



# What is Student Development Theory and How Can I Use it to Enhance My Advising Practice?



Kerry Thomas  
Academic Advisor  
College of Liberal Arts

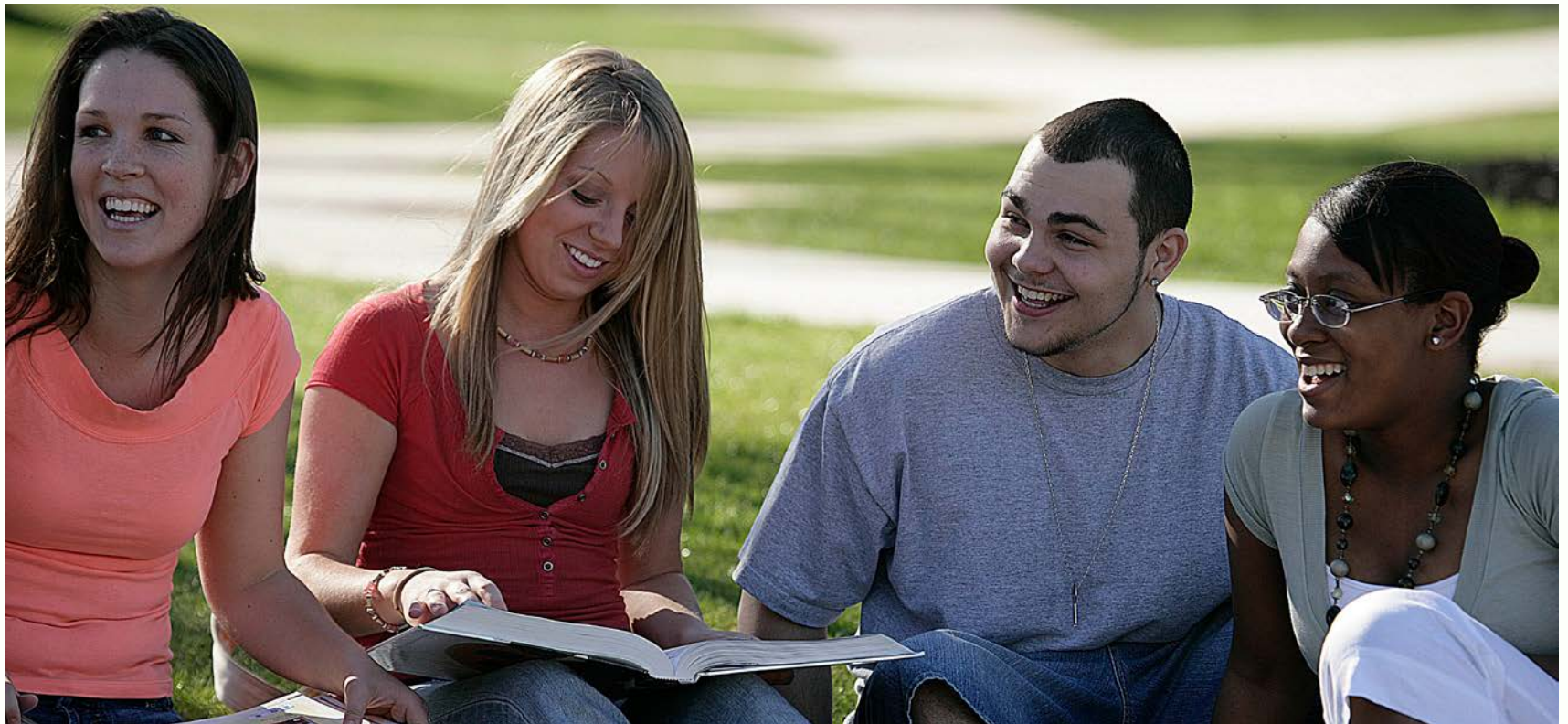
Oregon State University

# Today

- Explore why student development is important
- Explore one developmental theory and how to use it to inform advising practice
- Work through various advising scenarios in groups
- Homework: Explore additional theories to add to our advising tool-kit

# Why do students come to college?

- #1 reason = get a JOB!  
A record 87.9% of freshmen this year say college is key to landing a better job - US News and World Report
- But is that all we can offer?



## **NACADA Core Values about Students-**

Our work as advisors is guided by our beliefs that:

- Students can be responsible for their own behavior.
- Students can be successful as a result of their individual goals and efforts.
- Students have a desire to learn.
- Learning needs vary according to individual skills, goals and experiences.
- Students hold their own beliefs and opinions.

**Is this how your students typically act when they first come to college?**



# What do we expect of our students when they graduate?



What do we want them to know?

Be capable of?

Believe about themselves?

Believe about the world around them?

What skills do they need to be successful?

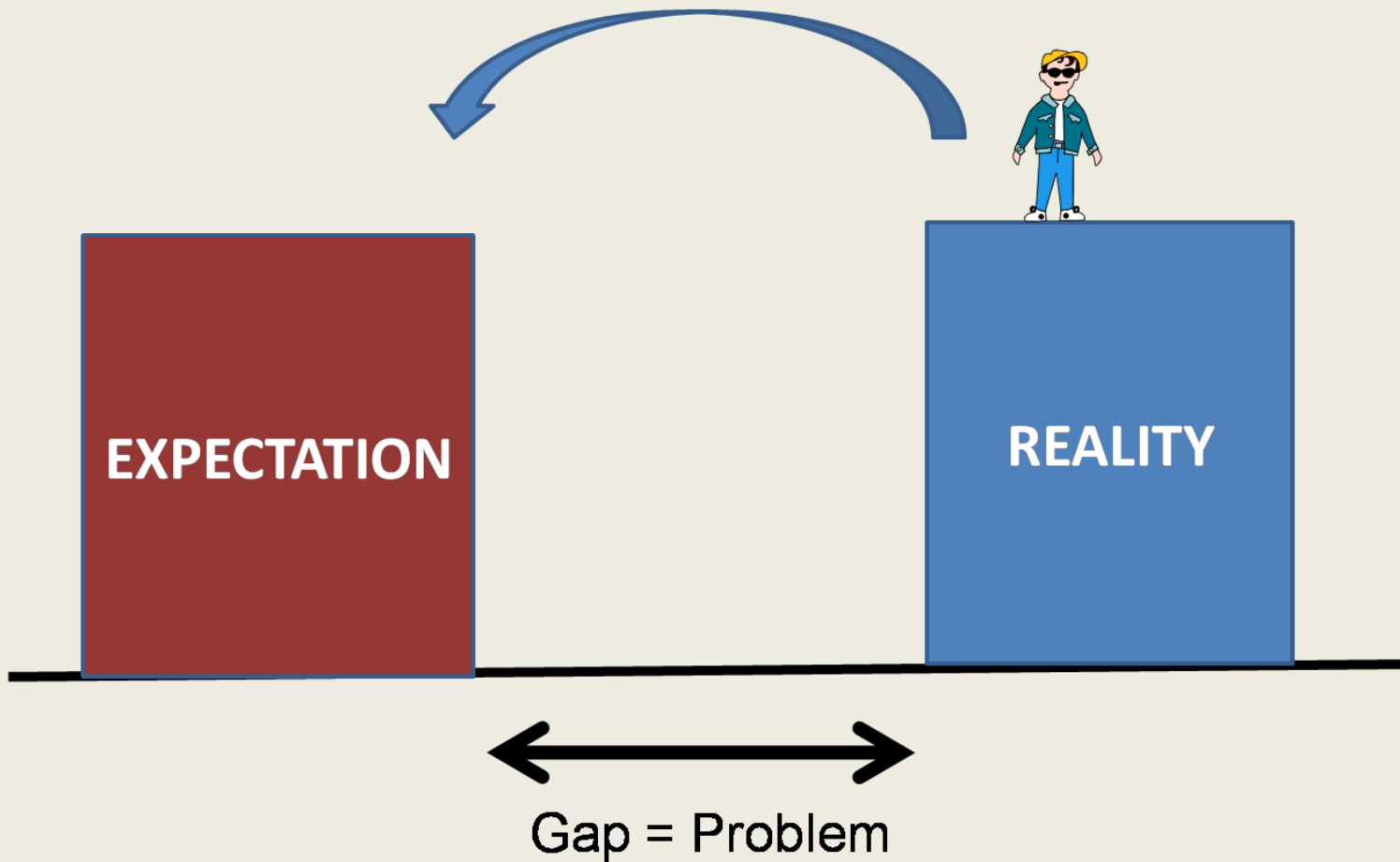
## Are our graduates leaving able to function in today's world?

“Survival of the 21<sup>st</sup> century requires flexibility, adaptability, the capacity to negotiate between one's own and others' needs, and the ability to cope with rapid change, ambiguity, diversity and complexity”

– Marcia Baxter  
Magolda, 2001, p. xvi-xvii



# Gap between reality and expectations

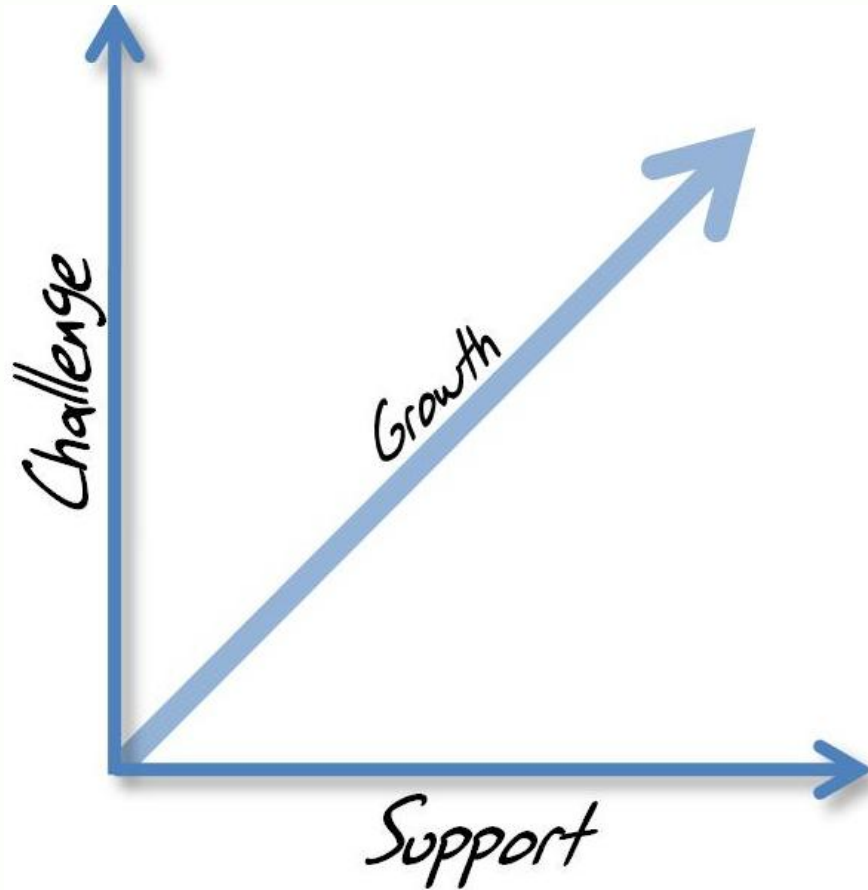


How we expect  
them to be

vs.

How they are

What does it take to get them from where they are to where we want them to be?





## Where do Advisors come in? Building an Evolutionary Bridge

“It is not necessarily a bad thing that adolescents are in over their heads. In fact, it may be just what is called for ***provided they also experience effective support***. Such supports constitute a holding environment that provides both welcoming acknowledgment to exactly who the person is right now as he or she is, and fosters the person’s psychological evolution.”

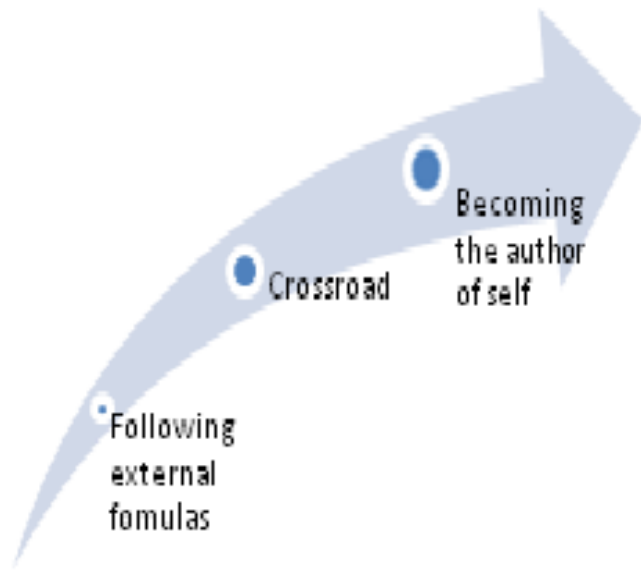
-Robert Kegan, 1994, p. 43



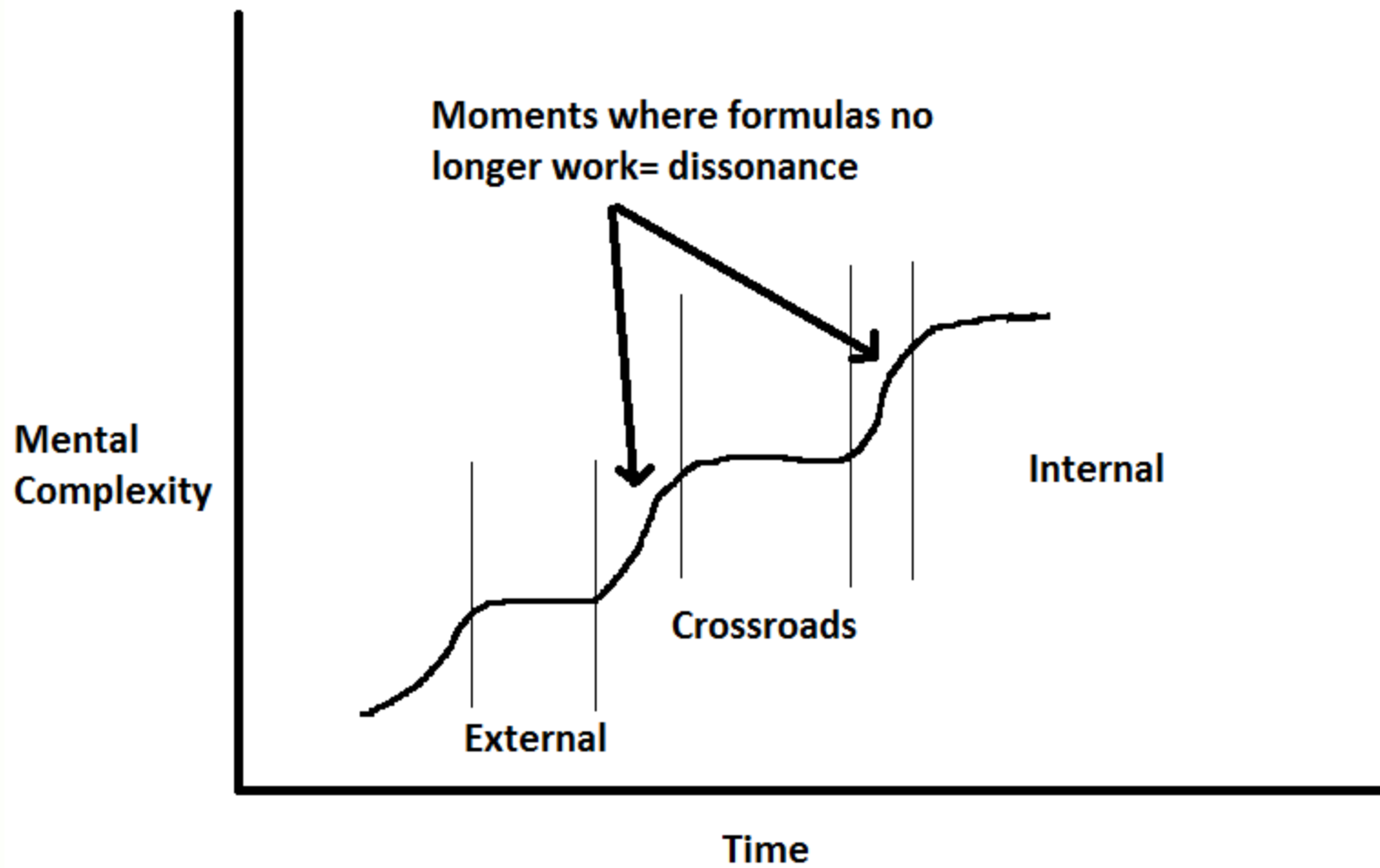
# Self Authorship

## Robert Kegan (1994)

- Development is not automatic
- Can be facilitated or supported
- Important to be able function in a way that matches environmental needs



## Developmental Trajectory is Unique to Each Individual



	<b>Cognitive- How I know</b>	<b>Interpersonal- Relationships with others</b>	<b>Intrapersonal- Personal Identity</b>
<b>Externally Defined</b>	“Facts are facts that professors tell us”	“I want to go out drinking because it’s what my friends like to do”	“I am (insert political belief) because that’s how I grew up”
<b>Crossroads</b>	“I don’t always think my professor is right, but I’m not sure what I believe or how to share my opinion”	“Going out to parties isn’t really my thing, but I am worried what my friends would say if I didn’t want to go”	“It seems like some things that I believe are important don’t match with what my political party believes. I don’t know who is right”
<b>Internally Defined</b>	“I love our lecture because I have the ability to present my own opinion and have dialogue with the professor in class”	“I decided that partying isn’t really for me. It means that I lost a few friends, but they weren’t my real friends anyway if they can’t respect my decision”	“I decided to change my political affiliation. My parents aren’t really happy with that, but it makes the most sense based on what I know and my personal values”

## Student Scenarios: Changing Majors



What do you notice about these statements?

Have you met with students who say similar things?

How would you respond?



## Student Scenarios: Struggling Academically

On your own: Underline the language that identifies their level of development

Discuss with a partner the cues you notice and how you would address the conversation developmentally as the advisor.



# Subject- Object Interviewing Techniques



- Context and content are determined by student- **Let the student take the lead**
- Interviewer/Advisor - **listen actively and ask questions** to determine developmental needs
- New meaning derived through conversation in partnership- **provide appropriate challenge or support**

## **To advise a student developmentally, Kramer (1999) suggests the following:**

1. know/apply student development theory.
2. focus on students; their on-going needs over an extended period of time. One advising session builds upon another.
3. challenge students to achieve their learning potential and to take academic risks.
4. view students as active partners actively engaged in intellectual and personal growth.
5. help students think about and articulate what is important to them in their academic as well as their personal lives.
6. set short-term as well as long-term goals, discuss ways to achieve those goals, and help the student monitor progress in fulfilling those goals.

# Homework

#1 Don't get overwhelmed- find what works for you

#2 Explore resources on the NACADA clearinghouse, JSTOR and Google Scholar

#3 Explore Student Development Theories and find a few that help to inform your practice

# References

- Baxter Magolda, M. (2001). *Making their own way: Narratives for transforming higher education to promote self-development*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Berger, J. G. (2010). Using the Subject-Object Interview to promote and assess self-authorship. In M. B. Baxter Magolda, E. G. Creamer & P. S. Meszaros (Eds.), *Development and assessment of self-authorship: Exploring the concept across cultures*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Kegan, R. (1994). *In over our heads: The mental demands of modern life*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Keeling, R. P. (Ed.) (2004). *Learning reconsidered: A campus-wide focus on the student experience*. Washington DC: National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, American College Personnel Association.
- Kramer, G.L. (1999). Developmental Academic Advising. In Session Guide, Academic Advising Summer Institute, pp. 198-216. Manhattan, KS: National Academic Advising Association.



**Thank you for your time,  
any questions?**