the rest remains stagnant—this is not the case. Development is unitary; it involves the whole person. Elements of a personality develop in interaction with other characteristics of the individual. The process of change has order and develops a foundation for successive developmental changes.

College offers students the opportunity to socialize with a variety of people and model the roles of a variety of different lifestyles. Separated from parents and in many ways on their own, students also have the opportunity to experience the consequences of their actions. The grades a person achieves and the successes and failures are owned by the individual. A college education is viewed by society as a meaningful achievement. Acquisition of a degree and working toward a career goal are consistent with a need to be involved in a meaningful experience. Finally, the college environment is ideal for providing time for reflection and introspection. Although many college students are pressed for time, without doubt most still have the option to have a large portion of unstructured leisure time available.

The interaction of students living together provides regular feedback to the individual, time for reflection and introspection, and late-night discussions with other students. It also provides the opportunity to live alone or with a roommate in an environment controlled mostly by the individual. This environment allows a person to choose among a number of activities and to experience the consequences of choices made in this environment.

Chickering's Theory of Psychosocial Development in College Students

Arthur Chickering studied the psychosocial development of college students and later collaborated with Linda Reisser. Their research revealed seven vectors of development (Figure 8.1) that students work on throughout the college years.

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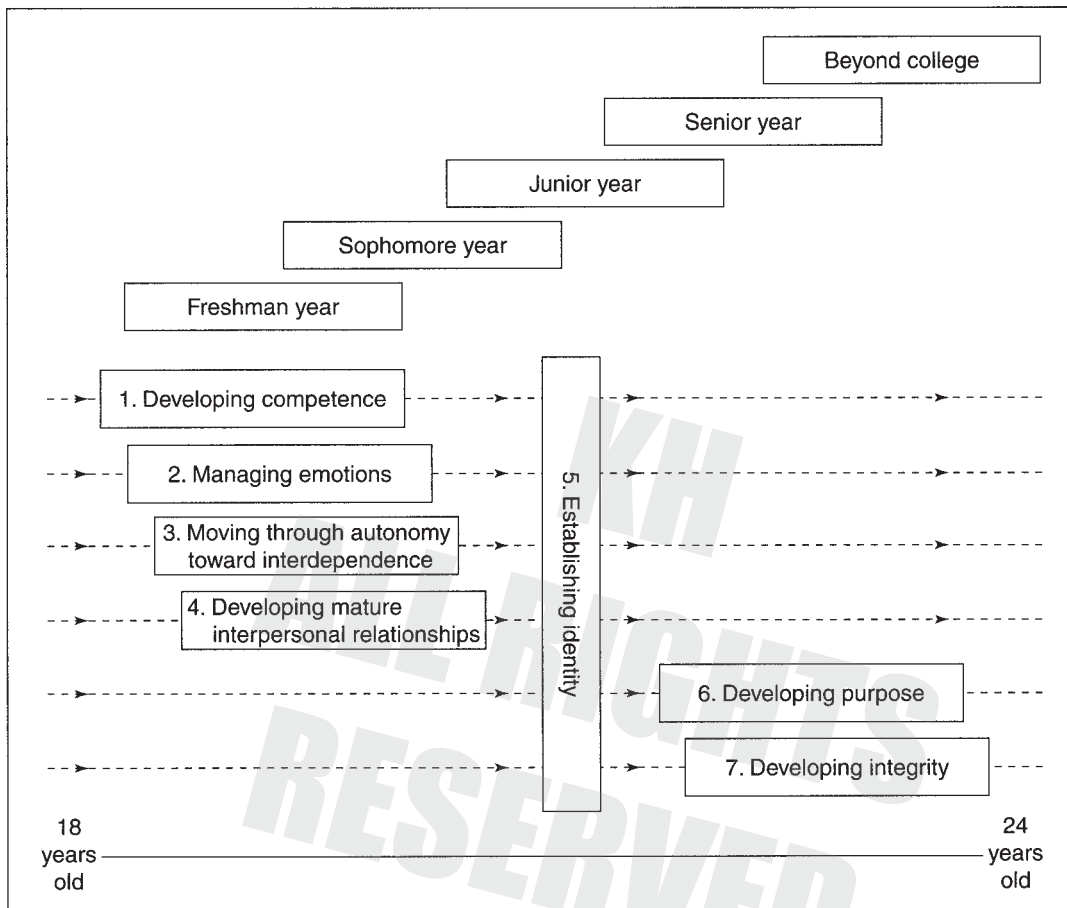One way students develop personal competence is by involvement in campus organizations.

Figure 8.1   Chickering's seven vectors of development.

A vector is a theme or a recurring issue that tends to drive growth and development in the personality. At certain periods in a person's life, societal expectations come into conflict with a person's usual pattern of behavior. The clash between a person's current behavior and new age-related role expectations causes a developmental crisis. This crisis creates an imbalance that the person needs to correct by adjusting his or her behavior and integrating this change into his or her personality. These seven vectors begin in early childhood and extend throughout a person's life. The seven vectors Chickering and Reisser identified are.[7]

Developing competence. When students arrive at a university, they are usually uncertain about how they will fit into this new environment. It is an environment that they have yet to master and presents for them a number of uncertainties. The first task that students must accomplish is to develop competence in the environment.

Students work on three forms of competence. First is intellectual competence. Students must come to believe that they are intelligent enough to compete in the university environment. They do this by consulting with their peers, getting feedback from instructors, and measuring this progress by performance on tests. One response often heard from new students is, "It's not as hard as I thought it would be." This response is most likely the result of somebody who had high expectations for great academic demands and found that the students with whom he or she was competing and the instructor's demands were geared for first-year academic performance.

> **Seven Vectors of Development**
> 1. Developing competence
> 2. Managing emotions
> 3. Moving through autonomy toward interdependence
> 4. Developing mature interpersonal relationships
> 5. Establishing identity
> 6. Developing purpose
> 7. Developing integrity

While working on intellectual competence, students also explore their physical/manual competence. This refers to whether students view themselves as though they are as strong as, as attractive as, or as physically developed as the other students attending the university. This is an issue of fitting in, determining whether one possesses the same athletic skills, manual dexterity skills, and other normal physical skills that other students possess.

The third competency issue is interpersonal competence. Students need to feel that they belong. They need to develop confidence in their relationships with peers, strong social networks, dating relationships, and similar forms of social interaction that signify peer acceptance. Participation in clubs and organizations, election to residence hall government, and establishment of friendships with roommates and others in the living unit give the person feedback about how he or she fits into the peer environment. Through this interaction, the person develops a sense of control or competency.

These three forms of competency—intellectual, physical/manual, and interpersonal—form an overall sense of competence or self-confidence, which is one of the first building blocks in students' overall move toward establishing a working identity structure. These competencies are formed through the process of differentiation followed by a process of integration. First the individual examines how he or she is different from other students. In some cases this will mean that the person performs better than peers, and in other cases it means that the person is not functioning as well as peers. Through the process of trial and error, feedback, and comparison, a person begins to develop a concept of where he or she fits in relation to others. This information is integrated into one's overall self-concept, forming one element in the person's identity. Competition with others and success in mastering academic work helps to reinforce and build these identity structures.

Managing emotions. Two processes occur in the evolution of emotional development during the college years. The first is moving from controlling one's own behavior because of external influence to a process of controlling behavior

through internal processes. Children do what is right based on external controls, generally through authority exercised by the school or parents. In adolescence, peer standards tend to control the same kind of behavior. Right and wrong are often defined by the external source of peer norms. However, as people mature, they come to accept increasing responsibility for their actions. This is a shift in locus of control from external sources being responsible for actions to an acceptance of the self as responsible for actions.

The second process, differentiation and integration, has four steps: (1) awareness of one's emotions, (2) acting on emotions, (3) receiving feedback on actions, and (4) exercising internal control of actions and integrating emotions. For example, take a young man learning to control his aggressive behavior. First he becomes aware that he gets angry. He controls his anger principally due to external sources such as the social rules of school or the imposition of authority. At some point he acts on this emotion, perhaps by striking someone. He will receive feedback about this aggressive action. This feedback may come from friends or authorities, who reason with him about the propriety of his conduct for his age. Peers may encourage or discourage this form of action. As a person grows older, this form of aggressive behavior is strongly discouraged, and punitive action is taken by society for those who are unable to control their actions. Eventually, through a process of reasoning, feedback, and having to confront the consequences of his action, the person internalizes appropriate responses to aggressive feelings.

During college, people learn to confront a wide range of emotions, not as children but as adults. Emotions such as love, rejection, grief, anger, and lust are among those that a person must learn to understand and integrate. People will comment that someone "is not acting like himself" because they have a concept or definition of other people; when someone does not respond as expected, they are likely to get feedback about how the behavior has changed. In other words, others define for a person how he or she is perceived and how people have come to expect the person to act. This feedback process helps the individual maintain and establish identity and sets expectations for how one is to control their emotions.

The process of managing emotions is actually about increasing awareness of feelings and learning how to understand and trust these feelings. The only way this can be accomplished is by experiencing these emotions, receiving feedback on them, and integrating this information into the self-concept.

Moving through autonomy toward interdependence. The vector of autonomy is a recurring issue throughout life, as are the other vectors identified by Chickering and Reisser. As early as the age of two, children begin differentiating themselves from others and take greater control over their lives. The process of autonomy consists of three elements. The first is developing emotional independence. When people become emotionally independent, they accept responsibility for themselves and lessen the need for emotional approval from

family and peers. People come to realize that they are ultimately responsible for themselves and that although the recognition of friends and family is important, it is less important than the individual's own sense of what is right. The second element of autonomy is what Chickering and Reisser described as "instrumental independence." Being instrumentally independent means that a person has become responsible for himself or herself and that the person has control of his or her environment. This usually involves being financially independent—employed— and having one's own residence. The integration of emotional independence and instrumental independence forms the third element of autonomy, which Chickering and Reisser described as "interdependence." This is a realization of independence and of one's responsibility for contributing positively to one's community.

For college students, the process of autonomy is a process of breaking away from parents emotionally and financially. College both helps and hinders this process. It helps the process because it allows students to move away from home and therefore free themselves from parental control. Residence halls provide an excellent intermediate peer environment in the transition between parental control and total independence.

College also hinders the maturation process, because it is expensive and requires a substantial time commitment. Parents are usually involved in providing some financial support to students for college. This financial support inhibits the development of instrumental independence. As long as students are dependent on parents for the money to survive, the apartments or residence halls in which they live, and the cars they may drive, students cannot be truly independent. Only after people become financially responsible for themselves can they become mature to the point of interdependence.

Developing mature interpersonal relationships. As people come to know more about themselves, they feel more secure in relationships. Chickering and Reisser observed that as people mature, the depth and intimacy of their relationships are enhanced. People retain belief in fewer stereotypes, are generally more tolerant of the views of others, and have fewer superficial relationships. Friendships are based on greater trust, and there is more openness and freedom to express one's innermost feelings. Part of the process of developing mature interpersonal relationships involves understanding and accepting differences in others—accepting others for who they are.

Women generally have had greater freedom to do this throughout their lives and have less difficulty developing their interpersonal relationships. The situation is different for men. Men are taught to be competitive with each other. It is difficult for them to share openly in friendships for fear that these expressions of emotion will be viewed as weakness. Men are generally much more selective about those

with whom they share their most intimate feelings. Often this level of intimacy is reserved only for a special female companion with whom they feel secure, or perhaps one close male friend with whom they have shared many experiences.

Young adults must differentiate themselves from others as part of the process of identity development.

People are not really prepared to participate fully in interpersonal relationships until they know themselves and feel secure in who they are. As this self-confidence and self-knowledge increases, people become less vulnerable and more willing to take emotional risks by sharing parts of themselves with others.

During maturation there is a shift toward greater trust, independence, and individuality. People should become less anxious, more secure, less defensive, and more friendly. They are often more spontaneous and more respectful of other people. General cultural stereotypes are broken down, and there is an increasing tolerance for a range of different people.

Establishing identity. Like the other vectors, establishing identity is a process begun in childhood. The college years are part of the period most critical to forming identity. The first four vectors—competence, managing emotions, moving through autonomy toward interdependence, and developing mature interpersonal relationships—form the framework for the establishment of an identity. They are necessary but not sufficient conditions for identity development.

The process of maturing and developing in these four areas helps people bring definition to their personality. For young adults to discover who they are, they must first separate or differentiate themselves from others. Only by doing so can they begin to integrate their successes and failures and develop a self-image or self-concept. Chickering described identity as confidence in one's ability to maintain inner sameness and continuity. It involves recognizing one's physical needs and limitations and developing comfort with one's body and appearance, sexual identity, and gender.

Once a person has established a self-image and formed an identity structure, the person is prepared to move toward expanding and enriching this identity. During the college years and throughout his or her 20s, a person works on resolving issues connected with the last two vectors: developing purpose and developing integrity.

Developing purpose. Career and vocational plans do not wait until the latter part of college. Most high school students and first-year college students wrestle with what they want to do with their lives. However, by the junior or senior year in college, career decision making is pressed by the rapidly approaching graduation date. Another way to express this is that the social demands of the environment create a crisis that the student must confront. Wrestling with the crisis of a vocational choice forces students to assess their strengths and to develop the beginnings of a commitment to a particular vocation. By the time students are ready to graduate, most have a general idea about how they might wish to earn a living.

As people make decisions about vocations, they are also enhancing their self-knowledge about non-vocational interests, the lifestyle that they would like to have, and the values that they hold to be important. If a person is committed to important social issues, such as the needs of the homeless, this particular value commitment may influence their career choice. If an individual wants a high-status position and a high-profile, luxurious lifestyle, he or she may choose a different profession. Some people are able to successfully integrate vocational, non-vocational, lifestyle, and value commitments into an occupation. A person who is interested in being outside and working with nature, who enjoys backpacking and camping, might, for example, choose a career in forestry, as a conservationist, or perhaps with the U.S. Park Service. A person who is interested in animals and nature might choose a position as a veterinarian or as a zoologist.

The goal of this vector—clarifying purpose—in the college years is to integrate the four elements of purpose—vocational commitment, non-vocational interests, lifestyle, and values—into an initial commitment for adulthood. As with identity and the other vectors, a person's purpose in life and overall career changes and matures as he or she develops. College is devoted to the integration of the initial commitment, and life after college is focused on exploring and confirming these initial commitments.

Developing integrity. The last of the seven vectors is integrity. It consists of humanizing and personalizing values and developing congruence between them. Humanizing values is a process of making rule-governed beliefs that guide society applicable to the human condition. It is a shift in how we view rule-governed behavior. It reflects a general liberalizing of values from a position in which they are considered absolute to a position in which they are considered to be relative. People come to learn that certain social rules may not always be consistent with the purpose for which they were designed. As people apply these beliefs and rules to their own lives, they come to accept or commit to those standards most consistent with their developing sense of values.

The humanizing of values also involves the internalization of these values. A person no longer considers them to be values to be held by others, but internalizes these values as his or her own. This follows a shift in locus of control.

Personalizing values occurs as values are applied to one's own life circumstances. It is an integration of what a person believes with how a person acts. A person may, for example, believe that stealing is wrong but be arrested for shoplifting in the bookstore. This incongruence may reflect a failure to personalize values and integrate what one believes with how one acts. This integration is a process of developing congruence between beliefs and actions.

Integrity is not something that a person achieves. It is a continuing process of moral growth and development. Although this is a continuing concern throughout college, many value issues are not resolved until after college. In part, integrity is the result of experience with ethical dilemmas confronted in life. The extent to which one's behavior reflects personal values is a complex internal process. Research suggests that as a person's stage of moral development increases, he or she is more likely to act in a manner consistent with those values.[8] In other words, moral development fosters greater consistency between beliefs and actions.

Cognitive Development

Cognitive development is concerned with increasingly complex structures or methods of reasoning. The characteristics of cognitive developmental stages are as follows:

- The stages form an invariant sequence. Issues at lower stages must be resolved to move to a higher stage of development. Moving from a lower stage of development to a higher stage is not possible without passing through the intermediate steps.
- The stages are arranged in a hierarchy, moving from simple to complex. In the early years, cognitive issues are resolved in a simplistic form. As a person gains experience, he or she may find more complex methods of reasoning and move to a higher stage.
- The sequence of cognitive development is universal. Regardless of culture or social issues, cognitive development follows a pattern or sequence inherent to the human life cycle. Social influences can affect the rate and the likelihood of reaching high levels of cognitive reasoning, but without these social or cultural influences, the potential to achieve higher stages is the same, regardless of culture.
- Stages are qualitatively different. This means that different issues are resolved, and new forms of reasoning are confronted at each stage.
- Cognitive developmental stages are concerned with the structure or complexity of reasoning, rather than the content of the judgments made. It is not so much the decision a person makes, but the reasoning or structure of the judgment

used to make the decision that reflects cognitive development. Cognitive development is the process of acquiring increasingly complex reasoning at each stage.

Cognitive development occurs through adaptation, which is a process of change to adjust or fit into one's surrounding environment. It is composed of the processes of assimilation and accommodation. Assimilation is the process by which one acquires and integrates new information into a thought structure. As one gathers new information and experiences, these events are not only held in the conscious awareness, but also used to help shape one's thinking. As this information is accumulated, it is used as experimental information in similar problem-solving situations. Accommodation is the process of adaptation used when a person's perception and actions are changed to use a more abstract or higher level of reasoning. Assimilation involves taking in and storing information, and accommodation applies this information in more complex forms of reasoning.

Perry's Theory of Cognitive Development in College Students

William Perry was interested in how the reasoning of students changed as a result of their exposure to the classroom learning situation and the college environment. Through his research, Perry found three major stages, each composed of three positions (Figure 8.2). He defined a position as a structure representing a mode or central tendency through which a person perceives the world at a given time.[9]

Dualism. Dualism is the first stage students encounter in their intellectual growth in college. In this stage, students see information classified as either right or wrong. They have little tolerance for ambiguity and attribute knowledge of "truth" to those in positions of authority. When two authorities disagree, one authority is usually seen as a bad authority (Position 2) and later, when two good authorities disagree, a new category of "not yet known" is assigned to those areas where knowledge is uncertain (Position 3).

Although the Perry scheme does not examine behavior directly, certain behavioral patterns can be identified within each level of development. In dualism, Widick and Simpson characterized students as:

- Experiencing stress when uncertainty is encountered
- Having difficulty in resolving interpretative tasks such as essays
- Perceiving instructors as knowing the truth
- Attaching disproportionate importance to evaluations[10]
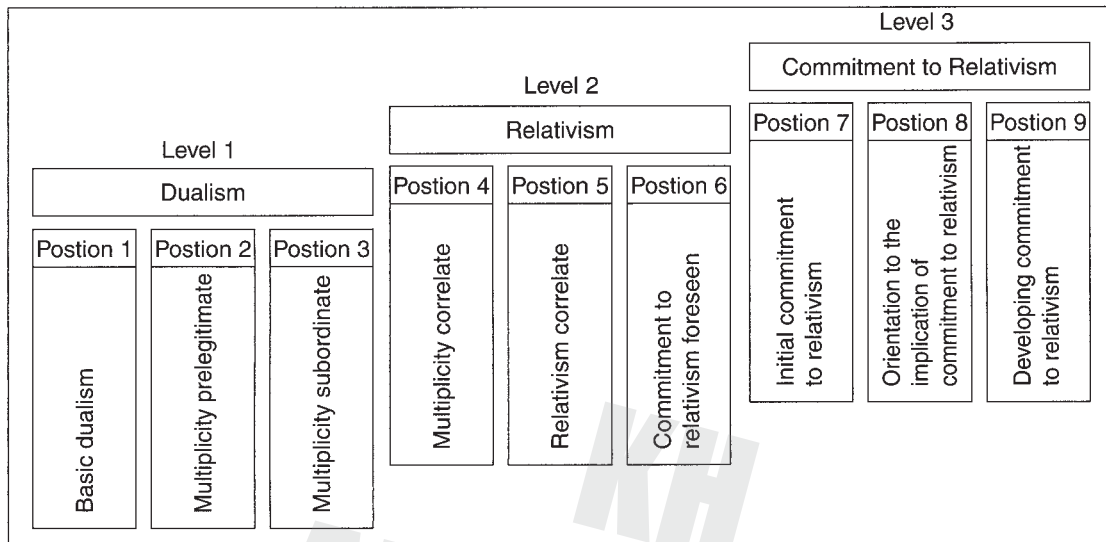
Figure 8.2   Perry's stages of intellectual and ethical development in college students.

At this level, students believe all knowledge is known, and professors supposedly have the right answers. The role of a student is to study and learn from those who hold the truth. As a person develops in this stage of dualism, he or she moves from a period of uncertainty to a period of increasing acceptance that it is legitimate to feel uncertain about some events.

Relativism. Through the process of grappling with issues that have no right or wrong answer, a student reaches the stage in which he or she is willing to accept that not all information is known and that it is legitimate to be uncertain. In relativism, the concept of absolute rights and wrongs—held in dualism—are replaced by the legitimacy of uncertainty (Position 4). Students are inclined to believe that people have a right to their own opinions and that no answer is any more valid than anyone else's.

In Position 5, knowledge is seen as certain only within context and relativistic assumptions of knowledge, and values begin to be linked to issues of self-identity. Knowledge and values are contextual, and authorities are seen as ways to help a person reach his or her own decision as to what answers are correct. However, there are no absolute criteria for making these decisions.

In Position 6, students see the necessity for orienting themselves to make commitments where there is no certain right answer. They recognize that many questions have multiple answers and that authorities are useful in selecting among the alternatives. The important aspect of this position is that students have come to accept uncertainty and are willing to commit, even when they are uncertain.

Widick and Simpson noted that during the stage of relativism, students experienced:

- An emphasis on intuition
- Development of the capacity to perform complex analytic tasks with some skill
- More internalized learning
- A lessened concern with pleasing instructors[11]

Commitment to relativism. At the level of a commitment to relativism (Positions 7, 8, and 9), students focus on clarifying their place in the world by exploring careers, marriage, and lifestyle. This level is characterized by self-discovery, commitment, balancing of priorities, and (in Position 9) a search for or the beginning of a synthesis in issues of ethics and integrity.

In Position 7 students make an initial commitment in some areas such as career, marriage, and lifestyle. In Position 8 they experience implications of these commitments and explore the responsibility associated with them. Finally, in Position 9 adults experience and affirm those commitments consistent with their identity and reassess or change commitments to meet that changing identity.

Perry acknowledged that Positions 7, 8, and 9 may be circular as opposed to linear. Throughout their adult lives, people may reexamine these same issues as they fulfill other dimensions of their life. Thus, Positions 7, 8, and 9 may simply be a cycle created as people experience different issues of commitment throughout their lives.

In 1981 Perry introduced a stylistic variation evident throughout the scheme, but particularly important in Position 4.[12] Students appear to approach the stage of relativism by viewing authorities either as role models to be followed or as adversaries to be debated. Moore described the different methods of cognitive adaptation. "The adhering student struggles with the transition from being a dependent learner to becoming an independent one; the oppositional student struggles with the temptation to stay in the apparent 'freedom' of the 'do your own thing' perspective."[13] Both groups of students depend on the authority figure, but in different ways—the adhering student for support and as a role model, the oppositional student for a challenge and for contrast.

Perry's scheme differs from many of the other developmental approaches in that it provides alternatives to development through escape, temporizing, and retreat. In retreat, a student confronted by too much challenge and not enough support may retreat to the security and certainty of basic dualism. Students who fail to make a commitment in the stage of relativism may escape into a relativistic way of viewing the world. They do not need to commit to uncertainty. Finally, some students temporize by remaining in a position because they are hesitant or unprepared to advance.

Conditions that tend to facilitate intellectual development include affective involvement, which involves empathizing with others and placing oneself in the role of another. Being confronted with new challenges, having the ability to process the encounter, and getting feedback regarding issues of uncertainty assist with development. Other dimensions of personality such as ego style and identity formation may further enhance or retard intellectual development.

Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development

Lawrence Kohlberg's research blended the work of John Dewey and Jean Piaget into a new way of thinking about how people develop the capacity to make moral judgments.[14] Kohlberg broke from the traditional view of moral development, which held that as people mature they absorb or internalize the cultural values around them. This view, sometimes referred to as childhood socialization or the anthropological perspective, continues to have support.

Kohlberg proposed that there are three levels of moral reasoning (preconventional, conventional, and postconventional), each consisting of two substages. Figure 8.3 illustrates the movement from Stage 1 reasoning to Stage 6 reasoning by showing the primary considerations (egocentrism, sociocentrism, and allocentrism) in making a moral judgment at each of Kohlberg's stages.

Preconventional level (Egocentrism). At the preconventional level, children are attentive to the cultural rules defined by their parents. They tend to interpret what is right by the physical consequences of their actions. Rewards and punishment tend to dictate what is right and what is wrong. Stage 1 is the "punishment-and-obedience orientation" (fear of punishment). In this stage, children are consumed with avoidance of punishment and defer their judgment to a parent or anyone with authority. There is no reasoning about the underlying moral order supporting this decision, only a response to authority or punishment.
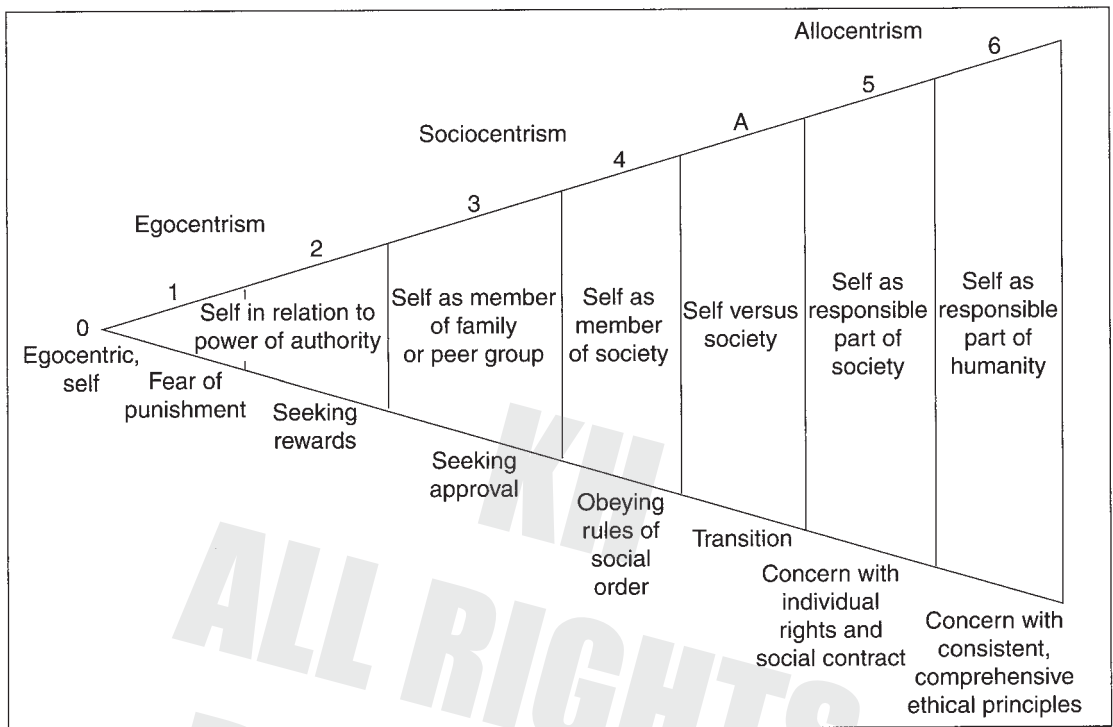
Figure 8.3   The move from egocentrism to allocentrism.

In Stage 2, "the instrumental relativistic orientation" (seeking rewards), moral reasoning is based on self-gratification or hedonistic values. Moral decisions are based on issues of reciprocity, equal sharing, and quid pro quo.

Conventional level (Sociocentrism). At the conventional level of morality, a person relinquishes moral judgments to the expectations of the social group. Initially this is the family group, followed by the peer group, and finally some type of cultural or social order. Moral decisions conform to the social norm or model expectations in the particular social order, regardless of the consequences. There is loyalty to the group, support for it, identification with it, and internal justification for it. The conventional level of morality comprises stages 3 and 4.

Stage 3 is the "interpersonal-concordance or good-boy, nice-girl orientation" (seeking approval). Morally correct decisions are decisions that please others. There is a concern with the stereotypes of what is good and what is bad or what the majority would do in a particular case. The focus is on being a good or nice person. The standard of what a good boy or good girl would do in a particular situation is internalized. Such statements as "Nice girls don't" characterize the kind of judgments that would be made at this stage.

At Stage 4, "the law-and-order orientation" (obeying rules of social order), moral decisions are determined by fixed rules for the purpose of maintaining the social order. The correct decision is one that follows the rules, fulfills duty, or upholds the social authority structure. As a member of society, one has a duty to maintain the laws of the community because the law has been created by a legitimate order and is necessary for maintaining the social order.

Postconventional level (Allocentrism). In this level there is a shift to principled thinking and an effort to internalize and personalize values. Morally correct decisions conform to the individual's concept of justice. These decisions occur apart from consideration of the response to authority or the need to conform one's opinions to those of a group. Stages 5 and 6 compose this level of moral reasoning.

Stage 5 is the "social-contract, legalistic orientation" (concern with individual rights and social contract). Morally correct actions uphold individual rights as agreed on in the society. The decision-making process and democratic decision making are emphasized. Without this form of decision making, what is right is viewed as a matter of personal opinion or choice. When decisions are not made through the democratic and legal process, social contracts between individuals are the binding force of what is morally correct.

The highest stage of moral reasoning is Stage 6, "the universal ethical-principle orientation" (concern with consistent, comprehensive ethical principles). Morally correct decisions conform to one's own conscience, consistent with a valid set of ethical principles that are logically comprehensive, universal, and consistently held. Decisions are made on the basis of principles, not on the basis of rules. These decisions are based on deontic principles of fairness, equality, human rights, and dignity.

These three levels of moral reasoning also may be viewed as movement from a focus on egocentric issues in early childhood (Stages 1 and 2) to a focus on the social environment (Stages 3 and 4) to a focus on allocentristic or other-directed values (Stages 5 and 6). This shows development as a move from self-interest to interest in others. Kohlberg's theory is consistent with the developmental concept of moving from simple issues to more complex issues.

Moral Development in the College Years

Moral development in the college years has been described by Gilligan as a "shift from moral ideology to ethical responsibility."[15] The source of the shift is a realization of the relativity of moral values brought about by the wider exposure to ideas and influences in the college environment.

Most college students are in Kohlberg's Stage 3 of moral reasoning, in which what is right is determined by the peer group. If one's peers believe that a certain behavior is correct, for all practical purposes the person holding loyalty to that group will act accordingly. As the person moves away from dependence on the peer group and comes to rely on his or her own judgment, there is a shift to adherence to moral judgments based on principles of law and order. This is Stage 4 reasoning. Most people in our society are Stage 4 reasoners. A greater exposure to education and the conflicting values in a college community press many students to advance to consider moral judgments on the basis of ethical principles (seen in Stages 5 and 6).

During college, students move from the recognition of external sources of authority for moral decisions to an acceptance of their personal authority and responsibility for moral judgments. It is a shift from letting others determine what is right and simply following those dictates to accepting responsibility for their own actions and acting in accordance with an internally held, valid set of principles.

One might question whether students who exhibit some of the most outrageous behavior in residence halls are making progress in their moral development. At one point, Kohlberg and Kramer believed that some students actually regressed after entering college. Their research showed that some students began making decisions[16] based on hedonistic self-interests without consideration for others. On closer examination, Kohlberg concluded that it was not regression that these students experienced when they entered college. Rather, it was a transitional period when some students experienced a conflict between the relativity of moral principles (conventional morality) and a commitment to ethical principles based on social contracts in a legalistic orientation (postconventional morality).[17]

This period of transition, marked by hedonistic behavior, permits students to increase their awareness of the concepts of equality and individual rights, their understanding of the collective functioning of humanity, and their knowledge of and concern for objective criteria for moral judgments.[18] It also allows a psychological moratorium that gives students the freedom to integrate conventional moral reasoning and establish a framework for Stage 5 reasoning based on ethical principles.[19] Because students are still struggling with internalizing the principles for ethical judgments, they substitute personal and subjective criteria for these decisions. Thus, these students appear to lack values or moral judgment. A more accurate description would be that they are in the process of developing principled thinking.

Carol Gilligan's Theory of Moral Development in Women

Carol Gilligan studied the relationship between moral reasoning and moral behavior using women as subjects. She discovered in her research that women make moral judgments in ways that differ from those described by Kohlberg. Kohlberg's theory is based on the concept of justice. In contrast, Gilligan's theory is based on the concept of caring. Gilligan contended that women emphasize relationships between persons and how they fit into a particular moral dilemma.[20] Women seek first to understand the needs of others and to respond to those needs, rather than to respond first to self-interests. The moral dilemmas that they face tend to be viewed in the context of relationship, collaboration, preventing physical or psychological harm, or restoring friendships. One example cited by Gilligan as symbolic of this caring voice in women that defines their moral judgment is taken from a story in the Old Testament. In this story, two women and a child are brought before Solomon. He is asked to determine which of the two women is the mother of the child. Both claim that they are the mother. Solomon offers a solution by calling for a sword to divide the baby in half. The true mother speaks up and surrenders her claim to her son to save the life of the child. Solomon recognizes that only a mother would make this sacrifice and declares her to be the rightful mother of the child. The story illustrates the nature of moral action that Gilligan believes women use to define their behavior—self-sacrifice and placing the well-being of others ahead of their own interests.

Gilligan described three levels of moral development and two transitional periods.

Level 1: Orientation to Personal Survival. At this level women focus on their self-interests. The needs and well-being of others are not a principle concern. Women are interested primarily in issues of personal survival and practical issues concerned with what is best for them.

Transition 1: Transition from Personal Selfishness to Responsibility. In the first transition, women move from consideration only of self-interest to a recognition of the interests of others. In this transition women begin to acknowledge that their actions affect others and that they have a responsibility not only to themselves but also to others.

Level 2: Goodness and Self-Sacrifice. Self-sacrifice is considered to be morally superior to the expression of personal needs, interests, or wants. Women tend to be more dependent on what other people think of them at this stage. Some women are conflicted over accepting responsibility for their own actions and social pressure to make a decision. Generally, other people's needs are put above their own needs.

Transition 2: From Goodness to Reality. In this transition women integrate Level 1, Transition 1, and Level 2 reasoning. They become more objective about their individual situations and tend to develop independence from the social influences of other people's opinions. They develop a more global understanding and acceptance of everyone's well-being. This includes themselves, and their own wants, needs, and personal survival.

Level 3: The Morality of Nonviolent Responsibility. At the third level, women accept responsibility for making their own judgments and the repercussions associated with these actions. Their reasoning has advanced beyond the concerns of others to a new level where their own needs are as valued as the needs of others. Moral judgments are based on weighing various consequences of actions and acceptance of personal responsibility for making those decisions. The single most important moral construct that operates throughout this level is the desire to minimize hurt—emotional or physical—to oneself or to anyone else. It can best be described as "do no harm to thyself or to others."

Social Development in the College Years

College influences students in two ways: formally and informally. Formal influences are those specifically designed by the university to inform or change a student in a specific way. These include classroom lectures, counseling sessions, and orientation programs. Of equal importance in a college environment are the informal influences. These include informal interactions with faculty, discussions with friends in the residence hall, dating experiences, and the scholarly atmosphere of the institution.

The process of influence is known as socialization. It is the system by which a person learns the social rules for interacting in the community. These rules of interaction, called norms, define acceptable behavior within the group and set standards for individuals seeking membership with that group. As prospective members come to understand the social behavior associated with membership, they come to accept these group standards so that they can gain group acceptance. The more an individual is integrated into the group, the more that person will conform to the normative standards of the group.[21]

The frequency of shared interactions and of common experiences help maintain friendships.

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Student Peer Groups

The single most important developmental influence on values, career aspirations, and overall adjustments is a student's peer group. It sets the standards for interaction, acceptable behavior, and approval. It also acts as a mirror to reflect the images that students will create for themselves. Residence halls are one of the most important places for these peer groups to operate. Friendships formed in the residence halls help students meet new socioacademic demands; learn their way around campus; combat feelings of loneliness; provide tension relief as students talk about common concerns; and through informal discussions in the residence halls, provide orientation to classes, teachers, and types of courses to be taken.[22]

Part of the interaction in a residence hall is controlled by the physical environment. If the living unit is constructed in such a way as to form small isolated groups in the unit, chances are the smaller groups will form the initial peer groups for individuals. According to Chickering, "The interior design and architectural arrangements concerning placement of living units and the nature of their location in relation to one another influences the choice of friends, the groups joined, and the diversity of persons with whom significant encounters can occur."[23] Without question, one effect of residence halls is that they create chances for students to have contact with one another. The day-to-day living situation of eating together, using the same washroom facilities and the other casual contacts give students a chance to become acquainted and to influence one another's attitudes and beliefs.

Researchers have found that students who live close to one another are more likely to form and maintain friendships than students who live further apart.[24] These friendships are likely to be formed in college and to be maintained throughout college and beyond. Not all college students participate in a special clique; however, all are influenced to a greater or lesser degree by the general peer environment. Some students simply prefer to be loners, but most students identify with other students. Part of the reason for this may be that they believe that other students share their personal values, interests, background, and experience.[25] Friends and peer groups "give each other emotional support and also serve as important points of reference for young people to compare their beliefs, values, attitudes, and abilities."[26]

Friendships are formed on a number of bases. Proximity, similarity of values, reciprocity and mutual trust, compatibility, duration of acquaintanceship, and admiration of the friend's good qualities significantly influence the selection and maintenance of friendships.[27] The frequency of shared interactions and of common experiences helps maintain these friendships. Such interchange provides an opportunity to share relationships and to develop linkages of trust. These commonly shared experiences reaffirm for students how they are similar and help students develop a bond of mutual support and confidence. With greater confidence come greater trust and self-disclosure.

A variety of different peer socializing agents are found within the undergraduate experience. The two that seem to exert the most influence are reference groups and primary peer groups. A reference group is a group with which the person wishes to be associated. In a college community this might be a fraternity or a sorority, a varsity athletic team, student government, or some other recognition group on the campus. The primary peer group may be the same as the reference group; however, it may also be different. The primary peer group is composed of those people with whom the individual most closely associates. This might include an individual's roommate, persons in close proximity to this person's residence hall room, or others counted among the student's closest friends. Both the primary peer group and the reference group exert an influence on students.

Most students do not identify directly with the larger culture of the university. Through intermediate social environments, students gain a sense of identification with the larger normative environment of the university. A student's reference group or primary peer group becomes the intermediate social environment through which he or she identifies with this larger university environment. This is why peer groups are so important during the college years. They are the bridge between the family as a controlling agent and the larger adult community.

A person's peer group tends to be most important in influencing beliefs, opinions, and dress. They are most likely to set normative standards for one's appearance, for resolving school-centered dilemmas, and in seeking advice on dating relationships. They also help shape opinions about a variety of issues, including political candidates, academic courses, and popular school activities. However, family background and parental opinions carry more weight in making complicated moral judgments that have long-range implications. Students tend to maintain their values concerning marriage, career selection, family commitments, and sense of honor and duty throughout their college careers.

Residence halls provide a natural place for primary peer groups to form. Feldman and Newcomb were among the first researchers to examine the influence of peer groups in residence halls. They described the peer group as the most important agent for change operating within residence halls. They summarized the ways in which peer groups influence students as follows:

- As part of the intermediate stage between the family and the larger postcollege world, the college peer group may help the individual student through the crisis of achieving independence from home.
- Under certain conditions . . . the peer group can support and facilitate the academic–intellectual goals of the college.
- The peer group offers general emotional support to the student; it fulfills needs not met by the curriculum, the classroom, or the faculty.
- The college peer group can provide for the student an occasion for and practice in getting along with people whose background, interests, and orientations are different from his or her own.

- Through value reinforcement, the peer group can provide support for not changing. Yet, it can also challenge old values, provide intellectual stimulation and act as a sounding board for new points of view, present new information and new experiences to the students, help clarify new self-definitions, suggest new career possibilities, and provide emotional support for students who are changing.
- The peer group can offer an alternative source of gratification and a positive self-image, along with rewarding a variety of nonacademic interests for students who are disappointed or not completely successful academically. Friends and social ties may also serve to discourage voluntary withdrawal from college for other than academic reasons.
- College peer group relations can be significant to students in their postcollege careers—not only because they provide general social training but also because of the development of personal ties that may reappear later in the career of the former student.[28]

Residence halls influence students by virtue of intensifying or defining the perimeters of the peer environment. Differences between students living in different types of undergraduate residence halls in part represent the different background characteristics of students, which are intensified as peer groups form.

Perhaps the most dynamic aspect of the residence hall environment is its potential as a means of organizing the critically important peer environment. The power of this peer environment is to influence students by helping to shape beliefs, career direction, and lifestyle among other dimensions of personal growth and development.[29] Of the three major influences determining a student's success in college—family background, the peer group, and tutelage—only the student's family background is more important to the student's success than the student's peer group. Once a student reaches college, the peer group is the major determinant of success or failure, more important than information learned in the classroom.[30] And, the residence hall is an important component in determining how this peer group is formed and who composes it.[31]

When one considers the potential for structuring associations by the mere assignment of students to live in close proximity to one another, and thus determining at least one level of the peer environment, the importance of residence halls to the overall influence of college takes on increased meaning.

REVIEW

In section A, Chickering's seven vectors of development in college are given. Section B contains a list of developmental issues students exhibit during the college years. Match the vectors with the behaviors. Vectors are used more than once.

SECTION A: CHICKERING'S SEVEN VECTORS

A. Developing Competence   E. Freeing Interpersonal Feelings
B. Managing Emotions   F. Developing Purpose
C. Developing Autonomy   G. Developing Integrity
D. Establishing Identity

SECTION B: DEVELOPMENTAL ISSUES

_____ 1.   A freshman who refuses to talk with her parents
_____ 2.   A junior who is spending all his free time with his girlfriend
_____ 3.   A freshman who is concerned with fitting in with the other students
_____ 4.   A sophomore who cannot control his temper
_____ 5.   A sophomore male who is homophobic
_____ 6.   A junior who is searching for a college major
_____ 7.   A student from the student judicial committee who gets caught shoplifting in the campus bookstore
_____ 8.   A freshman who is worried about being as intelligent as the other students in his classes
_____ 9.   A sophomore student who wants to live in an off-campus apartment
_____ 10. A freshman who continually violates college regulations
_____ 11. A sophomore who enters a college-sponsored co-op program in which she alternately works one semester and attends college one semester
_____ 12. A student who announces his engagement
_____ 13. A freshman who is overly concerned about her appearance
_____ 14. A student who spends much of his time proving to others how much he can drink, how tough he is, and how brave he can be
_____ 15. A freshman who is concerned because he cannot decide on a college major

1. Define growth as it is used in the text.
2. Define development as it is used in the text.
3. What two forces drive development?
4. Explain developmental crisis.
5. Give three characteristics associated with development.
6. Give three characteristics associated with cognitive development.
7. Cognitive development occurs through a process of adaptation. What are the two adaptive processes in cognitive development, and how is each defined?
8. List the three major periods of cognitive development that Perry identified in college students.
9. List Kohlberg's six stages of moral development.
10. In Kohlberg's theory of moral development, most college students are in what stage of moral development?
11. What are the three major stages of moral development in women identified in Gilligan's theory?

Lucy

Lucy was a freshman at State University. She was a little overwhelmed by the size of the university, which had 40,000 students and about 7,000 faculty and other employees. Her hometown had only 7,000 people, and her entire high school graduating class had fewer students than the number of women living on her residence hall floor. Lucy came to State because it offered the state's only agriculture degree.

Lucy did not make friends easily. She was somewhat shy and hoped that the experience of going to college would help her with her shyness. Her scheduled roommate never showed, leaving Lucy with a single room and the possibility of having someone assigned to the room later in the semester. She lived in a residence hall at the end of a long double-loaded corridor that had about 45 women on it, and she kept to herself the first two weeks of school.

By the end of the first month of classes, Lucy still had not made any friends in the residence hall. She got up in the morning, went to classes, and came back to her room and stayed there. She was very unhappy and was thinking about going home. The residence hall handbook instructed students who were having a problem to consult their RA. She went to the RA's room to tell her that she thought she wanted to leave school and that she wanted to know the procedure for withdrawing from State University.

What Would You Do?

1. If you were Lucy's RA, what questions would you ask, and how would you counsel her?
2. Is there anything that Lucy's RA could have done to have helped Lucy make friends early in the semester? If so, what?
3. What major developmental issues does Lucy seem to be confronting?
4. How can the RA help Lucy address these developmental issues?

Right Meets Left

Hans is a freshman who lives in a single room in an all-male residence hall of about 300 men. He went to a military high school and is very precise about everything. He keeps his closet and his other belongings in impeccable order. Hans has very conservative political views and proudly displays in his room an American flag and a photograph of a U.S. Marine Corps recruiting poster. Although he has not yet decided if he wants to join the ROTC, he is giving it serious thought. On most topics Hans has a strong opinion. The classes he likes best are math and science. He likes philosophy and history least because the professors in these courses won't give him a "straight answer" to his questions. Hans does not fit in with most of the other students on the floor and has become somewhat of a joke.

Asher is a freshman who lives on the same residence hall floor as Hans—about five rooms away. Asher is quite different from Hans. He wears blue jeans with holes in the knees, one silver earring, and usually a T-shirt with the name of some type of heavy-metal rock group on it. Asher believes that everyone should have the right to do his or her own thing. He does not like most of the rules in the residence hall but abides by them because he does not want to get into trouble. Asher has an American flag, which he uses as a rug in his room. Asher intends to major in philosophy. He likes philosophy because he believes that it allows everyone to have their own opinions about things.

One day Hans was in his room studying when he heard heavy-metal music coming from Asher's room. When he went to Asher's room, the door was open, and he saw Asher dancing on the American flag. Screaming above the music, Hans got Asher's attention. He asked Asher to turn down the music, which Asher did. Hans then told Asher that he thought Asher was a degenerate for dancing on the American flag and that only a communist drug fiend would ever show such disrespect for the flag. Asher acknowledged that he did occasionally use drugs and had not yet decided if he was a communist or an anarchist. He told Hans that when he decided what he was, he would get back to him but until then, Hans could "stay the hell out of his way." Some words and threats were exchanged, and Hans left and went back to his room, whereupon Asher turned his music up twice as loud.

That night someone forced pennies against the lock to Hans's room, making it impossible for him to open it from the inside. Bottle rockets and shaving cream were then shot under the door, followed by a bucket of water under the door. When the RA returned to his floor he found Hans screaming in his room and pounding on the door. No one was in the hall,

but most of the residents were awake and in their rooms with their doors open. Most were laughing. When the RA let Hans out of his room, Hans was furious and suspected Asher of the vandalism. He started down to Asher's room to confront him. Asher did not answer the door, but stayed inside listening to his music.

What Would You Do?

1. If you were the RA what would you do?
2. Based on the facts of the case study, what would be your best guess as to Hans's stage of cognitive development (using Perry's scheme), and why?
3. Based on the facts of the case study, what would be your best guess as to Asher's stage of cognitive development (using Perry's scheme) and why?
4. What, if anything, could the RA do to facilitate the cognitive growth of both students?
5. How could the RA best resolve the conflict between Asher and Hans before it escalates into more serious pranks?