

**COLLEGE STUDENT DEVELOPMENT: SELF-AUTHORING IN AN ERA OF
INCREASED PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

by

Dana M. Winters

B.A., Saint Vincent College, 2006

M.A., Indiana University of Pennsylvania, 2008

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
School of Education in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

University of Pittsburgh

2016

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

This dissertation was presented

by

Dana M. Winters

It was defended on

April 25, 2016

and approved by

Michel Gunzenhauser, Associate Professor, Administrative and Policy Studies

Gina Garcia, Assistant Professor, Administrative and Policy Studies

Valire Copeland, Associate Professor, Social Work

Dissertation Advisor: Linda DeAngelo, Assistant Professor, Administrative and Policy
Studies

Copyright © by Dana M. Winters

2016

COLLEGE STUDENT DEVELOPMENT: SELF-AUTHORING IN AN ERA OF INCREASED PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Dana M. Winters, Ph.D.

University of Pittsburgh, 2016

Parent involvement in the lives of college students is not new. However, the increasing interaction between parents and college students over the last 15-20 years is unprecedented. The evolving styles of hands-on parenting, opportunities for constant communication between students and parents, and changing relationship between the parent and institution are examples of how the role of the parent in higher education is very different now than it has been historically (Brooks, 2001; Howe & Strauss, 2000, 2003; Levine & Dean, 2012; Trice, 2002; Wartman & Savage, 2008). As conventional student development theory suggests, students must separate and individuate from parents in order to develop into independent adults (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Separating from parents provides opportunities for students to make decisions independently, which is necessary for students to progress toward self-authorship, a holistic form of development characterized by the formation of informal meaning making structures (Baxter Magolda, 2001). Therefore, moments of challenge that promote the development of internal structures of meaning making must be realized in order for students to develop. However, as parental involvement increases for college students, scholars question if developmental moments where students can independently solve problems are less likely to occur (Pizzolato & Hicklen, 2011).

My study addressed this gap in knowledge through two substantive theories that explicate the role of parents in college student development and decision making, in an effort to extend Baxter Magolda's (1998) theory of self-authorship. My work suggests that the role of others is central to the decision making processes of college students, and that ultimately, parents have the ability to support and impede the development of the independent self. Through their responses to students' assertions of self, parents and students engage in a cycle of response and counter response that leads to an outcome on the development of the independent self. This work has implications for the future of college student development theory as it takes into account how parents play an active role in student development, as well as implications for how practitioners engage with parents and students in efforts to create developmentally appropriate involvement.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION.....	XV
PREFACE.....	XVI
1.0 BACKGROUND, PURPOSE, AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY.....	1
1.1 WHY THE CHANGE?	5
1.1.1 Changes in Parenting.....	5
1.1.2 Technology Use.....	8
1.1.3 Parents as Stakeholders.....	9
1.2 IMPLICATIONS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT	11
1.3 INTRODUCTION TO THEORY	11
1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND RESEARCH PURPOSE	13
1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	14
1.6 DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY.....	15
1.7 DELIMITATIONS AND LIMITATIONS	16
1.8 SIGNIFICANCE.....	19
2.0 THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND LITERATURE	21
2.1 THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS: SELF-AUTHORSHIP THEORY	21
2.1.1 Baxter Magolda.....	24
2.1.2 Limitations to Baxter Magolda’s Theory of Self-Authorship.....	27

2.2	THEORETICAL FOUNDATION: EMERGING ADULTHOOD AND THE PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP.....	30
2.3	THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN DEVELOPMENT.....	34
2.4	SUMMARY AND IDENTIFIED RESEARCH GAP	40
3.0	RESEARCH METHODS	43
3.1	CONSTRUCTIVIST GROUNDED THEORY.....	45
3.2	DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES	49
3.2.1	Research Sites.....	49
3.3	SAMPLE AND COLLECTION PROCEDURES	50
3.4	DATA ANALYSIS.....	54
3.4.1	Coding Technique	54
3.5	DATA MANAGEMENT PLAN.....	57
3.6	TRUSTWORTHINESS.....	58
3.7	RESEARCHER ROLE, REFLEXIVITY, AND RECIPROCITY	59
3.7.1	Researcher Role and Reflexivity.....	59
3.7.1.1	Reciprocity.....	61
3.8	LIMITATIONS.....	61
4.0	PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS	63
4.1	THE PARTICIPANTS: THE PARENT-STUDENT DYAD.....	66
4.1.1	Josh and Grace Ellis	66
4.1.2	Brian and Mary Kind	67
4.1.3	Daniel, Sarah, and Nicholas Underwood	68
4.1.4	Aaron and Gerald Vick	69

4.1.5	Nathan and Martha Voren.....	70
4.1.6	Christina and Kelly Andrews	71
4.1.7	Becca and Karen Foster	72
4.1.8	Tina and Sandy Inman	73
4.1.9	Sarah and Steve Mason	74
4.1.10	Laney and Monica Quirk	75
4.1.11	Lori and Larry Vanguard	76
4.1.12	Leah and Iris Volt	77
4.1.13	Anthony and Ingrid Benson.....	78
4.1.14	Vincent and Jan Quinn.....	79
4.1.15	Veronica and Donna Bates	80
4.1.16	Beth and Dan Conner	81
4.1.17	Bonnie and Maggie North	82
4.1.18	Nicole and Natalie Rice.....	84
5.0	FINDINGS RELATED TO PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCES.....	86
5.1	INTERACTIONS BETWEEN PARENT AND STUDENT	86
5.2	THE PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP	88
5.3	STUDENT AND PARENT PERSPECTIVES ON STUDENT DEVELOPMENT.....	92
5.3.1	The Student Point of View	92
5.3.2	The Parent Point of View	96
5.3.3	Contributions to Growth.....	97
5.4	STUDENT AND PARENT PERSPECTIVES ON DECISION MAKING	102

5.4.1	The Role of Parents.....	104
5.4.2	Summary.....	106
6.0	SUBSTANTIVE THEORY	108
6.1	GROUNDING THEORY TERMINOLOGY	109
	Property.....	110
	Category.....	110
	Concept.	110
	Core Concept.....	110
6.2	THEORY#1 – THE EXPRESSION OF SELF IN STUDENT DECISION MAKING.....	111
6.2.1	Core Concept: Expressing the Self in Decision Making Processes	113
6.2.2	Concept: Expressing the self through others.....	115
6.2.2.1	Category: Soliciting input from others; Property: Input as information.....	116
6.2.2.2	Category: Interpreting input from others; Property: Input as other weighted.....	120
6.2.2.3	Category: Integrating input from others; Property: High integration.	122
6.2.3	Concept: Expressing self with others.	125
6.2.3.1	Category: Soliciting input from others; Property: Input as discussion	126
6.2.3.2	Category: Interpreting input from others; Property: Input as evenly weighted.....	129

6.2.3.3	Category: Integrating input from others; Property: Intermediate integration.	131
6.2.4	Concept: Expressing Self Independently from Others.....	134
6.2.4.1	Category: Soliciting input from others; Property: Input as validation.	135
6.2.4.2	Category: Interpreting input from Others; Property: Input as self weighted.	137
6.2.4.3	Category: Integrating input from others; Property: Low integration.	140
6.2.5	Summary.....	142
6.3	THEORY #2 – PARENTS AND COLLEGE STUDENT DEVELOPMENT: RESPONSE AND COUNTER-RESPONSE TO THE SELF.....	143
6.3.1	Core Concept: Developing the Self through Response and Counter-Response.....	145
6.3.2	Concept: Asserting the Independent Self	148
6.3.3	Concept: Responding to the Self (Parents).....	148
6.3.3.1	Category: Acceptance.....	149
6.3.3.2	Category: Resistance.	151
6.3.4	Concept: Student Counter-Responding to the Parent’s Response.....	153
6.3.4.1	Category: Student counter response to parent acceptance: Confidence.	154
6.3.4.2	Category: Student counter response to parent resistance: Deference or defiance.	156

6.3.5	Summary.....	161
6.4	APPLICATION OF PARENT RESPONSE AND STUDENT COUNTER RESPONSE TO EXPRESSING SELF IN DECISION MAKING PROCESSES.....	162
6.4.1	Application of Parent Response and Student Counter Response to Expressing Self through Others.....	164
6.4.2	Application of Parent Response and Student Counter Response Expressing Self with Others.	166
6.4.3	Application of parent response and student counter response expressing self independently from others.....	169
6.4.4	Summary.....	172
7.0	CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS	174
7.1	REVISITING BAXTER MAGOLDA’S THEORY OF SELF- AUTHORSHIP	180
7.2	IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORY	191
7.2.1	Using The Extension of Baxter Magolda’s Theory of Self-Authorship	192
7.2.2	Using Theories Outside of Higher Education to Contribute to Student Development Theory	193
7.2.3	The Future Study of College Student Development Theory	194
7.3	IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH	195
7.3.1	Constructivist Grounded Theory Methods	196
7.3.2	Limitations to the Study – Understanding Diverse Perspectives.....	197
7.3.3	Understanding How Parents Parent	199
7.3.4	Understanding the Role of Parents Relative to Others	200

7.4	IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE.....	200
7.4.1	Implications for Parents	201
7.4.2	Implications for Student Affairs Practice.....	202
7.4.2.1	Student-Parent Contact.....	202
7.4.2.2	Understanding initiation of contact and interaction patterns	204
7.4.2.3	Working with Parents	205
7.5	CONCLUSION	206
APPENDIX A	208
APPENDIX B	211
APPENDIX C	214
APPENDIX D	217
APPENDIX E	220
BIBLIOGRAPHY	221

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Selected Participant Characteristics	65
Table 2. Baxter Magolda's Theory of Self-Authorship Continuum of Development.....	208
Table 3. Student Interview #1 Protocol	214
Table 4. Parent Interview Protocol	217

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Relationship of Grounded Theory Terminology	109
Figure 2. Expressing the Self in Decision Making Processes.....	112
Figure 3. Expressing Self through Others.....	115
Figure 4. Expressing Self with Others	125
Figure 5. Expressing Self Independently from Others.....	134
Figure 6. Process of Parent Response and Student Counter Response.....	145
Figure 7. Developing the Self through Response and Counter Response	147
Figure 8. Integration of Parent Response, Student Counter Response, and Expression of Self.	163
Figure 9. Integration of Parent Response, Student Counter Response, and Expressing Self through Others	165
Figure 10. Integration of Parent Response, Student Counter Response, and Expressing Self with Others	168
Figure 11. Integration of Parent Response, Student Counter Response, and Expressing Self Independently from Others	171
Figure 12. Baxter Magolda's Continuum of Development Toward Self-Authorship in Relation to Substantive Theories	183

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my dear girls, Clare and Anna.

Being your mother is the the most rewarding and humbling journey of my life.

Thank you for keeping me grounded and keeping my world in perspective.

PREFACE

I have written these acknowledgements in my head a million times over the last six and a half years. Thanking those who have supported me on this journey through my words on this page seems so trivial compared to what they have given to me.

The work I have done would not have been possible without the support of my dissertation advisor, Dr. Linda DeAngelo. It was serendipitous that we met in a Starbucks not long after you had moved to Pittsburgh. Your passion for higher education, high quality research, and developing emerging scholars was immediately evident – and I knew that we would work well together. At that time, I had little direction to my independent work, and you pushed me harder than anyone ever has – which says so much about the intense care you have for your students. I thank you for your time, your sacrifices, your guidance, your mentorship, and your friendship. It is through you that I have learned what it means to be a scholar.

Thank you to the members of my dissertation committee, Dr. Michael Gunzenhauser, Dr. Gina Garcia, and Dr. Valire Copeland. You provided feedback and pushed my thinking in ways that helped me to acknowledge what my dissertation was, what it was not, and what it could be. Thank you for your support, challenge, and time.

Much of my time at the University of Pittsburgh was spent with the Collaborative for Evaluation and Assessment Capacity. I can never express the gratitude I have for Dr. Cindy Tananis and Dr. Keith Trahan, who took a chance on me as a graduate student researcher, and

allowed my dream to live on. I was only able to study one last semester without funding when you offered me a position. In that position, I learned so much about evaluation and applied research, and found a passion for the practicality of research. More importantly, I found colleagues with whom I could share this journey. Among this group, Everett Herman, Lisa Brown, Crystal Wang, Stephanie Romero, Matthew Richardson, Brittney Brueggman, and Taylor Wade; we shared our struggles and successes, both professional and personal, and I am eternally grateful for your friendships and support.

I routinely told the participants within my study, that my work could be strong because of their willingness to share their stories. I thank you for trusting me with your worlds, for letting me into your relationships, and for sharing your lives.

I am so thankful for the financial assistance I received to complete this study from the University of Pittsburgh School of Education Student Research Grant and the NASPA Foundation Channing Briggs Small Grant. These grants not only financially supported this work, but gave me much needed validation that my work was both timely and important.

So much of who I am and what I have been able to accomplish I owe to the love and support of my family. To my sister and (almost) brother-in-law. Thank you for making me laugh when I need it most and for allowing me to be myself. I look forward to turning my energy toward the two of you.

To my father, who consistently sees in me what I cannot see in myself. You will always be the person who can challenge me like no one else can, yet be there to pick me up when I falter. I thank you for passing along your determination and grit – without them, I would have never dreamed this big.

To my mother, who listens to me no matter the subject, validates me when I need it, and calls me out when I am being irrational. Thank you for your undying support, for the babysitting services, and for avoiding the topic of my dissertation unless I brought it up. You have always been, and will always be, my person.

To my sweet girls, Clare and Anna. It is hard to believe that I started this journey pregnant with Clare, and Anna surprised us three weeks early as I was handing in my comprehensive examinations. You both give me such joy and I cannot imagine anything more fulfilling than being your mother. I hope that this dissertation stands as proof you can do anything you set your mind to do, and that you do not allow challenges to stand in your way. Whatever and whomever you choose to be, know that you will always have my complete love and support.

Finally, to my selfless husband, Jason. I do not know that I can put into words all that you have done for me. You never doubted that I would realize this dream, and that alone would have been enough. You made so many sacrifices so that I could “play school” over the last six and a half years, you shouldered the weight of parenting over the last six months, endured my late night writing, helped me to process when everything was cloudy, and tolerated the many times when I was not at my best. Thank you for never wavering, and for knowing I could do this, even when I was not sure. Your love, support, and sacrifices have pushed me through the challenges and given me someone with whom I can share my successes. I look forward to the rest of our journey together.

1.0 BACKGROUND, PURPOSE, AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Parental involvement in higher education has been steadily increasing over the last 15 years (Carney-Hall, 2008; Merriman, 2007; Wartman & Savage, 2008). Between 2001 and 2008, nearly 75% of institutions surveyed reported an increase in the frequency of parental involvement, and an additional 68% cited increases in involvement from 2008 to 2011 (Levine & Dean, 2012). While this increase in parental involvement can be attributed to many factors, such as generational differences, rising costs of higher education, and technology that allows for constant communication between students and parents, studies indicate that the effects of parental involvement on student development and student success are unclear. These mixed results have not stopped the media, among others, from referring to today's parents of college students in less than endearing ways. Scholarly articles, books, and newspaper publications, alike, refer to parents as "helicopters," "lawnmowers," "stealth bombers," and "snowplows," all characterized by their heightened level of involvement in the lives of their students and their willingness to do anything to be a part of their students' lives. Just this academic year, major media outlets such as The Washington Post, ABC News, NBC News, and the Huffington Post, all carried articles or news segments where a former dean at Stanford University talked about how today's parenting trends are ruining college students (see Brown, 2015). With the unflattering, and at times fear inducing, attention paid in the media, it is understandable that many parents and student affairs practitioners, alike, question the role of parents in high

education. The increase in parental involvement has led to various institutional responses in which colleges and universities continually work to balance their responsibilities to the rights of students as adults and their responsibilities to parents as higher education consumers.

While parent involvement in higher education is not new, the level of involvement of today's parents is very different from parents who have come before (Carney-Hall, 2008; Wartman & Savage, 2008). A survey conducted by College Parents of America in 2007 (Wartman & Savage, 2008) indicates that 81% of parents believe they are more or much more involved in their college student's life than their parents were involved in their college lives. The numerous accounts of increased involvement, from calling the institution, constant communication with students, and visiting the institution, detail how the role of the parent in higher education is very different now than it has been historically (Brooks, 2001; Howe & Strauss, 2000, 2003; Levine & Dean, 2012; Trice, 2002; Wartman & Savage, 2008)

As higher education has evolved over the last century, so has the relationship between the student, parent, and institution. The first parent associations date back to the 1920s with the creation of the Dads' Association in 1922 and Mothers' Association in 1923 at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and the Texas A&M University's Mothers' Club in 1922 (Wartman & Savage, 2008). These groups, while originally intended to promote the general welfare of students by taking an active role in campus events and activities, also aided in fundraising efforts and safety projects on their campuses. This institution-parent relationship changed drastically as the political and social events of the 1960s and 1970s gave a new voice to college students. Social and political events of the time, such as the Civil Rights Movement, Vietnam War, and sexual revolution, changed many of the traditional power structures in both the family and the higher education institution. As students demanded autonomy within higher

education and the family, both the institution and parents began to lose their long-standing role as authority figures and any subsequent control over students (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997). Additionally, at this time, the relationship between higher education institutions and families began to crumble (Wartman & Savage, 2008).

Students were legally granted a modicum of autonomy through the passage of the Family Educational Rights and Protection Act (FERPA) of 1974. FERPA restricts what information can be shared with outside parties, including parents, setting the boundaries for disclosure to parents about student records. The legislation grants three primary rights to college students: (1) the right to review their education records, (2) the right to challenge their education records, and (3) the right to determine the availability of their education records to others (Wartman & Savage, 2008). This was viewed as a step toward greater autonomy of college students from parents, as well as an additional method of separation between institutions and parents, as parents could no longer access student information without student consent.

Beginning in the 1990's, institutions began to slowly welcome parents back to college campuses through the advent of parent programs (Savage & Petree, 2013). As parent programs and involvement grew, federal legislation made an effort to recognize the interests of parents through a series of amendments to FERPA. These amendments included the disclosure of disciplinary information for students under the age of 21 in any alcohol or drug-related cases, as well as the financial dependency exception, which stated that student information could be released to parents if the student is deemed to be financially dependent on the parents. These changes were intended to facilitate communication with parents, "without creating parent rights enforceable in court" (Baker, 2006, p. 84). The responsiveness to parents followed the trend of increased interaction between the parent and institution, and parent and student.

In direct response to the increasing involvement of parents, institutions created parent services, resources, and offices. Due to the increasing involvement of parents in higher education, it was vital for institutions to decide what type of relationship they wanted to have with the parents of their students. The options were clear; they could form a partnership, advocate a complete separation, or find space in between (Keppler, Mullendore, & Carey, 2005). In response, between 1999 and 2007, the number of parental resources offered, such as parent newsletters, parent orientation sessions, family weekends, parent ambassador programs, and parent associations, increased dramatically. In 1999, only 16% of institutions offered two types of parent services, whereas in 2007, 96% of the institutions surveyed indicated that they offered five or more of the most common services (Wartman & Savage, 2008). Of the services mentioned, 94.9% of institutions offered a family day or weekend, compared to just 43% of institutions in 1999; 95.2% offered a parent orientation in 2007, compared to 35% in 1999; and 85.2% were including parents in fundraising efforts, compared to 12% in 1999 (Wartman & Savage, 2008). Additionally, from 2000 to 2007, 43% of current parent services offices opened in institutions across the nation (Wartman & Savage, 2008). These services invited parents to be a partner in their students' higher education journeys, and some view the relationship between parents and institutions as a productive way to use parents to aid in student outcomes. For example, Wartman and Savage (2008) write that, "by bringing parents into the educational equation on personal, social, and economic views, [higher education] administrators gain a partner who has the most at stake in their student's well-being" (p. 90).

1.1 WHY THE CHANGE?

One of the reasons for the increased involvement of parents in higher education is the changing characteristic of today's college students. As the newest generation of students flocks to higher education, they bring with them unique characteristics and attributes, not the least of which is their closeness with their parents (Coburn, 2006; DeBard, 2004; Howe & Strauss, 2003). In a study detailing the connectedness of first-year college students, Abar, Abar, Turrisi, and Belden (2013) found that 90% of the students sampled were likely to communicate with their parents in some way at least once a week, with 66% indicating that they use a cell phone to communicate with parents multiple times per week. Many reasons exist as to why these shifts in parental involvement have occurred over the last 20 years, including: (1) changes in parenting, (2) the use of technology, and (3) the cost of higher education and the role of parents as stakeholders and consumers. Each of these ideas provides unique reasons as to why parents are more engaged with their students and with institutions of higher education, and provide context for the development of this study.

1.1.1 Changes in Parenting

With a new generation of students comes a new generation of parents, one that exudes certain general characteristics and behaviors. The current generation enrolled in college, referred to most often as the millennial generation, was born on or after 1982 and began entering American colleges and universities in the fall of 2000 (Terry, Dukes, Valdez, & Wilson, 2005). Howe and Strauss (2000, 2003), in their seminal work on millennial students, claim that millennial students share seven core traits: special, sheltered, confident, team-oriented,

conventional, pressured, and achieving. This is indicative of the active and protective style of parenting often attributed to parents of millennial students. Millennial students were born during a time of transition for parenting, when parenting styles became increasingly more protective (Woempner, 2007). Some cite that this change in parenting, where the amount of time children spend with both parents has increased by 25% between 1981 and 1997 (Hofferth & Sandberg, 2001), is a direct reaction to the parents' upbringing as children who were left to their own devices and seldom interacted with their own parents and other adults (Howe & Strauss, 2000, 2003). Many parents of millennials were latch-key children, characterized by being left alone or in group activities with little supervision for long periods of time during their youth (Long & Long, 1983; Woempner, 2007). As a reaction to their childhoods, parents of millennials are much more protective and active parents than were their parents (Woempner, 2007), resulting in millennial students that have had more exposure to parents and adults throughout their lives (Terry, et al., 2005). This is evident through the increased involvement parents take in their children's lives and the trend of parents to plan and organize their children's lives from an early age (Brooks, 2001; Ullom & Faulkner, 2005). Many college students today led organized and structured childhoods, having spent much of their time in adult-structured activities or engaging in activities where their parents or another adult were directly involved (Brooks, 2001; Hofferth & Sandberg, 2001; Lareau, 2003). These changes in the structure of child life greatly differed from the casual and self-organized play that previous generations experienced (Brooks, 2001; Lareau, 2003; Ullom & Faulkner, 2005). This led to parenting that is described as involved, over-protective, and child-focused (Howe & Strauss, 2000).

In addition, primary and secondary education reform tells parents of today's college students that one of the criterion for student success is active and engaged parenting. Federal,

state, and local education efforts at the K-12 level continually stress the importance of family involvement in education efforts, to the point that the 2001 No Child Left Behind legislation indicated family involvement as one of the six targeted areas for school success (Carney-Hall, 2008; Mattingly, Prislin, McKenzie, Rodrigues, & Kayzar, 2002; Wartman & Savage, 2008). As a result, the parents of today's college students have a history of involvement in their children's academic and nonacademic lives that hardly ends when those children enter higher education. In fact, "the paradigm shift for parents and students that higher education does not allow for the same involvement level remains a challenge" (Terry, et al, 2005).

Finally, a greater percentage of this generation of college students have parents with at least some college experience than ever before (Astin & Oseguera, 2004). As Astin and Oseguera (2004) report using Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) data from 1971 to 2000, the percentage of students with two parents who have graduated from a four-year institution at the nation's most selective institutions has increased from 28% in 1971 to 62% in 2000. This trend continued across all institution types, with 33% of students at mid-selectivity institutions and 18% of students at lower-selectivity institutions with two parents who are degree holders. This does not account for students who may have one parent with a college degree, or one or more parents with some college experience. When these two categories are considered, the percentages of students whose parents have at least some college experience grows considerably (Astin & Oseguera, 2004). While this statistic may not be surprising, it does affect how parents approach the institution and their children in college. As the number of parents with first-hand knowledge of the college experience increases, so do these parents' expectations of what the college experience should provide (Ullom & Faulkner, 2005). This leads to parents

being a more active part of the college process, sharing their own experiences and expectations for what they believe their students should be experiencing.

1.1.2 Technology Use

The advent and availability of new technologies aimed at increasing consistent communication also provides a changing landscape for parental involvement with their students. The proliferation of cellular phones, email, and other communication technologies has increased the frequency with which parents and students communicate (Wartman & Savage, 2008). For example, a study of parent and student communication trends found that the advancements to email in the late 1990s and early 2000s increased communication between students and parents, reporting that parents and students shared an average of 6.03 email contacts per week (Trice, 2002). As technological advances continued and more means of communication became available, a study of first-year college students indicated that students and parents communicated, via multiple mediums, an average of 10.41 times per week (Taub, 2008). With the availability and convenience of cell phones, communication continues to grow between parents and students. A 2013 study of first-year college students reported that 66% of sampled students communicated with their parents via cell phone multiple times per week (Abar, et al., 2013).

The availability of technological advances that lead to constant communication, such as text messaging and 24/7 availability through cell phones, creates another variable of increasing involvement of parents in the lives of college students. This, combined with the changes in parenting and generational differences, creates a new level of interaction between the parent-

student-institution tripartite, one that has not been experienced until this generation of college students entered the academy.

1.1.3 Parents as Stakeholders

In addition to the generational differences and proliferation of technology available for communication, the role of parents and the institutional view of parents have changed over the last 10-15 years. As the costs involved in a college education continue to rise, so does the involvement of parents in the institution. The combination of federal and state cuts to higher education and increases of nearly 150% in the average cost of tuition, has shifted the burden of paying for higher education onto families. In fact, more parents today are helping to pay for their children's education than ever before (Levine & Dean, 2012; Wartman & Savage, 2008). The bulk of this financial responsibility has come through the use of Parent Loans for Undergraduate Students (PLUS). Since 1998, the number of parents using PLUS to help fund their children's higher education has increased by 92%, and the average amount of loans has increased by 39% (College Board, 2013). In addition, institution-based loans intended to supplement other federal aid increased by nearly \$230 million between the 2007-2008 and 2012-2013 school years (College Board, 2013).

With this increase in parents providing financial support for their children's higher education, comes a shift in how institutions interact with families and how families view their roles in higher education. As parents transition from bystanders to legitimate stakeholders, their expectations of higher education climb. Institutions now view parents as higher education consumers, changing the relationship of parent and institution into more of a consumer and business relationship than ever before (Levine & Dean, 2012). This, in turn, alters the

interactions of the institution and parents, leading to more frequent communication and demands on the part of the parents for institutions to be responsive to the needs and wants of their students (Wartman & Savage, 2008). In addition, as more students remain financially dependent on their parents, especially to contribute to the rising costs of higher education, parents believe that they have greater stakes in the college experiences of their children.

In the first and only empirical study examining the relationship between parent financial contribution to higher education and parents' over-involvement in their children's college experience, Lowe, Dotterer, and Francisco (2015) found that parents who paid for their children's college exhibited higher levels of "helicopter parenting," an indexed variable consisting of a number of behaviors the researchers deemed "parental over-involvement," such as finding the child a job, registering for their child's courses, monitoring the child's financials, and intervening in academic advising. While the results of this study are limited by a small sample at one institution, the authors do provide a valuable look at the prevalence of helicopter parenting and the role of financial dependency. While they found that helicopter parenting was not prevalent within their sample, the parents who paid for their children's schooling were far more likely to intervene in ways that were considered overly-involved and obtrusive to the college student experience. These findings coincide with the work of developmental theorists (Aquilino, 2006; Arnett, 2004; Dubas & Petersen, 1996), who find that the tension between emerging adult independence and dependence, mostly financial, on the parent can create challenges in redefining the parent-child relationship, and inhibit the parent from viewing the child as an adult, capable of making independent and autonomous decisions.

1.2 IMPLICATIONS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

While it is evident that parental involvement in higher education is changing and increasing, the potential impact this involvement has on college student development is lesser known. Limited research has been conducted concerning the effect of parents on college student outcomes, and that research tends to be contradictory, at best. Studies of family relationships and the developmental transition to adulthood cite that emerging adults with the highest degrees of contact with parents tended to have the worst psychological adjustment to the roles and responsibilities of adulthood (Dubas & Peterson, 1996; O'Connor, Allen, Bell, & Hansen, 1996). These findings, in particular, support the need for addressing parental contact that may inhibit the development of independence and self-sufficiency during emerging adulthood. While this research advocates that separating from parents, both physically and psychologically, is essential for the development of autonomy, independence, and self-sufficiency, Cullaty's (2011) work calls into question the need for separation. He found that most students remained in close contact and emotionally invested with their families while attending college and that parents had mixed effects on college student development, both facilitating and hindering students' autonomy development.

1.3 INTRODUCTION TO THEORY

The developmental transition from adolescence to adulthood, typically occurring between the late teens and mid-twenties, has been the subject of much study and change since the 1990s. Traditional and contemporary developmental theory may all refer to this transition differently,

but most theories agree that this time is characterized by exploration into changing responsibilities and roles, all in an effort to settle into long-term adult roles (Arnett, 2000, 2006; Erikson, 1968; Keniston, 1971; Levinson, 1978). As individuals develop from adolescence to adulthood, they cite a number of subjective understandings of adulthood that indicate to them that their transition is complete, including independently determined worldviews, taking responsibility for one's life, and the ability to make independent decisions (Arnett, 1997, 1998, 2000; Greene, Wheatley, & Aldava, 1992). All of these subjective characteristics of adulthood are promoted through independent opportunities to explore and experiment with life roles and responsibilities (Arnett, 2000). While not necessary for development into adulthood, the college experience provides the independence that promotes these explorations and experimentations with new worldviews and self-sufficiency (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005).

In addition to the independence and exploration that the college environment supports, one of the missions of higher education is to promote the holistic development of students (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2009). One of the most important ways that students develop from adolescence to adulthood is in the ability to self-author (Kegan, 1994), or “the ability to collect, interpret and analyze information and reflect on one's own beliefs in order to form judgments” (Baxter Magolda, 1998, p. 143). Developmental psychologist Robert Kegan (1994) views self-authorship as necessary for adults to be able to independently guide their lives, meet everyday expectations of adult responsibilities, and take responsibility for their actions. In furthering self-authorship theory for study in higher education, Marcia Baxter Magolda (1992, 2001) explored the role of college in the transition to adulthood and how individuals make meaning. Life during and after college requires students to develop their own belief systems, make suitable decisions based on these belief systems, and create and maintain appropriate

relationships with others. Evolving directly from Kegan's (1982, 1994) combination of cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal development, there are three elements of self-authorship that answer fundamental questions of development. The first question, "How do I know?" focuses on the cognitive dimension of development and assumptions about knowledge, the second question, "Who am I?" refers to the intrapersonal dimension of self-authorship and who people believe themselves to be, and the final question of "How do I want to construct relationships with others?" examines the interpersonal dimension of self-authorship and how someone constructs and understands relationships with others (Baxter Magolda, 2001). In order to answer these questions, students need to be able to employ self-authorship. As a result of using a self-authorship perspective, students will better "transition from being shaped by society to shaping society in their role as leaders in society's future" (Baxter Magolda, 1999, p. 630).

1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND RESEARCH PURPOSE

While largely understudied, parental interaction can affect the development of self-authorship in a number of ways. For instance, evaluating personal judgments and the opinions of others in order to make decisions requires students to understand the difference between taking opinions into consideration to make an independent decision, and being consumed and influenced to a decision (Baxter Magolda, 1998). In addition, traditionally, in order for the progression to internal meaning making to occur, it is necessary for students to separate and become independent not only from their parents, but also from the idea that there are any cognitive authorities (Pizzolato & Hicklen, 2011). Separating from parents provides opportunities for students to make decisions independently, which is a necessary experience for

students to progress toward self-authorship (Baxter Magolda, 2001; Pizzolato & Hicklen, 2011). Therefore, moments of challenge that promote the development of contextual ways of knowing must be realized in order for students to develop. These moments of challenge allow students to independently make sense of situations. Yet, as parental involvement increases for college students, developmental moments where students can independently solve problems are less likely to occur (Pizzolato & Hicklen, 2011). While this is likely the case, very little research has been conducted on the role that parental or family involvement plays on a student's ability to self-author and progress toward contextual knowing. This study addresses this void, by providing a picture of how students make decisions and the role that parents play in those decision making processes, all in an effort to build theory around the role of parents in student development.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In response to this research purpose, I addressed the following research questions in this study:

1. How do students arrive at the decisions they make?
 - a. How are parents involved in student decision-making?
2. How do students perceive relationships with parents contributing to their development?
3. How do parents perceive their relationships with their children during college contributing to their children's development?

These research questions address the role of parents in college student development and decision-making. In addition, this study extends current conceptualizations of self-authorship theory to consider the ever-growing implications of parents to student development.

1.6 DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

Understanding students' meaning-making processes and the perceived role of the parent in student development is central to this study. These goals require rich and detailed descriptions of how students and parents experience their worlds and how the student progresses through a developmental trajectory. Qualitative methods provide the necessary foundation for gaining these deep understandings of how students and parents perceive their realities. Specifically, this study used constructivist grounded theory to generate theory from the personal experiences of the research participants. Constructivist grounded theory emphasizes the process of how participants make meaning. This is vitally important to my research since I focused on how and why students make decisions. The content of the decisions that participants made is not of primary importance to this study, but rather how the participants arrived at those decisions. This study used intensive interviews of students and parents to gain an understanding of how students arrived at the decisions they made. The use of intensive interviewing and constructive grounded theory methods provided a research design that was both directed, yet open-ended enough to allow rich detail to emerge from participants. These methods provided the depth of information necessary to build substantive theory from participants' descriptions and experiences (Charmaz, 2014).

I individually interviewed students and parents, asking questions about how the students made decisions and the role the parent played in these processes. The parent interview acted as a point of comparison to the student perspectives and provided a deep understanding of the perceived role of the parent in student development. In an effort to build a sample of students with a diversity of experiences, I conducted interviews at two research sites; one a large, public, urban, institution, and the other a small, private, liberal-arts, suburban-rural institution. Both institutions boasted large populations of traditional-age students who live away from their parents, which were two characteristics that were necessary for the sample of students for this study. In addition, both institutions provided parent support resources that were used by a large percentage of parents and families.

1.7 DELIMITATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The intent of a grounded theory qualitative study, such as this, is to develop substantive theory examining a core category or core issue of the research (Charmaz, 2014). While I have worked to abductively develop substantive theory, it is grounded in the context of my research sites and study participants. While this is not necessarily a limitation of the research, but rather a characteristic of grounded theory research, it is imperative that I explicitly discuss the purpose and possibilities of my research. The purpose of this research was to extend current student development theory by specifically examining the role of parents in college student development and decision making. Since little work has been completed in this area, this study and the subsequently derived theories serve as an entry point into the conversation about the role of parents in the development of college students, and is not meant to be a comprehensive theory

about the phenomena. With this being said, there are limitations to my study both conceptually and methodologically.

The theories that I have chosen as the foundation of my work, self-authorship (Baxter Magolda, 1992, 2001, 20014) and emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2000, 2004), are both based on a conception of college students which is quickly evolving and changing. While I discuss this in more depth in Chapter Two, both Baxter Magolda's and Arnett's studies, from which their theories emerged, involved a predominantly white and middle-class sample of students. While a number of scholars are working to extend both theories to broader and more diverse groups of students (see Pizzolato, 2003, 2004; Pizzolato, Nguyen, Johnston, & Wang, 2012; Torres, 2010; Torres & Hernandez, 2007; Wawrzynski & Pizzolato, 2006), the foundational theories of each author, which I use in this study, still face these limitations.

In addition, the idea of helicopter parenting and the over-involvement of parents in the lives of college students is largely regarded as a white, middle-class, traditional family conception of parenting. Often, media reports and scholarly articles depicting these parenting characteristics are conducted at institutions with predominantly white and middle-class student populations from traditional nuclear families (Kiyama, Harper, Ramos, Aguayo, Page, & Riester, 2015). The presence of these practices at more diverse institutions and the true legitimacy of the phenomenon are unclear (Kiyama, et al., 2015). Regardless, it is difficult to argue that the availability of constant methods of communication has not altered the interaction frequency and content between college students and their parents. It is on this changing landscape that I focused in this study, and not on the possibilities of helicopter parenting or the over-involvement of parents.

Finally, this study does not suggest that parental involvement is a necessary element of college student development, but rather one of many factors that contributes to college student development. Since there is an identified gap in the research regarding the role of parents in college student development, I have focused this study on identifying the role that parents play. It is not the intent of this study to normalize the role of the parent in development or to suggest that college students who may not have the same types of relationships with their parents as this study presents are at any developmental deficit. In fact, this study serves as a starting point to identify the role of a relatively homogenous group of parents on college student development. In the future, this work will be expanded to consider other conceptualizations of family and relationship types.

Given these limitations, the use of these theories and the changing role of parents in the lives of college student are still salient to the population of my study. Like the foundational studies I employ, my work was completed at institutions with predominantly white and middle class student bodies. As such, I claim the same limitations as Baxter Magolda's and Arnett's works; the substantive theories derived from this study need to be examined within diverse contexts and applied to the changing student landscape of higher education to further clarify and broaden its theoretical strength. As this study was not intended to produce a comprehensive theoretical foundation for the role of parents in college student development and decision making, but rather a substantive theoretical entry point from which the work can continue to grow and evolve, the future application of this work to more diverse populations is vitally important.

In addition to the preceding conceptual limitations and delimitations, there are also methodological considerations to be taken into account. Since this research is an academic

endeavor of a graduate student, concerns over time and resources limit the scope of the work. For example, decisions to collect data at two institutions within a single geographical region with distinct characteristics and contexts limited the variability within the study sample. The sample of students is described in depth in Chapter Four to allow the reader to discern the applicability of the findings to students from varying contexts and characteristics. In addition, limited time and resources required methodological decisions regarding sampling. Theoretical sampling, where researchers return to participants and the greater field to explicate emergent theoretical ideas, is a vital component of the rigor of grounded theory methods (Charmaz, 2014). While I employed theoretical sampling techniques while collecting the data for this study, the nature of participant recruitment and the difficulty of attracting participants to the study, limited my ability to broaden the study. Instead, I made the decision to deepen my understanding of the experiences of the participants who were a part of the study instead of recruiting additional participants to explicate my emergent theory. Therefore, I chose depth over breadth when collecting data, a decision that does not necessarily limit my study, but does provide additional context for the application of the derived theory.

1.8 SIGNIFICANCE

Howard Bowen (1977) wrote, “The impact of higher education is likely to be determined more by the kind of people college graduates become than by what they know when they leave college” (p. 270). The ability of colleges to promote environments of independence and exploration that support the holistic development of students is vitally important to the mission of higher education. As students transition from adolescence to adulthood within the college

environment, it is crucial to understand these developmental paths. With the steady increase in parental involvement in college over the last 15 years, current understandings of the roles of separation and individuation from families in development are called into question. The various generational changes, including the overwhelming use of technology as a mechanism of constant communication and the changing demographic on today's college campuses, lead to the expectation that a high level of parental involvement with students will only continue. Therefore, it is imperative that we begin to understand the effect of parental involvement on student development and decision making.

In addition, this study has implications for how institutions and student affairs practitioners approach parents. In order to partner with parents and maintain the best interests of the students, institutions must consider how parental interactions with students and institutions affect the development and success of the students. As institutions continue to expand the services they offer in support of parents, they must balance these services with what is in the best interest of the student. This study has implications for understanding the role of parents in student development, how we theorize about student development with relation to parents, and how we think about the relationship between parental involvement, higher education, and the transition to adulthood.

2.0 THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND LITERATURE

In this chapter, I review self-authorship theory and its use to explicate the development of college students, identifying a specific gap regarding the role of parents in the development of self-authorship. The next section of this chapter focuses on emerging adulthood, the changing relationship between the parent and child, and the role that parents play in development. Lastly, I review literature that addresses the potential impact of parents on students in higher education, especially considering the developmental outcomes of students. Given the limited literature examining the relationship between parental involvement in higher education and students' developmental outcomes, this review focuses on what we know about the relationship between the parent and child during this period, and the growing body of knowledge examining how parental involvement affects the college experience.

2.1 THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS: SELF-AUTHORSHIP THEORY

The theory of self-authorship informs the development of this study. Self-authorship theory offers a holistic theory of student development that leads to independent decision making and the development of an internal system of beliefs. A crucial element of the transition to adulthood is the ability to take on adult roles and responsibilities for one's self and one's community. As Robert Kegan (1994) wrote in his work on the need for adults to independently

guide their lives, society expects adults to take responsibility for themselves, be able to self-direct their lives, and make informed decisions. Transitioning into adult roles and responsibilities goes far beyond learning and applying particular skills necessary for adulthood. Emerging adults must learn to independently form judgments about their lives. Internally defining one's life requires the "capacity for self-authorship – the ability to collect, interpret, and analyze information and reflect on one's own beliefs in order to form judgments" (Baxter Magolda, 1998, p. 143). Self-authorship is a complex way of understanding the world and internally making meaning of individual and communal experiences. To Kegan, the capacity to self-author is necessary for adults to meet the typical expectations of society, such as the ability to be self-guided, responsible for their actions, and build interdependent relationships with diverse people.

Self-authorship, originated by Robert Kegan (1982, 1994), takes into account development along three dimensions (cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal) toward the ability of individuals to internally make meaning and decisions. Self-authorship refers to the ability of individuals to shift structures of meaning making from outside to inside the self. This shift requires the individual to change from uncritically accepting external authorities' beliefs, values, and identities as his or her own beliefs. In self-authorship, the individual can define his or her own identity, system of beliefs and values, and relations with others, all while taking into account and critically evaluating the views of others. The developmental path to self-authorship requires growth along three dimensions of development: cognitive (how one knows), interpersonal (who one is), and intrapersonal (how one relates to others). The activity of making meaning occurs simultaneously across all three of these developmental dimensions. Although Kegan (1982) did not directly study or address college students in his conceptualization of self-

authorship, he did indicate that higher education could promote the progression toward self-authorship by providing an environment conducive to developmental growth.

Kegan (1982, 1994) begins with the idea that individuals develop through various orders of consciousness, all building upon each other. Through these orders of consciousness, individuals evolve by defining and redefining the relationship between subject and object, or the self and others. According to Kegan (1994), “subject” is the components internal to us with which we are embedded and identified. In contrast to this, “object” is the features external to us that we use to relate to one another, reflect and act upon, and begin to internalize. Over the course of personal development, the relationship between subject and object evolves and changes to define and redefine the principles used to make meaning. As subject and object change, how individuals define their relationship to the cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal dimensions also changes. For example, individuals can define themselves through their relationships, making them subject, during one order of consciousness, then evolve to another order of consciousness where their relationships are external to how they define the self, making them object. These changes and redefinitions of subject and object are pivotal to the development toward self-authorship.

In addition to the consistent reorganization of subject and object, self-authorship takes into account growth among three different developmental dimensions. Growth in the cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal dimensions is necessary to reach self-authorship. Kegan (1982) defined meaning making as both cognitive and affective, meaning that it is both internal and relational. Within his various orders of consciousness, individuals evolve through different “organizing principles” that affect how they think (cognitive), relate to others (interpersonal),

and relate to self (intrapersonal) (Kegan, 1994, p. 32). The relation between subject and object changes across these three areas as individuals develop toward self-authorship.

2.1.1 Baxter Magolda

Baxter Magolda (1998) expanded Kegan's original conception of self-authorship and applied it to the context of higher education in her foundational longitudinal study with college students. Baxter Magolda used her 25-year work that followed college students from their first year in college through adulthood to expand Kegan's work into a continuum of development from external meaning making to self-authorship. Using annual interviews with students, Baxter Magolda created a continuum of development with three overarching areas of meaning making, each with three or four positions within it (Baxter Magolda, King, Taylor, & Wakefield, 2012). This continuum provides a guide for how individuals progress to self-authorship. Within this continuum, she focuses her work on the progression and relationship between the three dimensions of development necessary for self-authorship. Similar to Kegan (1982, 1994), she indicates that the foundational questions guiding the development of self-authorship are "How do I know?" (cognitive dimension), "Who am I?" (intrapersonal dimension), and "How do I construct relationships?" (interpersonal dimension) (Baxter Magolda, 2004). As Baxter Magolda (1998) writes,

Self-authorship requires evaluating one's own view in light of existing evidence and constructing a reasonable perspective as a result (the cognitive dimension). Doing so, however, hinges on one's ability to be influenced rather than to be consumed by others' perspectives (the interpersonal dimension). Being influenced but not consumed by others, or being interdependent, requires the possession of an internally generated belief system that regulates one's interpretations of experience (the intrapersonal dimension). (p. 144)

While one of Kegan's fundamental contributions to adult development was the integration of these three developmental dimensions into one holistic theory, Baxter Magolda places an even greater emphasis on their importance and interconnectedness in her expansion of self-authorship theory. Each position within her developmental continuum takes into account the relationship of the three dimensions of development, and how they contribute to the journey toward self-authorship (See Appendix A).

The ten developmental positions on the continuum to self-authorship, as described by Baxter Magolda (2012), fall within three broad categories of meaning making: external meaning making, the crossroads, and internal meaning making. Each position takes into account how the individual approaches the world, constructs knowledge, approaches the self, and builds relationships with others. The group of external meaning making positions is characterized by a reliance on external authority for meaning making and decision making. Individuals identifying within these three positions all use a strong external orientation to dictate knowledge, define the self, and relate to others. Most undergraduate students align with external meaning making during their early college years, while some do not move from these positions until after they leave the college environment (Baxter Magolda, 2004). In the crossroads, individuals begin to develop an internal voice that can begin to guide their meaning making. This has implications across all three developmental dimensions, but as an individual progresses through these positions, the three dimensions become increasingly blurred and interrelated. As individuals begin their journey into the crossroads, they are still dependent upon external authority, but are beginning to acknowledge an internal voice. The emergence of the internal voice slowly gains strength until it has become primary to external sources across all three dimensions of development as the individual exits the crossroads between external and internal meaning

making. The area of internal meaning making is characterized by a strong reliance on the internal voice to guide the three dimensions of development. Within this area, individuals increasingly trust their internal voice to guide decision making, their identities, and their relationships with others. Throughout these positions, they continue to build their internal foundation and philosophy of life, which places prominence on the ability to self-author their lives.

The positions included in Baxter Magolda and colleague's (2012) continuum of self-authorship development clearly show the interrelation between the cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal dimensions of development. Ultimately, those who reach a position of self-authorship see these dimensions become one overarching internal foundation from which they can define the entirety of their lives. From this place, adults are able to contribute as productive members of a community and provide internally-grounded knowledge and wisdom to a workplace, family, and larger society. While the positions progress from a place of complete external meaning making to complete internal meaning making, Baxter Magolda is careful to note that everyone's path may not be linear. She describes the complexity of moving through this journey as one with many starts and stops, and some returns to previous positions depending on the environment and context of development at any particular time (Baxter Magolda, et al., 2012). Across studies addressing self-authorship, one of the primary themes is the redefinition of how individuals relate to external influences. While never directly addressed by Baxter Magolda, the leading external influences in the lives of college students are often the parents. Therefore, the direct relation of parents to the process of meaning making and the journey to self-authorship is something that is missing from Baxter Magolda's prolific work.

2.1.2 Limitations to Baxter Magolda's Theory of Self-Authorship

One of the major limitations of Baxter Magolda's foundational work is the homogeneity of her sample. Conducted at a fairly selective Midwestern institution, Baxter Magolda's sample was predominantly white and middle class. In fact, by the end of the 20- year longitudinal study, all 30 participants who were a part of the entire study were white. As a result, a number of scholars have begun to expand Baxter Magolda's work in application to other populations of students, such as first-generation students, low socioeconomic status students, academically underprepared students, and culturally diverse students. These studies have yielded a number of adjustments to the lifespan of the development of self-authorship, but have not necessarily altered the foundation of Baxter Magolda's theory. Primarily, Baxter Magolda (2004, 2010) found that few, if any, of her participants reached statuses of internal meaning making while enrolled in college. It was not until they were faced with the complexities of adulthood that they fully developed internal meaning making structures. Contrary to this, studies of other populations of students find that they are more likely to develop internal meaning making structures earlier in their lives than more privileged white students (Pizzolato, 2003, 2004; Pizzolato, Nguyen, Johnston, & Wang, 2012; Torres, 2010; Torres & Hernandez, 2007; Wawrzynski & Pizzolato, 2006). This is due to the presence of dissonance and conflict within their lives that promoted development.

In Pizzolato's (2003, 2004) work with self-authorship and high-risk students, she echoes the previous ideas of developmentally effective experiences and times of dissonance and challenge as types of situations that can promote the development of self-authorship. For the students in her studies, experiences that created dissonance in their lives were catalysts toward early development toward self-authorship. The responses to these situations varied by the self-

authoring developmental status of each student, but in each situation, the experience helped to move them forward developmentally. Pizzolato (2003) is mindful to point out that there are optimal levels of dissonance for the purpose of development. Expanding this, she indicates that extreme experiences of challenge, such as strong feelings of marginalization, can impede progress toward self-authorship (Pizzolato, 2004). In situations where the students felt largely different from their peers, they were more likely to abandon their internal meaning making structures in an effort to fit in with the predominant culture. This stagnation of development toward self-authorship was a result of a return to identity stability or coping mechanisms that allowed external pressures to determine their identity (Pizzolato, 2004). Pizzolato (2003, 2004) also points to the support of others as factors that helped students to balance feelings of challenge. Some students turned to trusted others within the institution, while others turned to those from the home environment for support. These students were able to build networks of support that helped them to cope with challenging experiences and rediscover their former self-authoring behaviors and internal meaning making structures. Therefore, in the cases of Pizzolato's (2003, 2004) participants, support from external others helped students facing challenging situations to return to their internal foundations and move forward developmentally.

Torres and Hernandez (2007) and Torres (2010) echo many of the same findings as Pizzolato (2003, 2004) in their work with Latino/a college students. In their longitudinal study of Latino/a college students and how their Latino/a ethnic identity affects their holistic development, they found that making meaning of experiences of racism as times of challenge and dissonance were significant to their holistic development. In particular, Torres and Hernandez (2007) and later Torres (2010) indicated that as Latino/as develop toward self-authorship, they begin to be more aware of their ethnic identity and how they portray that to the

outside world. The authors advocate that there are additional steps within the development toward self-authorship for Latino/as that are predicated on their ethnic identity, such as the integration of cultural choices that reflect their identities, renegotiating interpersonal relationships to align with their Latino/a identity, and recognizing their own and others' cultural realities. While this reframing of self-authorship theory to include ethnic identity has yet to be applied to other ethnic identities, it is important to note that Torres and Hernandez (2007) and Torres (2010) did not change the basic structure of Baxter Magolda's work, but were careful to add more specific elements of the Latino/a ethnic identity that are experienced by individuals of that culture when developing toward self-authorship. This has important implications as it is applied to other cultures in an effort to provide a more complete picture of self-authorship and its role within various cultural contexts.

The application of self-authorship theory to other populations of students, such as first-generation students, low socioeconomic status students, academically underprepared students, and culturally diverse students, resulted in differences in the lifespan development to self-authorship and the addition of cultural features to the existing structure of Baxter Magolda's theory. For some students, marginalization and feelings of difference were catalysts for development toward self-authorship, leading these students to develop more rapidly than others. Yet, for other students from an authority-driven culture, feelings of marginalization and difference did not promote growth. These students had to come to terms with the cultural differences they were facing in an effort to break with authority, and the feelings of unease that came with that change. In addition, when applied to other cultural identities, scholars were able to expand Baxter Magolda's original conception of self-authorship theory to include specific elements of the ethnic identity.

While studies have been conducted to apply Baxter Magolda's theory to diverse populations, no study has produced a reconceptualization of her theory. However, this does not negate the fact that Baxter Magolda's theory of self-authorship was developed from a homogenous sample of students, and that this sample limits the applicability of the theory. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge this limitation of Baxter Magolda's theory as a limitation to my own study. While the participants within my study are overwhelmingly white, as well, I have taken this limitation into consideration when generating interview protocols and abductively developing the substantive theory presented in Chapter Five.

2.2 THEORETICAL FOUNDATION: EMERGING ADULTHOOD AND THE PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP

To address this gap in Baxter Magolda's theory relative to parents, I will use Arnett's (2000, 2004) theory of emerging adulthood, which provides a framework for understanding the age range of traditional age college students and their changing relationship with their parents. Typically relating to individuals between the ages of 18-25, many emerging adults enroll in higher education each year. For people in their late teens and early twenties, the transition from adolescence to adulthood is a period of independent role exploration, intended to help them settle into adult roles and responsibilities (Arnett, 2000). For individuals in industrialized nations, in particular, this transition is marked by exploration into various life directions, including education, career paths, interpersonal relationships, and personal worldviews (Arnett, 2000).

Arnett's (2000, 2004) theory of emerging adulthood builds upon Erikson's work on the study of identity development throughout the lifespan. Erikson's work is regarded as

foundational to many developmental theories, including theories of transition from adolescence to adulthood and college student development. Erikson expanded on many theories of the time to include the role that external factors, such as environment, play in development, in addition to internal factors. While Erikson did not explicitly assign age ranges to his stages of development, he identified the transition to Stage 5: Identity versus Identity Confusion as the point where individuals transition from childhood to adulthood. Within this transition, individuals establish their own beliefs, worldviews, and goals, all in progression to developing their own identity. At this time, people may find it difficult to define who they are as they work to determine which parts of their identity are externally and internally defined.

Arnett was the first theorist to identify this specific period of life as a full stage of development, rather than a transition point between stages of development. Building upon Erikson's work with the developmental transition from adolescence to adulthood, Arnett identified that this period of time resembled a stage of development more than it resembled a time of transition. In his work, he defined the time period of the late teens and early twenties as the stage of *emerging adulthood*. Arnett's (2000, 2004) theory of emerging adulthood defines the age range of 18 to 25 as its own unique developmental stage characterized by independent exploration into various possible life paths, worldviews, identities, and interpersonal relationships, while remaining partially dependent on parents for emotional and, potentially, financial support. Arnett (2000), through his work with individuals of this age range, saw a need to define it as separate from both adolescence and adulthood. Neither a time of dependence, as is adolescence, nor a time of complete independence, like that of adulthood, emerging adulthood is characterized by the ability of individuals to remove themselves from certain social roles and expectations and engage in a prolonged period of role exploration (Arnett, 2000). This is why

individuals within this age range often exhibit characteristics of both adolescence (dependence on others, impulsivity without regard for consequence) and adulthood (independent decision making, focus on internal commitments). While in this developmental stage, emerging adults use periods of independence from conventional social expectations to explore various life directions including education, career paths, and worldviews, before settling into long-term adult roles. At this stage of life, individuals have greater possibilities for independent exploration, void of many responsibilities such as parenthood, partnership, and demanding employment than at any other time period. It is in this time that individuals are able to make choices about what they want for their future, and work to shape their future identities.

According to Arnett (2000), the demographic variability for individuals within this age range is the most defining element of the creation of the developmental stage of emerging adulthood. One component of demographic variability is the living situation of emerging adults, where many live in a period of semiautonomy (Goldscheider & Davanzo, 1986), taking some responsibility for living on their own while in college, but still relying on parents and other adults for support. Nearly 40% of individuals will transition between independent living and returning to live with parents or family throughout this time period (Arnett, 2000). The period of emerging adulthood provides the highest level of demographic uncertainty, such as changes to living situations, than any other time period. According to Arnett (2000), these instabilities contribute to the need for this time period to be considered as its own developmental stage.

As a developmental stage, emerging adulthood provides a foundation for understanding the unique time period between the late teens and early twenties, the traditional age of college students. Studies of emerging adulthood examine the subjective understandings of adulthood, such as the ability to make independent decisions, define one's worldview, and accept

responsibility for one's self (Arnett, 1997, 1998). These characteristics, deemed most important to completing the transition to adulthood, show the need for self-sufficiency and independence during emerging adulthood. During this time period of exploration, individuals cite the explicit need to independently define their future paths in terms of education and career, future relationships, and personal views of the world. Higher education is commonly believed to offer a unique place for the development of emerging adults, where students can gain independence while still relying on the support of family in times of challenge. This is evident in Baxter Magolda's (1998, 2004) theory of self-authorship, where the college students on which her theory is based, continually describe the independence and support of higher education as a catalyst for their change and development. By providing an environment that supports independence and exploration, higher education helps emerging adults to develop and transition into adulthood (Arnett, 2000).

Scholars studying emerging adulthood generally use the conceptualization to explain the characteristics of individuals within this age range, especially in distinguishing it from adolescence and adulthood. The theory provides explanatory power about demographic, cognitive, and psychosocial characteristics that inform why individuals in this age range behave the way they do. Yet, one limitation to Arnett's theory is that it does not provide descriptions of how individuals navigate this time period. Contrary to this, one of the strengths of Baxter Magolda's (1998, 2004) theory of self-authorship is that she uses great detail to illustrate the experiences of her longitudinal participants in describing how they journey through the various stages of development. Arnett offers only descriptions of various characteristics of emerging adults, something that has been increasingly addressed by scholars studying emerging adulthood

as they focus on specific components of the developmental stage and how emerging adults experience them.

2.3 THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN DEVELOPMENT

One of the pivotal components of the transition to adulthood is the redefinition of the parent-child relationship (Aquilino, 2006; Kenyon & Koerner, 2009; Weissman, Cohen, Boxer, & Cohler, 1989). In fact, Blos (1985) in his work on development, supported the notion that adolescence cannot effectively end until the parent recognizes their child's status as an adult. A new adult-adult relationship promotes development by helping the emerging adult to feel independent from their parents and capable of managing the responsibilities that come with adulthood. There is considerable evidence that as the relationship between parents and their emerging adult children changes, the relationship becomes closer and contributes to the emotional well-being of emerging adults, especially as they transition to a college setting (Aquilino, 1997, 2006; Lefkowitz, 2005; Rice & Mulkeen, 1995; Wintre & Yaffe, 2000). In fact, in one study (Lefkowitz, 2005), emerging adults attending college overwhelmingly indicated that there was no negative change in their relationship with their parents as a result of renegotiating the parent-child relationship upon college enrollment. This has vast implications when applied to self-authorship theory and how students redefine how they react to external pressures. Since research shows that there is no negative change in the parent-child relationship as a result of renegotiation, one can assume that this would also be true as students renegotiate how they view the external role of parents while making decisions and developing toward self-authorship.

While the redefinition of the parent-child relationship is a necessary step in the development of the emerging adult, studies show that this can be a difficult transition for both children and parents. In their study comparing the criteria for adulthood between emerging adults and their parents, Nelson and colleagues (2007) show that the majority of parents do not view their emerging adult children as adults, nor do they view them as adolescents. This has implications for how parents approach their children and the college experience. As the relationship between emerging adults and their parents, especially within higher education, shifts to one of increased contact and closeness, parents and emerging adults have an increasingly difficult time renegotiating the terms of their relationship (Aquilino, 2006).

A crucial step in this process is that students and parents begin to negotiate areas of support and autonomy. In this journey, many students gain a sense of autonomy, yet continue to rely on parents in a number of ways (Arnett, 2004; Dubas & Petersen, 1996). Emerging adulthood theorists indicate that parental relationships that emotionally support emerging adults and help them to develop autonomy are crucial to the transition to adulthood (Arnett, 1998, 2000, 2004; Tanner, 2006). Kenyon and Koerner (2009), in a recent study of emerging adults' and their parents' expectations about the development of autonomy, show that there are marked differences between the ways students see themselves and how parents view them as they transition to adulthood. Parents indicated significantly higher expectations than did students for their emerging adult child's development in terms of autonomy, self-governance, independence, and decision-making. Students consistently reported that they believed they would be more dependent on their parents for emotional support, help in making decisions, and self-governance than their parents indicated they thought their children would be. In addition, Nelson and colleagues (2007) found that emerging adult children and parents differed on the criteria

necessary for adulthood. This mismatch in understandings of adulthood has vast consequences for emerging adults' transition to adulthood. If this behavior holds true throughout the transition to adulthood, emerging adults will face difficulty in becoming autonomous from their parents. It may be necessary for parents to take the lead in promoting autonomy for their children, rather than the more traditional approach of the child seeking independence from the parent (Arnett, 2004; Dubas & Peterson, 1996).

This echoes the concerns of Aquilino (2006), who writes of the importance of parents to accept their emerging adult children as adults in order to support their development and transition to adulthood. He states that one of the overarching challenges to parents of emerging adults is in accepting the adult status of their children. This challenge is further complicated by the tensions that accompany the child having legal adult status and independence that accompanies this stage, yet in many ways still being dependent on the parent, especially financially. Dependency on parents at this stage is typical, and serves to function as the support necessary for emerging adults to explore life role responsibilities including romantic relationships, education, and potential career paths (Arnett, 2004; Aquilino, 2006, Semyonov & Lewin-Epstein, 2001). Yet, this tension between independence and dependency can have implications on the redefinition of the parent-child relationship, and the emerging adults' development of autonomy.

One support to the redefinition of the parent-child relationship and the development of autonomy on the part of the emerging adult is leaving home. Researchers support the idea that home-leaving, such as living on campus during college, promotes the development of autonomy, individuation, and gives the emerging adult and parent the opportunity to build an adult-adult relationship (Arnett, 2004; Dubas & Petersen, 1996). Higher education helps to facilitate this

process by providing a space for emerging adults to become independent while possibly remaining dependent in some ways on their parents (Arnett, 2004). Traditionally, emerging adults have the opportunity to explore new roles and identities within the safety of higher education, independent from constant parental oversight. The redefinition of the parent-child relationship was facilitated by the child living away from home, in an environment that provided the challenge and support necessary for development into adulthood. Yet, over the last 15 years, the relationship between the parent, child, and institution of higher education has been changing. As a result of increased parental involvement in higher education, the emerging adults' freedom to independently explore their identities and future roles is called into question. As parents become more involved in their children's lives away from home, their ability to grow autonomously could be in jeopardy.

Studies of family relationships and the developmental transition to adulthood cite that emerging adults with the highest degrees of contact with parents tended to have the worst psychological adjustment to the roles and responsibilities of adulthood (Dubas & Peterson, 1996; O'Connor, Allen, Bell, & Hansen, 1996). These findings, in particular, support the need for addressing parental contact that may inhibit the development of independence and self-sufficiency during emerging adulthood. While separating from parents, both physically and psychologically is essential for the development of autonomy, independence, and self-sufficiency, most students remain in contact and emotionally invested with their families while attending college (Cullaty, 2011). In fact, in Cullaty's study (2011), interaction with parents both facilitated and hindered students' autonomy development. The level of interaction with parents and influence of parents over the students' lives were variables that students routinely cited as impacting their development process. The most important element toward positive development

for these students was the successful redefinition of the student-parent relationship. While Cullaty's study was limited by a small sample at a single institution, his work does contribute to a very small literature base regarding the effect of parents on college student development.

In one of the only studies relating parents and the development of self-authorship theory, Meszaros, Creamer, and Lee (2009) examined the idea of parental support in women's career decision making. Their findings supported the earlier works of Creamer and Laughlin (2005) and Laughlin and Creamer (2007), where women consistently indicated that their parents were the most important source of support and advice in career decision making, and that conflicting advice was a positive factor in the promotion of internal meaning making structures related to career decisions. As three of the only studies that address the role of parents in student decision making and self-authorship, they provide evidence that students cite the parents as an important source of advice while making decisions, yet they do not offer any explanation as to how parents affect decision making processes. These studies provide a foundation from which my study can approach a deeper understanding of how parents affect student decision making processes and the development of self-authorship.

Throughout her work, Baxter Magolda (1998, 2004, 2012) stressed the importance of "encountering the complexities of the world" (p.153) as a necessary element for development. She acknowledged that one of the challenges of higher education is to provide times of dissonance that can create these opportunities to experience life's complexities while also balancing the support necessary for developmental growth. Within studies of self-authorship, "developmentally effective experiences" (Barber & King, 2014) occur when the student faces experiences that create a high level of dissonance, yet have the support to promote developmental growth. Studies indicate that these experiences include exposure to new cultures,

ideas, or belief systems that cause internal discomfort (Barber & King, 2014), challenging times of marginalization, such as racism, sexism, or heterosexism (Abes & Jones, 2004; Pizzolato, 2003; Torres, 2010), and relational changes with parents and family, such as death or divorce (Baxter Magolda, 2004). Given the dissonance that can be associated with these experiences, these times of challenge and conflict have implications on students' developmental growth. For instance, Baxter Magolda (2004, 2010) found that few, if any, of her predominantly white participants reached statuses of internal meaning making while enrolled in college. It was not until they were faced with the complexities of adulthood that they fully developed internal meaning making structures. Contrary to this, studies found that high-risk students and culturally diverse students were more likely to develop internal meaning making structures earlier in their lives than more privileged white students (Pizzolato, 2003, 2004; Pizzolato, Nguyen, Johnston, & Wang, 2012; Torres, 2010; Torres & Hernandez, 2007; Wawrzynski & Pizzolato, 2006). This was due to the presence of high levels of challenge and the accompanying dissonance that promoted development.

Education leaders and scholars, alike, worry that parental involvement during the college years inhibits the development from adolescence to adulthood by limiting the instances of dissonance necessary for student development (Baxter Magolda, 2001; Pizzolato & Hicklen, 2011). Yet, regardless of this need for dissonance, studies call into question the idea that relationships with parents equate to dependence on parents (Creamer & Laughlin, 2005; Pizzolato & Hicklen, 2011). Creamer and Laughlin (2005), in their study of women's career-decision making using self-authorship as a frame, found that parents were important to the decision making process of college women, but that the relationship was not one of dependence. In fact, the authors wrote about how they actively reframed the way they viewed the parent-child

relationship from one characterized by dependence to one that has room for individualized decision-making that takes into account the influence of parents. Pizzolato and Hicklen (2011), in their study of the relationship of parents on college student epistemological development, found that parental involvement in decision making was not as prevalent as the authors expected, and that most times, it was initiated by the child and not the parent. They offer that this relationship that is initiated by the student may actually work to propel epistemic development, even though this seems counter to all literature on student development. They suggest that more research is needed to truly understand the relationship between parents and college students in relation to decision-making and epistemic development, citing that college students who initiate advice from their parents may be further along in the continuum to self-authorship than they were once believed to be. In fact, these students could be making decisions interdependently, which is an advanced stage of self-authorship.

2.4 SUMMARY AND IDENTIFIED RESEARCH GAP

Baxter Magolda's (1998) theory of self-authorship provides the foundation for this study, yet fails to address the specific role of the parent and the relationship between the student and parent in the developmental journey. While there are a variety of studies using self-authorship theory, most of these studies can be grouped into three categories: (1) studies examining self-authorship as a learning objective, (2) studies examining the role of self-authorship in career decision making, and (3) studies examining how various populations of students experience the journey to self-authorship. While each of these categories provides insights into the use of self-authorship theory and the role of external influences, none takes into account the role of parents

in self-authorship development. To address how students' changing relationships with their parents play a role in their decision making and progression toward self-authorship, I examine Jeffrey Arnett's (2000) understanding of emerging adulthood. Arnett's (2000) conceptualization of emerging adulthood as a developmental stage, rather than just a transition period between adolescence and adulthood, provides the foundation for understanding the characteristics of this population of traditional age college students, as well as their relationships with their parents.

One of the defining characteristics of the stage of emerging adulthood is the renegotiation of the parent-child relationship to one between two adults. This provides a foundation for the development of an internal voice and the balancing of external pressures as students journey toward self-authorship. It is this gap that my study seeks to fill. By marrying the developmental theory of self-authorship, which is predicated on redefining how one reacts to external pressures in order to build an internal foundation, and emerging adulthood, which uses the renegotiation of the parent-child relationship as a pivotal occurrence for development, I can begin to address the role of parents in college students' decision making and development. Given the importance of internally defined meaning making, it is important to gain a deep understanding of how college students navigate the relationship with their parents along the journey to self-authorship and transition into adulthood.

Since most individuals of this age range experience a time of transition and redefinition in their relationships with their parents, it is important to understand how this time is perceived by both the student and parent. Equally important is understanding how increased parental involvement in the lives of college students has affected the redefinition of the parent-child relationship. Developing concurrently with the redefinition of the parent-child relationship is the college student's response to external influences, such as parents, on the journey to self-

authorship and internal meaning making. As students transition through emerging adulthood and work to redefine their relationship with their parents, they also begin to make internally defined decisions, and learn how to mitigate external pressures.

While both of these developmental progressions are imperative to the transition to adulthood, it is unclear in the research literature how they occur, and how the parent and students experience them, especially in an era of increased parent-child contact and involvement. This study addresses this concern by examining the role that parents play in their college student's development and decision making processes during an era of increased parental involvement. Self-authorship theory provides a platform from which theoretical extensions can be built about the role of parents in development. The emphasis on external authorities, such as parents, in the development of self-authorship opens the door for a deeper examination of the role of parents in college student decision-making and development. Since the biggest challenge in the development of internal meaning making systems is the redefinition of how individuals respond to external influences, such as parents, the expansion of self-authorship theory to include this process is greatly needed. By examining the role of the parent in decision making and development, from the perception of both the student and the parent, this study built theory that explains this developmental progression and the role of parents in student development.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODS

The purpose of this study was to extend Baxter Magolda's (2008) theory of self-authorship with relation to the role of parents in the decision-making processes and development of college students. The following research questions guided this constructivist grounded theory study:

1. How do students arrive at the decisions they make?
 - a. How are parents involved in student decision-making?
2. How do students perceive relationships with parents contributing to their development?
3. How do parents perceive their relationships with their children during college contributing to their children's development?

College student development and the course that students take to adulthood are complex phenomena. Qualitative methods are especially beneficial to the study of these complex phenomena within higher education because they provide a method to explore and describe the experiences of college students (Brown, Stevens, Troiano, & Schneider, 2002). This is particularly true when little is known about the topic. While self-authorship is a well-studied area of student development, the role of parents in self-authorship has not been studied. In fact, the role of parents in student development, in general, is just beginning to be studied. Previous research (Cullatty, 2011; Pizzolato & Hicklen, 2011) addressed some elements of self-authorship, such as the role of parents in autonomy development and epistemological

development, but does not explore self-authorship holistically. Since there is little known about how parents influence student decision-making and the development of self-authorship, qualitative methods provided a space for deeply understanding and interpreting the students' and parents' lives, stories, and experiences.

Studies of student development and self-authorship overwhelmingly utilize qualitative methods in their research designs (see Baxter Magolda, 2001, 2009; Pizzolato. 2003, 2005; Taylor, 2008; Torres & Hernandez, 2007). In fact, researchers who have sought to study self-authorship quantitatively have routinely communicated the challenges in doing so (Baxter Magolda & King, 2012; Creamer & Laughlin, 2005; Laughlin & Creamer, 2007; Pizzolato, 2010; Wood, Kitchener, & Jensen, 2002). Studying self-authorship requires accessing meaning-making structures, working past the content of what people communicate to understand the structures that help them to make meaning of the world, something that is nearly impossible to do using quantitative methods. Those who study self-authorship cite the need for qualitative work to examine the process of how students develop. Barber and King (2014), in particular, take the stance that too much of the research in higher education is focused on what students are experiencing and the outcomes that follow from those experiences, and not on the process of how students experience college and the interpretations they derive of those experiences. In addition, one of the major purposes of this research was to extend self-authorship theory to include the role of parents. This purpose required an abductive, qualitative approach to research that used the experiences of individuals as the foundation for the generation of theory.

Not only are qualitative methods appropriate for the study of student development, self-authorship, and for the generation of theory, but they also align with my personal worldview. As a constructivist, I acknowledge that there are multiple realities and that these realities are

interpreted differently depending on social contexts. I see the world as socially constructed and individuals as capable of defining that construction for themselves. I appreciate the ability of individuals to tell their own stories, provide meaning to their own experiences, and describe their own realities. For this reason, I value the contribution of qualitative methodologies to education research, and I understand the role I have in this research process. Baxter Magolda (2004), while studying college students and developing her work in self-authorship, identified her own constructivist beliefs when she wrote that “realities are multiple, context-bound, and mutually shaped by interaction of the knower and the known” (p. 35). In line with this statement, and with my own personal worldview, I employed constructivist grounded theory methods in this study.

3.1 CONSTRUCTIVIST GROUNDED THEORY

Aligned with my own personal epistemology, as well as the necessity of this study to focus on the construction of meaning as a personal endeavor, I used constructivist grounded theory methods to guide data collection, organization, and analysis. The defining characteristic of grounded theory methods is in their unique ability to provide guidance in the research process toward the generation of theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This includes activities such as continuous and concurrent data collection and analysis efforts, building analysis codes from the data and not from predetermined ideas of what the data should provide, employing a method of continual comparison between codes and data during every step of analysis, the development of theory throughout every stage of data collection and analysis, and sampling that creates variation for the purpose of theory development (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978; Strauss, 1987). While constructivist grounded theory methods uphold much of the

foundational work of Glaser and Strauss (1967) regarding grounded theory, it places emphasis on reality as socially constructed and the role the researcher plays in communicating and interpreting this reality within the study. In contrast to this, traditional grounded theory methods call for the researcher to remain as objective as possible in the research process (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987).

One way that constructivist grounded theory breaks from traditional grounded theory is in its views regarding the role of the researcher. While Corbin and Strauss's (2015) most recent work on grounded theory begins to acknowledge the importance of the researcher as an interpreter of the participants' experiences, traditional grounded theory methods emphasize the need for researchers to control their perspectives, biases, and assumptions (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987). This view of the researcher as value-free and objective stands in stark contrast to the role of the researcher in constructivist grounded theory. Instead, as Charmaz (2006, 2014) explains, constructivist grounded theory methods embrace the idea that the researcher brings certain privileges and beliefs to the study. The researcher's views and background should be explicitly acknowledged as a shaping force within the study, especially when considering data collection and analysis. In this way, the constructivist approach to grounded theory views data collection and analysis, as well as the resultant findings, as something greater than how participants interpret their experiences. The research process becomes a space where meaning is made through collective experiences and relationships between the researcher and participants. The interpretations of those shared experiences result in the development of theory. Therefore, the theory that results from constructivist grounded theory methods is dependent upon the interpretations of the researcher and the reflective process of data collection and analysis.

A second difference between constructivist grounded theory and traditional grounded theory is constructivist grounded theory's emphasis on the process of how participants make meaning. This is vitally important to my research since I am focusing on how and why students make decisions. The content of the decisions that participants make is not of primary importance to this study, but rather how the participants arrive at those decisions. While the traditional methods of grounded theory are typically used to study content rather than action, the constructivist approach to grounded theory places priority on the process of "how – and sometimes why – participants construct meanings and actions in specific situations" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 130). The generation of theory in constructivist grounded theory builds from the processes of how and why. Constructivist grounded theory's emphasis on the conceptual development and analysis of action and process separates it from traditional grounded theory methods as well as other qualitative methods of data collection and analysis. By focusing on the processes of how college students come to the decisions they make, as well as the role of parents in these processes, I developed theory related to parents and college student development.

A final divergence of constructivist grounded theory from traditional grounded theory is in the use of previous literature and theory in the theory building process. While traditional grounded theory methods stress an inductive approach to the development of theory, or the absence of previous theoretical influence (Glaser, 1978, 1992, 1998, 2003), Charmaz (2011) argues for a more abductive process of theory building. She contends that it is nearly impossible to avoid established theory within the chosen field of study, and that instead, constructivist grounded theory methods should use abductive reasoning in the process of theory building. Abductive reasoning engages other theoretical explanations and tests new theory against previous theoretical frameworks to generate the most reasonable findings from the data

(Charmaz, 2006, 2011; Reichertz, 2007; Tavory & Timmermans, 2014). Through this type of reasoning, I built theoretical extensions to Baxter Magolda's self-authorship theory.

I used Baxter Magolda's theory of self-authorship to frame the direction of my study through the development of my original interview categories. Since I was expanding her conceptualization of self-authorship with college students to include the influence of parents on self-authorship, decision-making, and development, Baxter Magolda's theory provided direction to my research. Therefore, I did not apply Baxter Magolda's self-authorship theory to my data in an attempt to deductively test the theory, but rather I used the theory as a means to examine my own data in relation to the development of self-authorship for the students within my research. This is similar to the approach other researchers have used when employing constructivist grounded theory methods to extend established research (see Torres & Hernandez, 2007). To use previous theory abductively, I utilized memos and journaling to track how I thought about my data and to interrogate Baxter Magolda's work in relation to parents. As I participated in this process, I developed two substantive theories, independent from Baxter Magolda's theory of self-authorship, to explain the role of parents in college student development and decision making. I then used these substantive theories abductively to extend Baxter Magolda's theory to include a conceptualization of the role of parents to the development of self-authorship and internal meaning making. Using constructivist grounded theory methods, and abductive reasoning in theory building, provided the necessary tools for expanding upon Baxter Magolda's self-authorship theory, as well as constructing independent theory in relation to the role of parents in college student development and decision making.

3.2 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

3.2.1 Research Sites

For the purpose of this research, I interviewed students and parents affiliated with two different institutions. Mid-Atlantic University (MAU) is a large, urban, research university, while Holy Ghost College (HGC) is a small, private, religiously affiliated, liberal arts institution, in a rural/suburban area. Both are located in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. While I intended for data collection at both sites to provide a more diverse sample of participants, and allow for greater understanding of the relationship between parents and college student development across institution type and size, it is important to note that no patterns of difference emerged between students from each institution. There were no patterns of students' relationships with their parents or characteristics of the role of the parent in college student development and decision making that could be attributed to the difference in institution type.

According to the university's fall 2014 fact book, MAU had a total undergraduate enrollment of nearly 19,000 students, of which 51% were female, and a large majority were white (76%), and in-state residents (76%). Nearly all undergraduate students were full-time students (94%), with the average age of full-time undergraduate students being 21 years old. In compliment to this, HGC's 2014 fact book listed the total undergraduate enrolment as 1,626, of which 52% were male, and a large majority were white (83%) and in-state residents (83%). Nearly all undergraduate students were full-time students (96%), with the average age of full-time undergraduate students being 20 years old. Therefore, MAU and HGC were good locations for this study due to their large population of traditional age students who met the selection criteria.

Both MAU and HGC boasted active parent support programs that served as resources for parents to remain engaged with the institutions and students. The parent programs provided activities and support for parents, creating a bridge for the parents to the institutions. At MAU, in particular, the parent office offered a website and newsletters with various resources for supporting students while they attended MAU. They also sponsored a parent orientation and a parent ambassador program to further engage parents with the university and the students. HGC also offered parent resources through their orientation program, as well as through their family visitation weekends in the fall and spring semesters. Parents were informed and engaged with HGC through newsletters, as well as a parent portal, which listed important dates and events. The high activity of each parent program and attendance at their events showed the interest of MAU and HGC parents in remaining engaged in their children's lives while they attend MAU and HGC.

3.3 SAMPLE AND COLLECTION PROCEDURES

I followed the guidance of constructivist grounded theory methods and used a two-tiered sampling approach for data collection. First, I determined an initial purposeful sample of participants with characteristics that addressed the research questions. Then, I used theoretical sampling to determine which of these initial participants I would engage for further information. Initial selection criteria for potential participants included being a student at MAU or HGC who had finished at least the second year of coursework, living away from family, either on-campus or off-campus, during their entire college career, and having a parent willing to complete the study. Since few students reach any advanced stages of self-authorship before their third or

fourth year of college (Baxter Magolda, 2001), the sample included only students who had completed at least their second year of college coursework. To further bound the study, the sample was restricted to traditional age students living away from family. This was important since students who live with their families during their emerging adult years have different relationships with their families and developmental experiences than those students who live away from family (Arnett, 2006). In addition to these selection criteria, I took into account the proportion of male and female participants. Many studies of parental involvement with college students detail differences between male and female patterns of interaction and development (Rice, 1992; Samoulis, Layburn, & Schiaffino, 2001; Sorokou & Weissbrod, 2005; Sullivan & Sullivan, 1980; Taub, 1997).

I screened students based on their willingness, and the willingness of one parent, to engage in interviews. I interviewed parents to gain an understanding of their role in the students' decision-making. The addition of parental interviews provided insight into the role of parents in this process and in their students' development. This served to inform the broader field on how parents see their roles in their children's lives and development toward adulthood. The views of the parents were an important element to the theory building process. This importance grew from a separate research study I conducted with a team of researchers exploring the role of parents in college student persistence and completion. At times, parents' views of how they supported students differed from the students' views of how their parents supported them (Winters, 2013). Students and parents often identified different situations that led to student persistence in college. Being able to gather data from student and parent pairs provided a broader look at parental involvement and contributed to a more comprehensive theory of the role of parents in college student development different (Cullaty, 2011; Pizzolato & Hicklen, 2011).

While the goal of the initial purposeful sampling was to generate a sample of 20 student and parent pairs, 10 pairs at MAU and 10 pairs at HGC, my final sample included 12 pairs from MAU and 6 pairs from HGC. To develop the initial sample, I used various contacts within student affairs and academic affairs at both MAU and HGC to solicit students and parents who would be interested in participating in the study (See Appendix B for recruitment scripts). In addition, I asked those who participated in the study if they knew of others who would like to participate. Each interested student was directed to ask a parent to contact the researcher to confirm the parent's willingness to participate. After several rounds of recruiting, I ended data collection with a total sample of 18 students and 19 parents (two parents asked to be interviewed together). For each pair, both the student and parent were consented to be included in the study, and told explicitly that none of the information provided to the researcher would be shared between the parent or student. To promote participation, I provided WePay cards to students as incentives for completing the study (Patel, Doku, & Tennakoon, 2003). Student participants were given \$30 upon the completion of one student and one parent interview, and \$20 for any additional interviews.

In this study, I used intensive interviews of students and parents to gain an understanding of how students arrive at the decisions they make. An intensive interview is a "gently guided, one-sided conversation that explores a person's substantial experience with the research topic" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 56). Intensive interviewing and grounded theory methods work well together because they are both directed, yet open-ended enough to allow rich detail to emerge from participants, providing the depth of information necessary to build theory from participants' descriptions and experiences (Charmaz, 2014). In constructive grounded theory methods, intensive interviews provide a space where the researcher creates a relationship with the

interviewees, so that they are able to tell their stories as completely as they are willing. It is in the complete telling of stories and representation of experiences that grounded theory researchers are able to construct conceptual categories that directly inform the development of theory.

Students and parents were interviewed at least once each, and some students were contacted for follow-up interviews during theoretical sampling, for a total of 45 initial interviews. The first student interview focused on the students' experiences related to personal indicators of student development, the role of family in the students' lives, specific times of challenge and the role of their families in those times, and decision-making mechanisms the students use (See Appendix C). The parent interview explored their perceived role in their students' lives, how they approach their students in times of challenge, and how they perceive their role in their children's development (See Appendix D). In line with constructivist grounded theory, I began the process of concurrent data collection and analysis during the first stage of interviews. During the collection of the first interviews, I analyzed the data and developed initial categories. As I developed categories, I engaged in theoretical sampling to obtain data to explicate my conceptual categories and inform the early stages of theoretical development, which resulted in nine additional student interviews. As Charmaz (2014) explains, theoretical sampling is a common tool used in constructivist grounded theory methods where researchers begin with data, develop speculative ideas about those data, and then return to the field to collect additional data from the research participants to test and refine those ideas. Employing theoretical sampling often results in additional interviews of the research participants and the development of carefully crafted questions for those interviews that focus on the conceptual categories that have been developed (See Appendix E for interview protocol).

Student interviews lasted between 40 and 90 minutes, giving the students the ability to extend beyond arbitrary time limits in order to entirely express their experiences. I conducted all student interviews in person, at a location that was mutually decided upon. It is important that the location was one of comfort and discretion for the student, to create a sense of security for sharing personal information. Since the role of the researcher in the development of theory is central to constructivist grounded theory, the relationship between the researcher and the interview participants is of extreme importance (Charmaz, 2014). To develop rapport with the interview participants, I worked to create a comfortable environment for sharing personal life details. Parent interviews lasted between 20 and 40 minutes, and were conducted by telephone since many parents were not located in the immediate geographic area. With the consent of all student and parent participants, all interviews were audio-recorded using a voice-recording iPad application and were transcribed by a research transcription service.

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

3.4.1 Coding Technique

While coding data is a practice common to various qualitative analysis techniques, there are distinct and unique purposes to coding in constructivist grounded theory. Charmaz (2011, 2014) offers that the purpose of coding in constructivist grounded theory is to separate data to define processes and make comparisons in an effort to develop theory. As such, there are three phases of coding in constructivist grounded theory methods. Each phase builds upon the others to work toward the generation of theory.

To begin the initial phase of coding, I read the complete interview transcript in its entirety. After this first reading, I then broke the transcript into more manageable parts using initial coding to define and categorize each piece. The goal of this first stage of coding was to remain open to the different possibilities within the data. I made sure to use action and process terms as initial codes, in order to capture what was happening in the interview and to move toward defining process as coding progresses (Charmaz, 2014). I then used these smaller action pieces to compare the initial codes to each other in an effort to make larger, more focused conceptual categories for the data, where theoretical integration of the data can begin. This second level of coding was based on using constant comparisons among collected data to determine similarities and differences. Constant comparison, a technique common to grounded theory methods helps to break down data into more manageable parts for the purpose of comparison. Through these first two levels of coding, I began to define what was happening within the data in an effort to build conceptual categories that defined the processes within the data and led to the development of theory. After the development of conceptual categories, I used theoretical sampling to conduct additional interviews with the participants in an effort to refine and explicate the categories. The interview transcripts of the theoretical sampling interview were then coded in relation to the conceptual categories to provide greater clarity toward theoretical development. After all data were collected, I began the final stage of coding, theoretical coding, where I revisited the focused codes in an effort to integrate them into the development of theory.

Throughout the entire iterative process of data collection and analysis, I used memo-writing to track how I was thinking about the data and the generalizations I was making. Charmaz (2011, 2014) contends that memo-writing is a crucial element of grounded theory

methods because the memos serve as analytic reflections forcing the researcher to engage in data analysis early on in the collection process in an effort to begin theory development, and provide a space for the researcher to track the process of theory construction. The content and length of each memo varied, and included areas such as how conceptual categories had been developed, tracking of comparisons between conceptual categories and codes, as well as general reflections on how conceptual categories accounted for specific pieces of data. As the project grew, these memos became the foundation for constructing theory, and for reminding me of previous data analysis efforts. Treating the memos as ongoing markers of analytic reflection pointed to gaps in the theory development and data collection, and revealed the areas within the data that needed to be strengthened and tested within the process of theoretical sampling and additional interviews with participants. These areas are explicated in the interview protocol from the additional interviews (See Appendix E).

As mentioned previously, theory building is an abductive process within constructivist grounded theory methods. Where inductive processes of theory building require the researcher to begin with a blank slate in an effort to create new theory, abductive reasoning uses established theory as a point of comparison in an effort to extend those theories (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014). This is especially useful for this study since I was working to develop theoretical extensions of Baxter Magolda's self-authorship theory. While Baxter Magolda's work framed this study, its place in data analysis was at the margins. In line with Charmaz's (2011) beliefs, and as a constructivist, I was aware that previous theory and literature influenced how I saw my data, how I worked with my data, and what emerged from my data. In fact, during the process of data analysis and theory building, I developed two substantive theories that were independent from the theory of self-authorship, but which helped to inform the extension of Baxter

Magolda's work. In particular, abductive reasoning was helpful in relating my data to the established theory of self-authorship offered by Baxter Magolda. In line with abductive analysis, I did not apply Baxter Magolda's theory to my analysis, but rather did the opposite, where I applied my substantive theories to Baxter Magolda's work to inform the theoretical extension of the theory of self-authorship. I used Baxter Magolda's work as a point of comparison for my theoretical development (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014). These comparisons helped me to abductively reason through areas of difference and provide an extension of Baxter Magolda's theory of self-authorship.

3.5 DATA MANAGEMENT PLAN

To organize the data analysis process, I uploaded all de-identified, transcribed interviews and field notes to Dedoose, an open source qualitative data organization and analysis tool. I used Dedoose to facilitate the analysis process by organizing the data, codes, and resultant patterns among data. The program also facilitated the use of memo-writing, a pivotal element of grounded theory data analysis.

To ensure the confidentiality of all participants' interview data, recordings of the interviews, as well as the transcribed interviews, were saved to a private and secure drive. All participants received a pseudonym that was used for the recording and transcription files. The list of true names in relation to the pseudonyms is kept in a separate locked file within my office. The pseudonym will be used to speak about each participant in this dissertation and any further publications from the data.

3.6 TRUSTWORTHINESS

In addition to understanding my own personal assumptions and biases, there are a number of strategies that addressed the credibility and trustworthiness of my work and my role as a researcher. Constructivist grounded theory builds many of these checks and balances into the data collection and analysis process, many of which I have discussed previously as pivotal elements of my data collection and analysis. Processes such as the constant comparative method of comparing data cases against one another, using theoretical sampling to test theoretical conceptions, prolonged persistence in data collection to ensure that the data are well supported, as well as claiming and understanding all researcher biases and assumptions helped to address the credibility and trustworthiness of the data and my findings (Charmaz, 2014). In addition to these methods, I used a form of member-checking common to the practice of constructive grounded theory. As I returned to the field to test my conceptual categories through theoretical sampling, I was transparent with the research participants about the categories I was seeking to explicate. In this way, I spoke to them about how I interpreted their experiences and ensured that my interpretations were authentic in capturing their narratives (Charmaz, 2014). Using these various approaches to address issues of the credibility and trustworthiness of my work helped to ensure that I was reflecting the experiences of each of the research participants and had synthesized them into well-supported conceptual categories and theoretical constructions in the most authentic ways possible.

3.7 RESEARCHER ROLE, REFLEXIVITY, AND RECIPROCITY

3.7.1 Researcher Role and Reflexivity

Another consideration for qualitative research is the role of the researcher and potential biases throughout the data collection, analysis, and interpretation processes. To address these areas of concern, I fully disclosed my own personal biases, assumptions, and privileges, as well as continually reflected on my own thoughts about data collection and analysis through journals for the entirety of the study. This reflexivity, or “the process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher, the ‘human as instrument’” (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p.183), is vitally important to recognizing my position as a researcher, the potential implications of this position on how I conduct my study, and how I may arrive at certain conclusions (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

Using a journal to record my thoughts about both the data collection and analysis processes helped me to be more reflexive throughout the study. Journaling allowed me a space to keep a record of my own thoughts about the data and my own frame of mind as I worked to make meaning of the data and build theory. As I contributed to the journal, I continually looked for any indication of bias in data collection and analysis in an effort to be aware and to bracket those biases or assumptions to address as I wrote the results of the study. In addition to the methods I used to remain reflexive throughout the study, I offer the following assumptions that guide the purpose and development of this study:

First, as a student of higher education, and a former student affairs professional, I contend that the foundational purpose of higher education is to promote student development, inside and outside of the classroom. This includes helping students to develop cognitively, psychosocially, interpersonally, and intrapersonally. Therefore, I see the development that students traditionally

experience while in college as a vital component to the higher education experience. With this in mind, I recognize that college students are a heterogeneous population, and that no two students will develop in the same way or in the same time frame. Yet, I contend that there are similar enough experiences between students to form general theories and assumptions about student development, as well as the advancement of certain developmental trajectories as positive for student growth. Therefore, I do not assume that all students will develop self-authorship in the same ways, but I see self-authorship as a holistic, and positive goal of development. For this reason, I position self-authorship as a goal of student development.

Second, as a parent myself, I am a proponent of close family ties and parental and family involvement in the lives of college students. While I promote this involvement, I also recognize that this involvement may not be a positive experience for all students, and that there may be a point where parental involvement in the lives of college students becomes a deterrent to student development and student success. I come from a two-parent household where both parents were actively engaged in my college experience. I recognize that my college experience is not the only way for students to experience college. In addition, I recognize that there are many types and styles of families and parenting, each with their own strengths and challenges. I worked to bracket my understandings of family and college experiences while conducting this study, keeping an open mind to the myriad of experiences of the participants within this study.

Finally, as I stated earlier, I consider myself to be a constructivist. I see the world as holding multiple realities, and that each individual constructs his or her own reality within the context they are placed. This influences my approach to the world and to research. I worked to identify my own privileges and biases during each step of the research process, not in an attempt

to limit their influence, but rather in a transparent attempt to show how they may have influenced my conclusions and theory building.

3.7.1.1 Reciprocity

In an effort to thank MAU and HGC students and parents for contributing to my study, as well as the various departments who helped me to recruit student and parent participants, I will present the findings of my work for MAU and HGC officials, students, and parents. In particular, I will focus on how my work can help the MAU and HGC Parent Programs to support parents and students in the developmental journey, especially related to self-authorship.

3.8 LIMITATIONS

There are a number of methodological limitations to this study, some of which I have addressed in Chapter One. One of these concerns is the constraints of time and resources in completing a dissertation. While constructivist grounded theory methods advocate for theoretical sampling and data collection until the point that all conceptual categories are exhaustively defined, the limitations inherent to being a student factored into the completion of this work. While I made every effort to adequately define and refine my conceptual categories, I chose to use theoretical sampling as a method to refine my theory building within the frame of my current sample, instead of recruiting additional participants to be a part of the study. Essentially, I opted for depth in theory building, as opposed to breadth. As Jamieson, Taylor, and Gibson (2006) wrote, “A grounded theory is never right or wrong but is always modifiable in the light of new

information” (p. 102). In Chapter Six, I address the inclusion of additional student and parent experiences as an area for future research.

The greatest limitation to this study is the use of MAU and HGC as research sites. While using both sites offered variation in the types of students who could participate, and offered a number of students who met the selection criteria for this study, both institutions are more selective than most colleges and both are predominantly white institutions, which made a diverse sample a challenge. In fact, my study includes only four non-white participants out of the 37 total participants. Therefore, I caution the reader to consider this context when applying the findings of my study to other student and parent populations.

Another limitation to the sample for this study is commitment of time, as well as the commitment of a parent to complete an interview, required for participation. It is reasonable to assume that only students who have positive relationships with their parents chose to participate in this study. Therefore, the sample of students have less variation in terms of the type of relationship that the student and parent share than is desired. In an effort of transparency regarding the context of my student and parent participants, I offer an extensive description of the student and parent characteristics, experiences, and relationships in Chapter Four.

4.0 PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS

In total, I interviewed 18 student-parent pairs from two different institutions. In Table 1, I provide selected characteristics for the 37 participants in the study (one student's parents asked to be interviewed together). In addition to conventional demographic questions, within the interviews, I included questions about family structure, such as if the student was the first child in the family to attend college, the distance of the student's home from the institution they were attending, and the parent's marital status. There is fairly wide distribution when examining the distance between the student's institution and home, with eight students living within three hours of their institutions and ten students living more than three hours from their institutions. Since numerous students spoke about the role that distance has played in the development of their relationships with their parents, which I discuss in the next chapter, it is important to contextualize this finding. In addition, many of students in my sample (11) were the first child in their family to attend college, and nearly all of the students came from families with two married parents, with three students from families with divorced parents and one student whose father had passed away while she was enrolled in college

Other demographic characteristics include the race, sex, and first-generation status of the students in the sample. My sample is overwhelmingly Caucasian, with one African American student and one Asian American student. In addition, while I attempted to interview equal numbers of female and male students, my sample includes more female students (11) than male

students (7). Nearly all of the students within my sample (16) are not first-generation students, meaning that at least one of their parents attained a four-year college degree. Finally, the students chose which parent I would contact for a parent interview. Students chose their mother for the parent interview (13) most often, while six students chose their father, and one student asked if both parents could be interviewed.

Table 1. Selected Participant Characteristics

Student Pseudonym	Parent Pseudonym	Institution	Race	Marital Status	Distance from Home (driving)
Josh Ellis	Grace Ellis	MAU	Caucasian	Divorced	3-6 hours, in-state (mother) 3-6 hours, out-of-state (father)
Brian Kind	Mary Kind	MAU	Caucasian	Married	Less than 1 hour, in-state
Daniel Underwood	Nicolas and Sarah Underwood	MAU	Caucasian	Married	More than 6 hours, out-of-state
Aaron Vick	Gerald Vick	MAU	Asian American	Married	3-6 hours, in-state
Nathan Voren	Martha Voren	MAU	Caucasian	Married	3-6 hours, in-state
Christina Andrews	Kelly Andrews	MAU	Caucasian	Married	Less than 1 hour, in-state
Becca Foster	Karen Foster	MAU	Caucasian	Married	More than 6 hours, out-of-state
Tina Inman	Sandy Inman	MAU	African American	Widowed	3-6 hours, in-state
Sarah Mason	Steve Mason	MAU	Caucasian	Married	More than 6 hours, out-of-state
Laney Quirk	Monica Quirk	MAU	Caucasian	Divorced	3-5 hours, in-state (mother) 3-5 hours, in-state (father)
Lori Vanguard	Larry Vanguard	MAU	Caucasian	Married	More than 6 hours, out-of-state
Leah Volt	Iris Volt	MAU	Caucasian	Married	More than 6 hours, out-of-state
Anthony Benson	Ingrid Benson	HGC	Caucasian	Married	More than 6 hours, out-of-state
Vincent Quinn	Jan Quinn	HGC	Caucasian	Married	1-3 hours, in-state
Veronica Bates	Donna Bates	HGC	Caucasian	Married	1-3 hours, in-state
Beth Conner	Dan Conner	HGC	Caucasian	Married	1-3 hours, in-state
Bonnie North	Maggie North	HGC	Caucasian	Divorced	1-3 hours, in state (mother) More than 6 hours, out-of-state (father)
Nicole Rice	Natalie Rice	HGC	Caucasian	Married	Less than 1 hour, in-state

4.1 THE PARTICIPANTS: THE PARENT-STUDENT DYAD

In this chapter, I provide a general overview of the individuals and relationships between each parent-student dyad. This contextualization is vitally important to understanding subsequent chapters that detail the participants' experiences. Using the foundation of the intensive interviews, I describe the general characteristics of the dyads, as well as the relationship between the student and his or her parent(s).

4.1.1 Josh and Grace Ellis

Josh Ellis is a junior at MAU. He is active in his fraternity and has a passion for sports. Josh is the eldest of two children; his younger sister is a first-year student at another institution of higher education. His mother and father are divorced, and he primarily lived with his father throughout high school. When he has long breaks from school, he tries to split his time between their homes, even though they live one and a half hours from each other. MAU is more than three hours from his mother's home and nearly five hours from his father's home, which is out of state. When asked where he considers "home," he responded that he lives at MAU all year, and only returns to his mother's or father's homes for holidays. His mother Grace, who has a bachelor's degree, is currently pursuing a master's degree and is active in her local church, and his father, who also has a four-year degree, is a professional in the arts. Josh described his relationship with his parents as good, but not necessarily close. He said,

Both of my parents and I have good relationships...I'm not super close...with my family just because that's not how our family dynamic is...But, I mean, it's good for the relationship that we have. (Josh Ellis)

Josh said that, although he talks to his dad slightly less than he talks to his mom, he tries to call them at least once a week, to talk about his classes or his activities. He says the conversations are short, but he knows it makes them happy to hear from him, so he does his best to call regularly. Josh's mother, Grace, added that they will text throughout the week, and that she appreciates that he calls to talk. Both mother and son agreed that their level of interaction is just right for the relationship that they have.

4.1.2 Brian and Mary Kind

Brian Kind is a junior at MAU. He grew up in a suburban area about 20 minutes from MAU, where his mother and father, who are married, still reside. Brian is the eldest of four children and the only son. He enjoys music and is active with the Catholic Newman Center at MAU. He has a close relationship with his mother, whom he texts frequently in a week and calls a couple of times per month. In addition, he sees his family regularly throughout the semester since his home is so close to MAU. He stated that his parents will come to MAU for lunch once each month, and that he will go home during the semester, as well. When we talked about the relationship he has with his family, Brian nearly always spoke about his mother. His mother stayed at home with him and his sisters, which he cited as a major reason that they have a close relationship. He stated that he has a "more distant relationship" with his father, who is a professional and travels for work frequently. Brian talked about recent tensions between him and his parents that have caused a strain on his relationships with them. He has changed his major and decided on a new path for his future, one that his parents are struggling to accept. In addition, he talked about how his views about the purpose of college, as well as his spiritual and political beliefs have changed from those of his parents, and that this contributed to the tension.

His mother, Mary, indicated that she shares a good and close relationship with her son, and she is working to step back from her role as “the nurturing mother” and to build a relationship with her son as an adult. While both Mary and Brian cite a close relationship, both pointed out that they would like to communicate more frequently.

4.1.3 Daniel, Sarah, and Nicholas Underwood

Daniel Underwood is a junior at MAU, where he is active with intramural sports and the Catholic Newman Center. Daniel is the eldest of three sons, and his parents and brothers live more than six hours from MAU, several states away. His parents, who are married, are both working professionals with college degrees. Daniel said that he interacts with his parents via text message, Twitter, or Snapchat daily, and also calls them three to four times per week. He consistently referenced the “close relationship” he maintains with both parents, even though he is quite far from home when at MAU and only sees them on major breaks. Daniel and his parents, Nicholas and Sarah, who asked to be interviewed together for the study, indicated that the interaction they have with each other is just right for the relationship that they have. Nicholas and Sarah said that they think the interaction is just right since Daniel initiates contact and, “it’s not just us always texting him.” Daniel affirmed this comment, by saying that when it comes to initiating contact with each other, that, “it’s normally back and forth” and a “good mix” between him and his parents. Daniel said that he talks with his parents frequently about topics in which they share interest, and Sarah, Daniel’s mother, was quick to point out that their communication is typically, “pretty lighthearted conversation” about topics such as college football. While Daniel, Sarah, and Nicholas were pleased with the level of interaction they have, there are times

when Daniel wishes he could talk to them more. He stated that he does not want to be, “left out of the loop of what happened, what happens with my brothers or anything like that.”

4.1.4 Aaron and Gerald Vick

Aaron Vick is a junior at MAU who immigrated to the United States with his parents from China when he was five years old. He enjoys sports, especially basketball, a love he shares with his father, Gerald. He is active with intramural sports, residence life, and his fraternity. The eldest of two children, Aaron’s parents, who are married, and younger sister reside approximately five hours from MAU. Aaron interacts frequently with his parents, typically every day by text message, and has a standing Skype call with his father, mother, and sister every Sunday evening. He spoke of a close relationship with both of his parents and with his younger sister, and how he works to maintain that relationship. Aaron mentioned that being away from home has helped him to appreciate his family even more, and that now, “every interaction is a positive, warm one at this point for as far as I can remember.” Aaron’s father, Gerald, who is a working professional with a PhD, talked about the importance of family and creating a strong relationship with his son, especially while he is at MAU. He spoke of visiting Aaron during the semester and the intentional communication schedule they have to make sure that Aaron is supported while away at college. When asked about his interaction with Aaron, Gerald responded,

I believe the best way is to interact with the kid in college...as much as possible by talking (and) text messaging...we need to know what's going on with him – we have a lot of information about him, around him and he always feels...very close to the family members and...without just isolating himself...from the family.
(Gerald Vick)

When asked about the level of interaction that they share, both Aaron and Gerald stated that it is just right for the relationship that they have, especially considering how busy they are; though Aaron added, “obviously I wish I could talk to them more.”

4.1.5 Nathan and Martha Voren

Nathan Voren is a junior at MAU. He is the youngest of two sons, and his older brother graduated from a four-year institution of higher education. Nathan’s parents, who are married, reside approximately five hours from MAU, where his father is an attorney and mother is a nurse. Nathan enjoys being outdoors, especially biking, and is active with Hillel at MAU. He told me that his level of interaction with his parents has increased over his years at MAU, and he now calls them approximately once per week. Nathan and his mother, Martha, spoke of very different types of relationships with each other. While Nathan indicated that he thinks he interacts with his parents enough for the relationship they have, his mother, Martha, stated that she would, “probably say [the interaction level is] not enough. It is never enough.” Interestingly, while Nathan’s mother, Martha, talked about the “good” relationship that they have, one that is based on support, Nathan did not offer the same language. For example, Martha told me,

I think we are definitely close. We try to be open. He does volunteer very personal aspects of his life to me, which I feel very honored that he feels comfortable enough to do that. There's always honesty for everything. I think it's a very positive relationship. I think that he still regards us as a parental figure, but also knows that he could say or do anything in our presence and it will not be rejected. (Martha Voren)

When asked about his interactions with his family, Nathan offered that he wouldn’t characterize his family as close, saying, “(We are) not the tightest family around, but we're definitely not – well, it's just like – we talk every once in a while.” In addition, when I asked Nathan about his

relationship with his family, he indicated that he, often, is made to feel guilty when he makes decisions against them. This is a stark contrast from Nathan's mother, Martha's, description of their relationship.

4.1.6 Christina and Kelly Andrews

Christina Andrews is a senior at MAU. She is the eldest of four daughters and grew up with her sisters and married parents in a suburban area 30 minutes from MAU. She is active with the MAU Women's Choral Ensemble, the Catholic Newman Club, and a national club associated with her major. Christina describes her entire family as very close, and her parents as involved in her life, as well as the lives of her three sisters. Her father has a four-year degree, and her mother attended college, but did not complete her degree. While she talked about how close her family is and that she interacts with her parents at least once per week and sees them regularly, she admits to forgetting to call them. For instance, when I asked her about how often she interacts with her parents, she responded that she will, "forget to call them a lot," and that she then will, "feel bad about it afterwards when (she) realizes it." Later, during one of our interviews, Christina elaborated on this communication dynamic when she said,

My family means the world to me. Even when I don't talk to them all the time, I still like – I love them so much. And so when I realize I haven't been including them, I guess I feel a little bit bad, but it's more because I care about them and less because I feel obligated to do something. (Christina Andrews)

Regardless of the frequency with which they talk, both Christina and her mother, Kelly, stated that they believe their level of interaction with each other is appropriate for the relationship that they have. Christina's mother, Kelly, went on to state that she misses her daughter, even though she communicates with her often, but that she is happy with their relationship. Both mother and

daughter described instances of tension, but consistently spoke about the closeness and the good relationship that they share.

4.1.7 Becca and Karen Foster

Becca Foster is a junior at MAU. She is the youngest of two, and her older brother is a senior at a different institution of higher education. Her parents, who are both working professionals with advanced degrees, are married and live out of state, more than six hours away. Becca is very involved on campus with clubs and events and enjoys the outdoors. Becca and her mother, Karen, have negotiated times that they check in with each other by phone, typically on Sunday mornings. Becca's mother, Karen, pointed out that the relationship she has with Becca, and the frequency with which they interact is intentional. Karen was admittedly fearful of becoming a helicopter parent after hearing stories from friends, and was mindful of her communication frequency with her daughter, Becca. She explained her approach to communicating with her college-age children by saying,

I have a friend who has a son who's probably four years older than our son. And, when he went away to school I saw what she was doing. You know, she called him all the time and then it – it sort of happened that he wasn't returning her calls and she was getting frustrated, and then she would get really worried and she'd get herself sort of into a frenzy. And, and I remember thinking, especially with today's technology, they know it's you when you're calling them...My husband and I talked about this...I want my kids to want to talk to us...I don't want them when they look at their phone and it says Mom to roll their eyes and say, "Oh my god. It's my mother again." So we intentionally tried to be respectful of their time and their – the fact that they are away, and that...we're not responsible for them while they're there in that regard...It was really sort of watching another family go through the college experience that we developed our approach to how we wanted to interact with – with Becca and her brother when they were away.
(Karen Foster)

Since Becca's brother was already away at college when she began her studies at MAU, she knew what to expect with her mother's interactions. She said that her brother warned her that the interaction level would be different than when she lived at home. Becca and Karen Foster were not the only parent/student dyad to discuss intentional communication patterns aimed at developing independence or building relationships. They both understood why their interactions were limited, and were confident that the structure had helped Becca to become more independent. In addition, while they may not interact as frequently as many of the other dyads within this study, both Becca and Karen Foster stated that their level of interaction is just right for the relationship that they have.

4.1.8 Tina and Sandy Inman

Tina is a senior at MAU, where she is active with her sorority. She is the eldest of two, and her brother is a sophomore at a community college near their home, approximately five hours from MAU. Tina is the first person in her family to attend college and looks forward to graduation and enrolling in law school. Tina's father passed away her first year of college after a lengthy battle with a terminal illness. Tina talked about her close relationship with her mother, Sandy, who she recently taught to text message so that they could interact more frequently. Sandy reiterated that she and her daughter have a close relationship, and that they interact almost daily by text message and at least weekly by phone. While Sandy is excited for her daughter, Tina, and the changes that are coming with graduation and new opportunities, she repeatedly talked about her daughter growing away from her. Tina spoke, as well, about how she no longer relies on her mother, but still enjoys speaking with her and talking about decisions that she is making independently. Tina talked about how her relationship with her mom has evolved and

changed. She thinks that the physical distance between them when she is at college has helped them to develop a better relationship. When I asked her about this, she added,

Just her being around all the time and her always knowing who I was hanging out with, where I was going, what time I was coming home, that sort of stuff, kind of got in the way of our relationship development, whereas I'm in college, and she doesn't know who I'm hanging out with, what time I'm coming home, if I come home, that sort of stuff. So we can focus on the stuff that we tell each other, as opposed to the things that we're doing. So I think – I think that was, um, what made us able to get closer. (Tina Inman)

Tina went on to talk about how she shares more with her mom now, than she did when she was younger, because their relationship has developed. Tina's mother, Sandy, added that she feels lucky to have the relationship that she has with Tina, and that it does not matter how often she and her daughter communicate, or what they talk about, "Cause she knows that I love her. She knows I'm her anchor."

4.1.9 Sarah and Steve Mason

Sarah Mason is a junior at MAU. Sarah is the youngest of two children, and her older brother attends a different institution of higher education. Her parents, who are married and both have advanced degrees, live out of state and more than six hours from MAU. Outside of her classwork, Sarah enjoys sailing and working with children. Her father, Steve, describes her as educationally-focused and self-confident. Sarah interacts frequently with her parents, both by text messaging and phone calls. She talked about how her interaction pattern with her parents has changed since her first year of college when she had scheduled times to check-in with her parents each week. Now, she communicates with her parents frequently, texting nearly every day and calling multiple times per week, but not on a set schedule. Both Sarah and her father, Steve,

indicated that their level of interaction is just right for the relationship that they share. They each talked about the mutual support they share in their relationship. When asked about her relationship with her parents, Sarah offered,

I'm very confident that if I ever need to talk to my family, they're always there—and I feel like they have the same relationship with me, so I feel like we're secure enough with each other. (Sarah Mason)

Steve echoed these sentiments when I asked him to describe how his relationship with Sarah had changed since she has been in college:

She's no longer just the child but is the – you know, feels like she's an equal in a lot of ways, and we treat her that way so, um, so that's changed a lot since she's been [in college]. (Steve Mason)

He continued by talking about how their relationship is indicative of the mutual respect they have for each other.

4.1.10 Laney and Monica Quirk

Laney Quirk is a junior at MAU. She is the youngest of two, and her older brother graduated from a different four-year institution of higher education. Laney parents are divorced, and both live in the town where she grew up, which is about four hours from MAU. She lived predominantly with her mother, but spent time with her father, as well, during her childhood. Her father has a four-year college degree, and her mother completed a certificate program. Laney talked about how her family all lives in the same small town, and have never really left. Even her brother stayed close when he attended college. Laney talked about how she wanted to attend a larger school away from the small town, and that her parents initially opposed the idea of her attending MAU. Her mother, Monica, ultimately supported the decision, and thinks that the

distance has resulted in a stronger relationship between mother and daughter. Monica stated that she thinks her daughter, Laney, appreciates her and the sacrifices she made as a single mother more now that she is living away from home. They text each other at least every other day, and talk by phone at least once per week. Both mother and daughter stated that their level of interaction with each other is just right for the relationship that they share. When I asked Laney's mother, Monica, about her level of interaction with Laney, she said

I think it's just right. You know, I mean, I'm a mother. You know what it's like. You always worry about your kids. Doesn't matter how old they are. You know, with her being three and a half hours away, that makes it more difficult. (Monica Quirk)

While she would like to interact more with Laney because she misses her, Monica indicated that the level of interaction that they share is good for the relationship that they have.

4.1.11 Lori and Larry Vanguard

Lori Vanguard is a junior at MAU. She is the eldest of two, and her married parents and brother live out of state, more than six hours away. Outside of school, she is very active with theater at MAU. She often turns to her father, Larry, about managing colleagues with her theater work. Larry has an advanced degree and manages others in his work. Lori typically interacts with her parents via text message once per week and by phone once per month. She stated that she communicates more with her parents now than when she was a first year student, and that she is usually the one who initiates contact. Lori's father, Larry, affirmed their interaction patterns and said that the frequency with which they interact is a product of Lori's independence. In addition, Lori talked about how the level of interaction she holds with her parents has helped her to become more independent, and she sees it as a time of transition where she knows her

parents are concerned for her, but they no longer need to talk about everything. When talking about the relationship that they share, Larry talked about how he would not characterize them as friends, but that they have an open and respectful relationships. He said,

The relationship I have with Lori is a very open one...we have a great deal of mutual respect for each other, and never went through what people say, "Well, that's just typical of children where they won't talk to their parents or they hate their parents or, you know, they don't respect their parents or value what their parents think"...We have a very open dialogue...Lori is very smart and mature...but I think people frown on saying you're friends with your children. But Lori and I, we have a pretty mutual, respectful relationship. We're not friends because you just know we're not. Very infrequent do I have to tell Kristen to do something or tell Kristen that she's done something wrong and needs to correct it.
(Larry Vanguard)

While they both admitted that they could interact more with each other, both Larry and Lori agreed that they interact the right amount for the relationship that they have.

4.1.12 Leah and Iris Volt

Leah is a junior at MAU and is just 18 years old. Leah is the eldest of three daughters and her married parents, who both hold advanced degrees, live out of state, more than six hours away. Her younger sisters attend a boarding school, just as Leah did before enrolling at MAU. Leah enjoys volunteering, music, and Harry Potter. Leah's age is a consistent point of struggle in her relationship with her mother, Iris. Leah and her mother, Iris, both stated that she is independent and very mature for her age, but Leah does not think that her parents treat her as an adult. She talked at length about decisions that she is considering for her future and the opposition that her parents continually voice. Leah indicated that she is frustrated by her parents' opposition, especially because she and her mother, Iris, have always shared a close and open

relationship. Leah's mother, Iris, talked to me about how she required Leah to communicate with her every day during the first two years of college, but that she has relaxed that now. Leah and Iris interact at least every other day, typically by phone or text message, but Leah said that she calls less frequently now because of the tension in their current relationship. When I asked her about the relationship she has with her mother, Iris, and where she sees that relationship in the future, Leah stated,

I'm still trying to make the decision. My mom and her mother were the best of friends for years...And I always thought, when I grew up... "That's entirely what I want." And as I'm growing up, to an extent, I'm kind of realizing that I'm not always going to have that...especially now, 'cause it's in the midst of a change. And I need that – a little bit of separation. (Leah Volt)

During our multiple interviews, Leah expressed a desire to have a strong and close relationship with her mother, but questioned how to get to that point given their current strained relationship. Leah's mother, Iris, also pointed out that she wants to have a strong relationship with Leah, but she sees their relationship as closer to that point than Leah sees it. While the both see their relationship in a point of transition, it seems that mother and daughter are at odds as to the direction the relationship will go.

4.1.13 Anthony and Ingrid Benson

Anthony Benson is a senior at HGC. He is active with the football team and church. Anthony is the eldest of two, and his younger brother attends a different institution of higher education. His parents, who are married, live out of state, more than six hours from HGC. Anthony and his mother, Ingrid, both talked about the close and strong relationship that Anthony shares with his parents. Anthony stated that he interacts with his parents via text message nearly

every day and will talk to them by phone a few times per week. When talking about the relationship he has with his parents, he referred to himself and his father, who has a Bachelor's degree, as "two peas in a pod" and points out that he and his mother have very different personalities, but are close and share an interesting dynamic because they are so different. When talking to Anthony's mother, Ingrid, she affirmed that she and her husband share a very close relationship with Anthony, and points to a number of family health issues while Anthony has been at college that have contributed to that closeness. Anthony stated that he thinks his father's battle with cancer, especially, has led him to have a closer relationship with his parents than some of his peers have with their parents. While his father is now healthy, his illness made Anthony appreciate and value their relationship. When I asked both Anthony and his mother Ingrid about their relationship and the level of interaction they have with each other, both indicated that their interaction level is just right, with Anthony stating,

I would say it's about right. You know, obviously, you always would like to see them more, but, I mean, that's – that's human nature, I think. And so – but I think I interact with them enough where I'm not sort of – there's not a longing, so to speak...so I would say it's about right, and I've learned how to manage it since, you know, being out here for four years. Um, so we're able to – to stay in contact and maintain our clo-, we don't drift apart or anything. (Anthony Benson)

Anthony's mother affirmed this, saying that they have a very "close and supportive relationship," and that Anthony provides support to them as much as they support him.

4.1.14 Vincent and Jan Quinn

Vincent Quinn is a junior at HGC. He is the second eldest in a family of six children, and his older brother graduated from a four-year institution of higher education. His parents, who are married, and younger siblings live approximately three hours from HGC. Vincent wished he

interacted more with his family. He talked about how he had planned to call them once per week during the semester, but that he did not fulfil that plan. He interacts with his parents, especially his mother, via text message occasionally, and typically talks to them by phone once per month. He pointed out that he wants to communicate with them more, but that his life at school, and schedule get in the way. He is active with numerous clubs, residence life, and service groups on campus. Vincent's mother, Jan, is a neonatal intensive care nurse who talked about wanting to communicate with Vincent more, but knows that he is, "doing what he needs to do," and that he is "exactly where he needs to be" at HGC. She talked about Vincent affectionately, calling him her "sweet, considerate one." Jan told me that she and Vincent have a good relationship, even though they do not communicate as often as either of them would like. She said,

I think we're just as close as we've always been. I mean, I miss him...and I believe he misses me too, but...I'm confident that he – that he's doing wonderful there. So it's a good life...we may not have the same amount of contact, but I don't believe our relationship has suffered in any way. I think it's grown, I think...he's seeing me more as a person, than just only as his mother. (Jan Quinn)

While Vincent talked about tensions with his parents, especially with his father, he affirmed a very strong relationship with his mother, one he works hard to protect.

4.1.15 Veronica and Donna Bates

Veronica Bates is a senior at HGC, where she is active with residence life and enjoys running and musicals. She is the first person in her family to attend college and is planning to pursue a graduate degree. The eldest of three children, Veronica's younger brother also attends HGC. Her parents, who are married, and her youngest brother live approximately two hours from HGC. Veronica told me about the changes to how she interacted with her parents over the time

she has been in college. She talked about how her mother wanted to over-communicate with her during her freshman year, but that their interaction frequency has gradually decreased. According to Veronica, “[Our interaction level] is content now – it works. It’s not as suffocating as it used to be and I love that.” She describes a good relationship with her mother, whom she describes as her support system, but indicated that her relationship with her parents had never been particularly close. She said,

I guess you could say I don't treat my parents like my friends. You know, how like some people are like friends with their parents? No, I see them as like mom and dad – and, you know, they're my support system, they're my support beams, but, you know, I'm not gonna tell them every single detail and aspect about my life. (Veronica Bates)

Veronica’s mother, Donna, spoke similarly about their relationship. She states that she was very strict with Veronica as she was growing up, and that that relationship carried over into Veronica’s early college years. Donna talked about how she is beginning to view Veronica as an adult, but that she is still working on transitioning from a relationship built from her position of authority.

4.1.16 Beth and Dan Conner

Beth Conner is a junior at HGC. The youngest of two children, Beth’s older brother graduated from MAU. Beth’s parents, who are married and both have college degrees, live more than an hour from HGC. At HGC, Beth is involved with residence life, multiple clubs related to her majors, and enjoys intramural sports. As the second child in her family to attend college, Beth indicated that her parents expected her to have similar interaction patterns to her brother. However, Beth said that her older brother called their parents almost daily, and that Beth did not

want to have that level of communication when she went to college. This, initially, led to tension between her and her parents. She stated that she will text her parents a few times during the week, and tries to call once per week, typically on Sunday to check-in. While she indicated that she thought that she communicated too much with her parents when she was a freshman, she thinks that they now communicate just enough for the relationship that they have. Beth's father, Dan, talked at length about the transition he and Beth are experiencing in their relationship, and the challenge it has been for him. He often spoke nostalgically about how close they were when she was in high school and how Beth relied on him. He stated that he understands that their relationship is changing, but he does wish that Beth still needed him the way she had before she went to college. When describing their current interactions and relationship, Dan said,

I'm trying to treat her as an adult, and I think, you know, sometimes...it gets a little unnerving to me because it's how I remember that other relationship we had when she was younger...So I think sometimes...I definitely miss that. I miss that aspect of it, and maybe I'm thinking this is just kind of a phase. (Dan Conner)

Beth also spoke about the changes to her relationship with her parents, and needing to prove to them that she is able to make independent decisions and to take responsibility for her life. She stated that she is working through that with her parents, and that there are times that it can cause tension.

4.1.17 Bonnie and Maggie North

Bonnie North is a senior at HGC. She enjoys the outdoors and is active with many outdoors clubs on campus. She primarily lives with her mother and grandmother approximately two hours from HGC. An only child, Bonnie's parents divorced when she was young, and her father lives out-of-state, more than six hours from HGC. She spends some holidays with her

father, who has remarried, and his family. Both of her parents have advanced degrees. Bonnie told me that she interacts by text and email with both of her parents frequently, especially now that she is preparing her medical school applications. She relies on them for help editing her personal statements and values their opinions on her applications. She tries to call each of her parents once per week, but admits that it is hard because she is so busy with her courses, research, and planning for her future. She also tries to go home to see her mother and grandmother often. She talked at length about the close relationship she has with her mom. She stated that she thinks she interacts more with her mother than other students interact with their parents because, “for a while my mom and I lived by – by ourselves in an apartment, and so she's been a big part of my life and we've done a lot together.” Maggie also spoke of the “strong and close relationship” she has with her daughter, Bonnie. She talked about the mutual support they provide to each other. When I asked Maggie how she would describe her relationship with her daughter, Bonnie, she responded,

I would describe it as very loving and supportive relationship, emotionally and regarding any other issues that we do have. I'm always there for her...I'm always there emotionally and supportive of anything that she – that she wants to do, so – and I – I'm sure she knows that... She's also very supportive of me, so...it goes both ways. (Maggie North)

Bonnie and Maggie have a close relationship where they share many facets of their lives with each other. They both indicated that they interact with each other just enough for the relationship that they share. Bonnie did state that she would like to have more frequent contact with her father, but that she has “always felt that way.”

4.1.18 Nicole and Natalie Rice

Nicole Rice is a junior at HGC. She enjoys reading and spending time with her friends. She is the youngest of three daughters and both of her older sisters have graduated from other four-year institutions of high education. Her parents, who are married and both have college degrees, live less than an hour from HGC. Nicole stated that she communicates by phone with her parents at least once per week, texts them more frequently, and tries to go home one weekend per month. Since her parents' home is close to HGC, she indicated that she thinks she sees her parents in person more than her peers see their parents. She said that her interaction patterns with her parents have changed since her first year of college, and that she interacts much less with her parents now than she did earlier in her college career. Nicole indicated that her frequent communication with her parents during her first year was a product of being homesick and not wanting to feel "left out of the family." She talked about being the last child, and that her family takes for granted many of her experiences since they have already been through them. She is concerned about missing out on what is happening with her family when she is at HGC, and said she will, "go home with them so they don't feel like I'm, like, not being a part of the family." Nicole told me that she feels comfortable talking about everything with her parents and sharing all parts of her life, and even though they have had some challenging conversations about her future recently, she still values their input in her life. Both Nicole and her mother, Natalie, indicated that their level of interaction is good for the relationship that they share. Nicole's mother, Natalie, shared that she enjoys her children as adults more than she did as children, and that she is happy with the relationship that she shares with Nicole, which is based on "unconditional love and support." Natalie stated that Nicole can share anything with them, and that they will support her and help her in any way that she needs. Nicole agreed that she can

share with her parents, but did indicate that they have not been as supportive as she had hoped with decisions she has made, independently, about her future.

5.0 FINDINGS RELATED TO PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCES

The student and parent interviews examined a number of areas regarding interactions between the students and parents, the student-parent relationship, college student development, and student decision making. This chapter details the participants' experiences within these areas to provide context on the sample for this study.

5.1 INTERACTIONS BETWEEN PARENT AND STUDENT

The students and parents within my study interacted by various means, differing greatly in frequency. Nearly all of the students indicated that they communicated with their parents at least once per week, and all students communicated with their parents at least once per month. All students said that the frequency of communication with their parents varied based on the time of year and the availability of their schedules. Students and parents used multiple forms of communication, including text messaging, phone calls, email, SnapChat, and Skype. Students and parents indicated that they communicated via text message as frequently as multiple times per week, and that they communicated by phone, Skype, or FaceTime at least once per week.

Communication patterns shifted over the students' college careers, with participants stating that they communicated with their parents less often in their junior and senior years than they did when they first came to college. The students indicated that the change in interaction

was due to their own change in activities, getting busier as they progressed through school, and a growing sense of trust their parents had in them. While students and parents attributed the change in interaction frequency to a natural progression, others students indicated that they had made intentional changes to how frequently they interacted with their parents during college. For some, these changes were met with resistance from parents. For example, Brian Kind talked about these intentional changes when he said,

At first...they were kinda taken back from [the change in interaction]... I kinda felt the need to kind of back off more...it's kind of starting to have more of a permanent split. But, the initiation of it was definitely me. (Brian Kind)

Brian continued by saying that his parents were, at first, hurt by the change in his interactions with them. His mother, Mary, reaffirmed this in her independent interview. Yet, as Brian has grown and matured, his parents have tried to understand his need for independence, and less frequent interaction.

When asked if the parent or student initiates most interactions, students and parents indicated that it is a good mix of initiation between the parent and the student or that the student initiates most contact. In addition, many parents were explicit that they are mindful of their children's schedules, and that they will either text or email if they need to interact with their child, instead of calling by phone and possibly interrupting their child. In addition, many parents were respectful of allowing their children to be independent. One parent, in particular, communicated that she and her husband intentionally did not call their daughter more than they had negotiated.

If I call her, I typically text her first, just to say, "Hey, um, is this a good time to call you? Can you talk," those kinds of things. I – I try to do that just to be respectful of her schedule and just her independence. (Karen Foster)

Parents' intentional communication with their college-age children, like that of Karen Foster, served two purposes. The first was that parents wanted to allow their college age children to be independent, to make their own decisions and mistakes, and to grow and mature into adults. While this was a consistent theme throughout a number of parent interviews, there was also a secondary purpose to this communication style; the parents looked to the future of their relationships with their children. This type of communication style, where the parents are intentional about the frequency with which they interact with their children, was indicative of their desire to build a future relationship that was mutually supportive and respectful.

5.2 THE PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP

The parents and students in my study all talked about how their relationships had changed since starting college, and how their communication habits and the physical distance between them had contributed to these changes. While all parent participants indicated that they wanted to have a close relationship with their children, they were particularly interested in respecting their children while they were in college. In addition, establishing a relationship between two adults requires the parents' acknowledgement of their child as an adult. Parents and students, alike, talked about how the recognition of the students' adult status was an important part in the development of their relationship.

Regardless of the current state of the parent-child relationship, both parents and students, alike, talked about how their relationships had changed over the past three to four years. While all participants talked about changes to their relationships, they attributed these differences to a number of reasons, such as proximity/distance, the influence of the college environment, the

students' independence, and the natural evolution of maturation. Both students and parents talked about the positive role of proximity in their relationships. Now that the students did not live consistently with the parent, there was an opportunity for the parent-child relationship to transition from what they saw as a relationship based on authority to one based on mutual respect and support. Students talked about positive changes to their relationships with their parents, especially with respect to independent decision making, when they no longer had to abide by their rules due to living in their homes. As the years progressed, parents were becoming less likely to intervene in their children's lives, which helped to progress their relationships. Student Anthony Benson illustrated this transition when he said,

But every time I came back from college, it was a little bit more like that. It was a little more relaxed. It was a little bit more on a – kind of on equal footing, so to speak. And I mean, you're never really completely on equal footing with your parents, but as much as you can be, I think, as now you're an adult and you transition from them being an authority figure that you respect, to being a – you know, like, a consigliere, a confidante that you can respect. (Anthony Benson)

Many students offered comments such as these regarding the changing role of their parents. In addition, parents spoke about navigating their own role changes. One mother talked about how her role had changed, when she said, “I guess it's changed into less of a supervisory parent role and more of a supportive parent role.” (Martha Voren). Martha went on to offer that while she understands her changing role, it is not always easy. When I asked her about how she sees her role changing, she said, as she laughed,

Um, you can theoretically see the blood spurting from my tongue as I bite down. Really try very, very hard to, um, support that he is a young adult now and that he's capable of making his own decisions and he needs to experience his own failures in order to grow. (Martha Voren)

A number of parents talked about the challenge of accepting the new role they had in their children's lives. For Martha Voren and Mary Kind, this meant trying not to intervene in their

sons' decisions making and not influencing their views. Mary Kind realized that her son was becoming more independent and beginning to form his own views, and that if she wanted a relationship with him, she had to allow him the room to grow. She said,

Yeah. I think it was a conscious decision because when they get older you kind of have to do that otherwise you're just going to push them away 'cause in their mind they feel like they're adults. So you can't treat them like you did when they were 14 or they're just going to reject that and resent you for it. So I have to make a conscious effort to try to be more in tuned with that, that I can't baby him too much. Doesn't mean, like I said, I can't make his favorite food when he comes home or do little nice things for him, but I can't treat him like he's a little kid...I have to respect his views on his political and even if they're different from me or his religious or just different life views that are different from mine. I kind of have to respect it and let him have them whereas if he was younger I'd be trying to change them maybe. (Mary Kind)

A common sentiment among parents, Mary acknowledged that she was having trouble navigating the new relationship that was forming with her son. Parents spoke about how their relationships with their children were changing, and that it was challenging at times to define their places in their children's lives. This coincided with acknowledging that their children were transitioning into adults and becoming more independent.

Parents' acknowledgement of their college-age child's adult status is a vitally important event in the development of emerging adults. Overwhelmingly, the students in my study indicated that their parents treated them like adults, and they could point to a number of situations confirming their parents' acknowledgement of their adult status. In addition, parents offered examples of ways that they recognize the adult status of the children, such as Kelly Andrews, when she said,

And, you know, I feel very good about, you know, her ability to make decisions and, you know, that she is an adult. I feel – I feel like she's, you know, well on her way to, you know, taking care of herself, which is the ultimate goal, right, [laughs]. (Kelly Andrews)

As mentioned previously, parents admitted to struggling with the uncertainty that accompanies their children growing up, but were excited for the next phase of their relationships. Even those parents who wanted to resist the transition admitted to the changes, and the exciting possibilities that an evolving relationship could bring. Examples of the transitioning relationship between parents and students were evident throughout the student interviews, as well as the parent interviews. This is exemplified by Anthony Benson, who when asked to describe the current state of his relationship with his parents, was excited about the evolution of his relationship with his parents. He said,

Like, the child versus the adult sorta thing. And as I've matured, I think they've seen that in me and it's sort of – we've both evolved in our person-, in how we look at each other. They don't see me as a kid anymore. And I see them, obviously, as my parents, who I respect, but – and I think my idea of and understanding of their perspective has changed also, so respect means a different thing now than it did before. So that's, I think, where the – the differences come from. So I feel more comfortable – not challenging them, but expressing my ideas, and I think I've – part of college is you get better at being more articulate and expressing your ideas in a different way. So they respect that and they understand that, so it's easier to talk to them as adults than it was, obviously, before. (Anthony Benson)

It was obvious from talking to Anthony and his mother that they had a relationship built on mutual affection and respect. Students mentioned a number of times that their parents were their “friends,” and that they had a “relationship among equals.”

While positive sentiments about the parent-child relationship and how it has evolved were the norm for this study, in a few cases, students indicated that the relationship they had with their parents had remained distant or become more strained since coming to college. For example, Brian Kind, who was intentionally trying to separate himself from his parents, talked about how his relationship with his parents was distant, especially with his father. He said,

I still love them both very much, but – it's still where it's kind of more of a – affectionate bond, with my mom, and my dad's, you know, still kinda more like, “I'll like talk to you and like still, you know, be your son,” but like it's more of a kinda distant thing. I think it's more in practice, of things that I tell them...or how much I like see them. (Brian Kind)

Some students talked about decisions they had made about their futures that were not received well by their parents, and the strain that had caused on their relationships. While the participants in my study spoke, overwhelmingly, about their “strong” or “close” parent-child relationship, it is important to note that not all participants had similar parent-child relationships.

5.3 STUDENT AND PARENT PERSPECTIVES ON STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

A major component of the interview protocols for both parents and students focused on the growth of the students since they had been enrolled in college and the contributing factors to that growth. Many of the students’ and parents’ perspectives on student growth during college were similar, including students’ growing confidence and independence and gaining new perspective on themselves and the broader world.

5.3.1 The Student Point of View

As junior and senior students, the participants all had numerous stories regarding how they had changed since starting college. While the student participants all talked about their development very differently, they largely referred to areas where they had developed in confidence, independence and maturity, thinking of others before themselves, and building independent views of the world and themselves. Many students talked about how their increasing

confidence in their chosen majors, groups of friends, and in themselves in a broad sense had resulted in increasing independence and maturity. While the students routinely used terms such as “self-confident,” “independent,” and “mature” to describe their own development, their perceptions of these terms took many forms. Some students equated maturity and independence, meaning that their growing sense of independence since they were away from home and their parents’ control resulted in maturity.

A number of students referenced changes in how they viewed themselves as a part of their development. For example, students talked at length about their development in terms of establishing independent views of the world and how they would approach their own futures. This type of development was vitally important in how students approached decision making and the expression of their own internal voices. Christina Andrews talked about becoming more independent from what others think she should do. She spoke of becoming less competitive during college because she was no longer interested in what others may think of her, or in competing with others. When asked to explain this change, she said,

I think a big change just over – overall – from high school to now, including the past couple years is I'm much less competitive now than I was at the beginning. I think I've kind of come to this realization that, for me at least, like the success that I want in life is not –I don't want success by other people's terms. I want to do what I want to do to make myself happy and that was kind of a big change, whereas in high school it was very much like, you know, pick the best school you can....apply to all these scholarships...do everything you can to get to the top...whereas now it's much – it's like I'm gonna pick the school that I – where I want to be for personal reasons, for grad school...it's not that I don't care about whether or not I succeed. It's just more I guess intrinsically motivated, I guess, more so than worrying about being at the top from everyone else's perspective.
(Christina Andrews)

Christina continued to speak about how this change had really emerged over the last year of her college career and as she began to make more independent decisions, some in opposition to her

parents. A major turning point for many students was beginning to make plans for their futures without their parents' input, such as deciding to change majors or getting engaged. They saw their separation from the opinions of others as a product of maturity through these experiences and a sign that they were developing their own independent ideas about the world and themselves.

Other students, when asked to describe what their growing maturity looked like, talked about gaining new perspectives on both themselves and their relationships with the world around them. They talked about seeing the world differently and changing their personal world views as they progressed and developed through college. This was especially important for the students' continued development of internal foundations for decision making. As the students worked to critically think and evaluate the world around them, and their specific roles within that world, they further defined their internal voices and meaning making structures. Specifically, Nathan Voren and Anthony Benson explicated on their growth in critical thinking and the opening of their minds to diverse points of view. Nathan Voren talked about how the college environment and his studies opened his eyes to new ideas and the diversity of the world. He said that during college he had, "become more aware of the world," and that he was, "very, very much in a bubble...in high school." Anthony Benson, also, talked about how he was starting to critically approach the world and the role that thinking more deeply had on helping him to develop his views and belief structure. When asked about this change in how he thinks, he said,

I think about things a lot more critically and I can understand them a lot more deeply and um, I have a lot better perspective on things...I'm able to – to step back and look at things a little more stoically and not get as emotional about decisions and observations and people in general and relationships and all that.
(Anthony Benson)

While Anthony Benson and Nathan Voren spoke of their development of critical thinking to the world outside of the classroom, additional students talked about their role in the larger world, and how they focused on considering others before themselves. These students talked about the importance of thinking about their family and friends and not being overly selfish. For example, Tina Inman talked about how her maturity was evident in how she was becoming more selfless and in how she was putting others ahead of herself. When asked about her growing maturity, she stated,

I would say I am – well, first of all, definitely more mature, in that...I'm a lot less selfish than I was before. I didn't realize how selfish I was while I was at home, thinking primarily of myself. But now I can say that I think...it's kind of inherent now to think about others before myself. (Tina Inman)

Other students talked about this in terms of how they approached decisions that could affect others involved, as well as their families, friends, and the broader society. For example, Aaron Vick and Daniel Underwood both talked about being good role models for their younger siblings, and considering that when making decisions. To these students, being less selfish and considering others before themselves, was a marker of their development during college.

The way that these students referenced becoming more critical of the world around them indicates movement toward the development of internal meaning making structures. In addition, in referencing their potential influence on the worlds around them, these students exhibited internal meaning making structures that are developing toward interdependence with the external world. While the development of critical reasoning to evaluate the world around them has helped them to become less dependent on external structures of meaning making, and to develop an internal voice for guiding their decisions and lives, their consideration of how their decisions will affect others shows that they are beginning to view the world as interdependent, a high level of development for college students. This level of development toward interdependence was

exhibited by only four students within this study, and these students did not display the necessary internal foundation to be considered as fully interdependent. It was clear that these students were still developing their internal meaning making structures, but were working to consider others in an interdependent way when making decisions.

Every student participant identified ways in which they had changed or developed while in college. Most students indicated that college had been a time of growth, reflection, and development. They could each point to specific examples of change between who they were as first-year students and who they were now as junior and senior students.

5.3.2 The Parent Point of View

When asked how their college age children had changed or grown during college, parents offered numerous answers and examples, many of which aligned with the views of their children. For example, parents affirmed that their college age children were growing increasingly more confident, that they were much more independent, and they were learning more about themselves. In addition, they talked about the role that involvement and leadership roles in clubs, organizations, and their major areas of study had all played in helping their children to become more self-confident. Many parents referenced how their children's growing confidence had helped them to grow in maturity, take responsibility in challenging situations, make independent decisions, and assert themselves inside and outside of the classroom.

Similar to the student interviews, parents also spoke about their children's changing perception of others and of the world as a sign of their development. Nicole Rice spoke of her daughter, Natalie's, development in being more accepting of others' differences. When asked to describe how Natalie had changed since coming to college, mother Nicole offered,

She was very unaccepting of individuals who were different from her. And through the past couple of years, I've seen that begin to change... she is stepping outside of her room more...she is more involved in campus activities... she's coming to that realization that...I don't have to study all the time. I can go out with my friends and I can have fun, and maybe my friends don't have to be exactly like me, that maybe associating with people that are different from me, it brings more to the relationship, that it actually helps me to grow as a person. And I think she's starting to see that. (Nicole Rice)

Nicole was not alone in noticing a greater acceptance of others and tolerance for a diversity of opinions in her daughter. Ingrid Benson, when asked about her son Anthony's growth during college, referenced something very similar, saying that "[Anthony] has become more patient, more accepting of others' ideas." Parents indicated that these changes in perception of the world and others were a product of the college environment, which provided students with an opportunity to experience new things and interact with new people, broadening their world views. Again, the presence of openness to diverse views and using critical thinking to evaluate the views of others relative to the self are vitally important developmental markers toward the development of the internal self. Both parents and students spoke of these changes in the college students and talked about how they contributed to greater self-confidence and the ability of the students to assert the self in challenging situations and decision making.

5.3.3 Contributions to Growth

Students and parents attributed development to a number of factors, including the support of friends and family, challenges in college, the college environment, and the natural evolution of growing up. When asked about what or who had contributed to their growth in college, nearly every student identified something or someone within their institution. These answers included challenges in courses that led to a broadening of the students' worldviews, support from friends

that helped them to accept who they were and build confidence, and participation and leadership positions within various campus activities and clubs that exposed the students to new ideas and helped to build self-confidence.

After speaking with students and parents about the role that the college environment had played in the students' growth during college, I asked them to reflect on the specific role that parents had played in the students' development. Overwhelmingly, students and parents, alike, spoke about support from parents. Students cited the importance of knowing that their parents supported them, especially when faced with challenges in college. Whether it was being available to listen or offering advice, many students indicated that their parents' support was a contributor to their growth.

Still, not all students could identify a way that their parents had played a role in their development. For example, when asked about how his parents had contributed to his development, Brian Kind talked about how his parents were not helpful when he was faced with challenges. He indicated that the support he received from them did not align to what he needed at the time, and that it led him to rely on friends and himself, instead of on them for support. He said,

Well...[chuckles] it's, it's kind of hard because...I don't really feel the support back, you know, 'cause they, they kinda focus more on...what I should do...and like less on just like kind of being there. (Brian Kind)

Brian spoke about how his parents did not provide the level of support that he needed, and that they were currently experiencing a time of tension because of this. While Brian saw the lack of support from his parents as an example of them not contributing to his development, the opposite is true. While most students identified ways that their parents had supported their development by focusing on positive experiences, parents contributed to their children's development through

their lack of support, as well. While not an ideal situation, by not receiving support from his parents, Brian was forced to depend on the support of others and his own internal foundation to face the challenge of changing his major and future path. This tension led him to turn to others for support, and to grow more independent.

Other students, although they acknowledged the role that their parents' support had played in their lives, indicated that being away from their parents had a strong developmental influence on their lives. For example, numerous students talked about the role that distance had played in their relationship with their parents, whether that distance be 20 minutes or several states. Students across both institutions indicated that being away from their parents' constant attention had pushed them to be more independent and to take responsibility for themselves. Christina Andrews, this distance was also instrumental in pushing her to be independent thinkers, and to not rely on her parents. She knew she had their support, and she talked at length about how much that support helped her to take on challenges and grow as a person, but she also stated that being away from her parents and being responsible for herself was a huge factor in her development toward becoming more intrinsically motivated. She talked about how she, as a college senior, is less competitive and less motivated by how others view her success than she was as a first-year student. During our talks, she recognized her former competitive nature as a product of her parents' influence. When talking about how she had changed, and how she now viewed success intrinsically rather than extrinsically, she said,

I will say I do think that [change] is partially because – or maybe not because, maybe it's not a causal relationship, but I think that is at least somehow related to the fact that I'm not under my parents' direct influence, to be honest with you, because my parents are very, like, success kind of motivator. (Christina Andrews)

For Christina, not being under her “parents’ direct influence” has allowed her to define her own successes and to develop views independently from her parents.

Parents' perspectives on how they had contributed to their children's development were similar to those of the students. Overwhelmingly, parents talked about various means of support that they had provided to their children, or ways that they taught their children to handle situations that could help them to develop. In particular, parents talked about ways that they made sure their college age children know that they have their support. For example, Steve Mason spoke about how he and his wife have provided safety and security to their daughter, Sarah, and that she knows she will always have their support. When asked how he had contributed to Sarah's growth during college, Steve Mason responded,

I think – I think we...and my wife in particular give her a solid, you know, base from which to operate, that's safe and secure. She knows she has a solid grounding, so she can do all this exploring and if something goes wrong we'll – she's got a place to return to. (Steve Mason)

Steve Mason and his wife provided a supportive environment for Sarah to grow, but also made sure that she felt safe enough to use her college years for a time of exploration. It was evident that Sarah Mason felt the same safety and security that her parents provided. When she spoke about her relationship with her parents, she did so in terms of a very open and trustful relationship, one where she knew she had her parents support at all times.

Some parents talked about intentional acts to push their children to be more independent, such as the way Karen Foster had structured her communication with her daughter, Becca, so that she was forced to make independent decisions. Similarly, Natalie Rice spoke about how she parents so that her daughter, Nicole, will be independent and able to make her own decisions. She talked at length about her parenting philosophy, stating,

My goal with all of my children attending college was for them to be independent. I've always thought that the most important lessons, while attending college do not come from a book, but are those lessons that teach you how to become independent, how to work well as a team, how to get along with others...I've tried

to make Nicole as independent as possible...I normally leave the initiation of contact up to her...when she needs help, she knows that I'm always here to reach out to...My parenting philosophy has always been that, you provide them roots to hold on to –You give the courage – you give them the courage to fly, and you give them a home to come back to when they need it. And I think that Nicole knows exactly that. We'll always be here for her, whenever she needs us, but our goal for Nicole is to be independent. (Natalie Rice)

Natalie's parenting philosophy of intentionally promoting experiences and opportunities for her daughter to exhibit independence was not unique. Other parents echoed similar sentiments of pushing their children to be more independent, while helping them to understand that they would always be there to support them.

The idea of intentionally parenting so that their children could become more independent was a common sentiment across parent interviews, and was important in the subsequent development of their children. Kelly Andrews spoke about intentional ways she had stepped back and allowed her daughter, Christina, to make her own decisions and be more independent:

The hardest thing about being a parent I think is letting them sort of make some of their own mistakes a little bit...you step in I think when –certainly if there's something, concerning, but you kind of have to let them figure it out, I guess is how I would describe it...you can – you make suggestions, but you kind of have to leave it up to them to figure it out. (Kelly Andrews)

Stepping back to allow their college age children to grow up and be independent, while providing support, was an important contribution to their children's development. While this may have contributed to why students had a difficult time identifying the role their parents played in their development, by allowing their children room to independently face challenge, parents were intentionally promoting development. Students did not acknowledge that these actions were instrumental to their development especially since students talked about their parents' contributions to development in terms of positive experiences such as support and the

sharing of valuable life lessons. In fact, no student talked about intentional ways that their parents had pushed them to be independent or contributed to their development by stepping back from their lives. However, as demonstrated in the next chapter, parents contribute to development through support, or acceptance, and also through challenge, or resistance.

5.4 STUDENT AND PARENT PERSPECTIVES ON DECISION MAKING

The final major area within the parent and student interviews addressed how the students made decisions and the role that parents played in their decision making. Students and parents both offered examples of decisions the students had made and the various processes they used to come to those decisions. However, the most striking similarity across interviews was the role that others played in the students' decision making processes. Students and parents, alike, spoke about how students solicited advice or input from others that they trusted during their decision making processes, and the role that the input would play in their decisions. When asked about who they turn to for input and why, every student talked about the importance of finding someone who they trusted to understand the situation or someone who they knew understood them as a person and would have their best interest in mind. In terms of finding someone who could understand the situation and the decision that needed to be made, students talked about turning to faculty members, friends, and college administrators most often. For example, when talking about a specific decision related to selecting sites for her student teaching, Beth Conner spoke about why she consulted with friends and faculty members instead of her parents or significant other, whom she typically consults on decisions. She spoke about the importance of consulting people who both knew her and knew the process of student teaching. Since neither of

her parents nor her significant other are teachers or have ever experienced the process of selecting preferences for student teaching, she spoke with trusted others for advice. Beth offered the following explanation,

It doesn't really help me to ask my parents, like, "What do you think?" That, I would go to someone in the education department, and see what their idea is, because they know me. My parents know me, but they don't really know how to help with that. Right? Like, in the education department, they know me and they know where I would fit. (Beth Conner)

Since Beth was having difficulty deciding where she would like to student teach, she solicited advice from trusted others about the situation, something she cited as a typical component of her decision making process.

While soliciting input from others was common to decision making for students, they spoke very differently about how they used the input they received. Many students talked about how they evaluated the input of others, and that some people's advice, like that of their parents, was more important than others. All students tended to value the input of people who fully understood the situation at hand, yet admitted to always listening to their parents' feedback, regardless of their knowledge of the subject. However, listening to parent feedback did not always translate into following it. Every student talked about how they would evaluate the input of others related to their own views when making decisions. For example, Anthony Benson talked about how he works to evaluate all feedback relative to his own ideas of how he should proceed. When talking about this process, he said,

I think I have a pretty well developed filter of, you know, listening and taking everything in and being a sponge and then sort of discerning what's best and I need this, don't need this, that's a good idea, that's a bad idea. (Anthony Benson)

Anthony's use of a "filter" to discern what feedback is helpful and how he should integrate that feedback into a final decision was a common sentiment across interviews. Students talked about

how they had worked to develop a system for evaluating the feedback of others, and that the ways they responded to others' feedback had evolved, especially during their college years. This was especially true when students talked about the role that their parents played in their decision making.

Due to the centrality of others to student decision making processes, the role of soliciting, interpreting, and integrating the input of others is foundational to the substantive theories presented in Chapter Five. Since a vital component of development, especially with respect to decision making, is the evaluation and mitigation of external sources of meaning, the role of others has direct implications on how students express their own internal voices through their decisions. This also related to the role that parents played in decision making, since all students talked about the high value that they place on the input of their parents.

5.4.1 The Role of Parents

Similar to the role that parents played in student development, students and parents both talked about the importance of parent support when making decision. Additionally, students and parents talked about the role of feedback and advice on decisions the students were making. For students, this advice was valued more highly than advice from friends and mentors. Many students talked about how their parents always had their best interest at heart, and that parents know the student "even better than I know myself" (Bonnie North). Even though this did not always result in the student enacting the parent's advice, many students spoke about listening to their parents as a sign of respect. For example, Nicole Rice talked about the role of respect when she said, "I always listen to (my parents) and I try to respect them, but I just kind of say, "Like, I know this is what you want, but that's not what I want." So, while she is respectful in listening to

her parents, it does not mean that she blindly follows their advice. The role of the parent in providing feedback is an important element of the substantive theories presented in Chapter Five.

A number of parents also talked about how their children use the advice or input that they provide. Mary Voren talked about how her son, Nathan, typically responded to advice, when she said, “He listens. He takes it into account. Sometimes he follows it, sometimes he doesn't.” This was a common sentiment among the parents when talking about how their children used their advice. While some parents could point to specific situations where their children had enacted their advice, the majority of parents spoke about how their children either adapted the advice or did not necessarily follow it, but that they did listen to it. The only exception is in the case of Donna Bates, who freely offered advice to her daughter Veronica, and expected her to follow it. Donna spoke to me about a number of decisions that Veronica had made since choosing to attend college, and each time, she talked about the role that she played in guiding Veronica to the decision that she felt was best for her. About this, Donna said,

I find when I let her think it's more her decision, let her talk it out, and then just give some pointers then she doesn't butt heads as much...so you just kind of guide them without them knowing. (Donna Bates)

Donna continued by telling me that Veronica may think that she makes her own decisions, but that she guides her important decisions to make sure they are made correctly. It is important to note that Donna's perception of her role in her daughter's decision making exemplifies the strongest control out of all parent participants, and was atypical within this study.

Most parents talked about how their children were capable of making independent decisions, and that they saw their role as one of support. This was especially true for Maggie North who talked about the way her daughter, Bonnie, typically turns to her for help through

important decisions. When I asked her how she perceived her role in Bonnie's decision making, Maggie said,

Well, because we have a good relationship, we can talk about things...I do try to give her as much information, I guess that's what I try to do – And then let her make the ultimate decision, or give her – you know, talk about experiences that I've had...I'm not pressuring her into anything. It's ultimately going to be...what she wants to do. Not what I want to do and not what I'm doing, so –I just try to stay background. (Bonnie North)

The idea of providing information to help their children to make their own independent decisions was a sentiment shared by many parent participants. By listening to their children, asking questions to initiate deeper thinking, and helping them to define a path that will lead to a decision, all without imposing their own views, parents not only supported their children through decision making processes, but also supported their development of internal ways of knowing.

Overall, parents perceived their role in their children's decision making as one of support in helping them to make independent decisions. Many parents talked about helping their children to make sense of the situation, but not inserting themselves or their views into the decision, unless asked. While some parents talked about offering advice, many of these parents talked about how their children listened to the advice, but did not always enact it. Again, the role of the parent in decision making is of central importance to the substantive theories presented in Chapter Five.

5.4.2 Summary

In this chapter, I presented detailed context to the student and parent participants in my study. This included their specific characteristics, their relationships, and also a description of their experiences relative to the major areas within my study of student development in

college, student decision making, and the perceived role of the parent in development and decision making. Overall, students' and parents' views were aligned with each other, and both parties detailed similar experiences of the major areas within this study. The details within this chapter lay the foundation for the substantive theories that I present in Chapter Five, which detail how students make decisions and the role that parents play in student development and decision making.

6.0 SUBSTANTIVE THEORY

Self-authorship (Baxter Magolda, 2001; Kegan, 1994) reflects the use of an internal orientation: it is the capacity to internally define one's beliefs, identities, and social relations by using one's own voice to critically choose from multiple possibilities. As Baxter Magolda (2004) has pointed out, an internal orientation is important because these developmental capacities are needed for students to achieve 21st century collegiate goals...Although developing an internal orientation is consistent with many collegiate learning goals, it is not prevalent in U.S. college populations (Baxter Magolda, 1992; King & Kitchener, 1994; Perry, 1970), perhaps owing to strong socialization toward authority dependence in adolescent life and schooling or to strong ties to parents and peers that discourage decision making that is internally grounded.

(King, Baxter Magolda, Barber, Kendall, Brown & Lindsay, 2009)

The purpose of this study was to generate theory to address ideas of college student development and decision making in an effort to extend Baxter Magolda's theory of self-authorship in relation to the role of parents. The study focused on how college students come to the decisions that they make and the role that parents play in the decision making process and college student development. In this chapter, I provide substantive theory to address these areas, and offer an extension of Baxter Magolda's theory of self-authorship. Substantive theory is described by Charmaz (2006) as theory that is context-specific, not generalizable, and is based on real world phenomena. In this case, the theories that I present within this chapter are consistent with Charmaz's description. It is important to remember that these theories are developed from the specific contexts and realities of the participants within my study, and that

these contexts should be considered when thinking about the theories in relation to other contexts of college students and their parents.

6.1 GROUNDED THEORY TERMINOLOGY

To present the substantive theories, I use Charmaz's (2014) terminology to describe the tenets of theories built through constructivist grounded theory methods. In the following section, I present an overview of these terms to help guide the reader through the subsequent theories. In addition, Figure 1 illustrates the relationships of the terms I use to describe the different levels of my substantive theories. Each term builds upon the next to fully develop a theory. For example, *properties* are the defining characteristics of *categories*; *concepts* are the most theoretically important categories; and the *core concept* is the single unifying idea that the theory seeks to address. This relationship is illustrated in Figure 1.

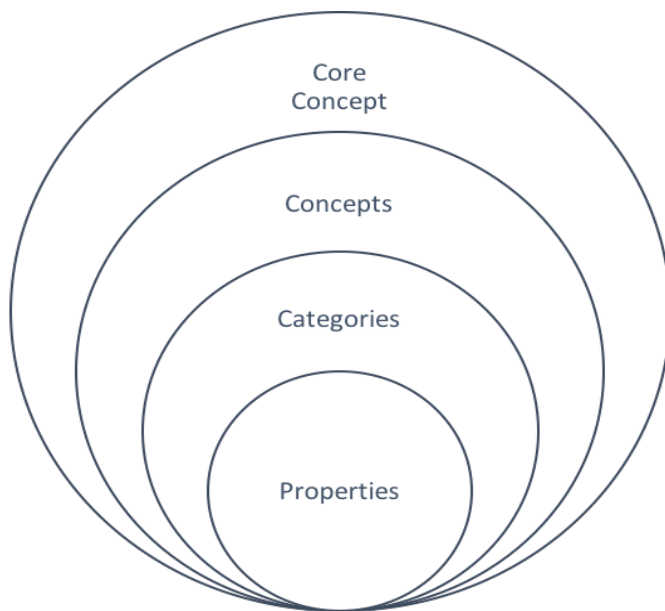


Figure 1. Relationship of Grounded Theory Terminology

Property. Properties are the characteristics that define each category and concept. The properties of a category are established directly from the analyzed data and the multiple levels of coding. The properties describe the category as well as account for how the category may be different and change in relation to other categories.

Category. Categories are chosen among codes for having increased significance to the study and theory being developing. Codes are elevated to the level of category based on their ability to describe common ideas within the data. After categories are elevated, the researcher works to describe clearly the underlying properties and functions of the categories. Categories with the most theoretical significance are elevated to concepts within the theory being developed.

Concept. Concepts form the foundation of theory building. Concepts are “abstract ideas that account for data and have specifiable properties and boundaries” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 342). They are typically created inductively and developed abductively in relationship to other concepts and categories within the data. Concepts provide greater understanding of what is being studied and contribute to the development of the overall core concept of the theory. In constructivist grounded theory methods, concepts and categories often take the form of processes and activities due to the focus on capturing how individuals relate to the world. In this way, categories elevated to the level of concepts can also take the role of the central processes of the theory.

Core Concept. In constructivist grounded theory methods, the core concept is the theoretical concept with the greatest amount of significance. There are two ways to arrive at a core concept. The first way is to elevate a concept within the theory to become the primary core of the theory, while the second involves the development of a broader concept that can unify and

explain the other concepts within the theory. For this study, I developed the core concepts for both theories as broad unifying concepts.

6.2 THEORY#1 – THE EXPRESSION OF SELF IN STUDENT DECISION MAKING

Much of this study focused on understanding how college students come to the decisions that they make. While the students spoke about a number of different approaches to decision making, such as the use of pro-con lists, doing research to gain all possible information before coming to a decision, and considering the effect that each decision could have on themselves and others, one common sentiment emerged from all participants; the role of others. Every student, whether they avoided or embraced decisions, used lists or flow charts, spoke about soliciting information from others. When talking with the students about specific decisions, I asked them to elaborate on the role that others played in their decision making, and who they were most likely to turn to for advice and support when making decisions. Examples of people who students typically turned to for input in their decision making included parents, siblings, godparents, faculty members, college administrators, friends, and significant others. In order to orient the reader to the terms unique to the development of theory in grounded theory methods and their specific use within this theory, I present a general overview of the terms and their relationships to one another in Figure 2

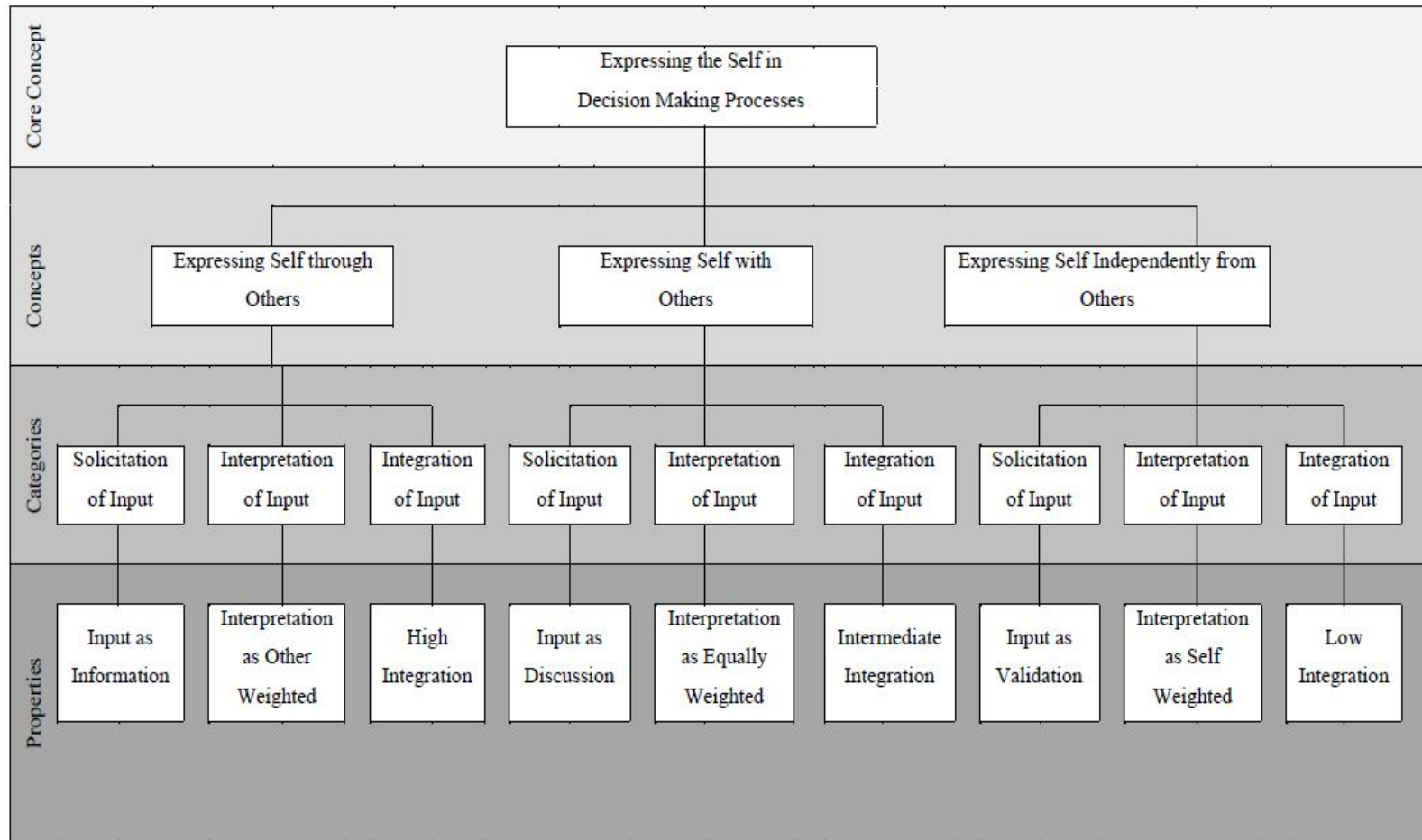


Figure 2. Expressing the Self in Decision Making Processes

Due to the role that others played in the students' decision making processes, and the discussions that addressed motivations for soliciting input from others as well as techniques for interpreting and integrating the input of others, I have identified one predominant core concept for the development of substantive theory addressing the decision making of college students: *Expressing the Self in Decision Making Processes*. This core concept serves to unify the three concepts that describe ways of expressing the self: *Expressing Self through Others*, *Expressing Self with Others*, *Expressing Self Independently from Others*. These three categories are defined by three categories that explain the process of how students come to express the self. The three concepts that inform how students come to express the self include: *Soliciting Input from Others*, *Interpreting Input from Others*, and *Integrating Input from Others*. While these categories are tightly coupled, each consists of unique properties that contribute to ways students work to express the self in decision making processes. I further explicate each of these areas in the following sections.

6.2.1 Core Concept: Expressing the Self in Decision Making Processes

As mentioned previously, there are two ways to arrive at a core concept. For this study, I developed the core concept of expressing the self in decision making processes as a broad unifying concept for the three defining concepts within my theory. The idea of expressing the self is the common unifying thread throughout this theory, as well as the link to the second theory of the role of parents in college student development, which I present later in this chapter. Throughout my study, the role and negotiation of the influence of others played a prominent part in how students approached decision making. While students talked about a number of ways that they may analytically approach decisions, each student talked at length about the role of others,

how others factored into their decisions, and how they worked to find an independent voice while surrounded by others freely offering advice and opinions.

A number of students referenced the evolution of how they approach decisions and the input of others. Many students talked about learning to evaluate the advice of others relative to their own thoughts to make an informed decision that isn't fully dependent on the thoughts of others. For example, Daniel Underwood spoke about how he responds differently to input from others now than he did in the past. In addition to gaining confidence in making independent decisions before asking for the input of others, he also talked about changes to how he approaches advice when he does receive it. Daniel talked about this change when he said,

In the past, I would take advice from others and like use it a lot...now, I use my own like gut instinct a lot more, my own personal experience a lot more, than I take input from others. I'll definitely use input from others, but I don't weight it as heavily as, as I used to. (Daniel Underwood)

As students develop through college, they learn to express the self in making decisions and can exhibit a decision making process that is more internal than external. This corresponds to feeling confident in independently thinking about situations, possibly to the extent of making an independent decision, before soliciting input from others. It also is characterized by a reduced weight placed on the input of others relative to the self, and a final decision that is more fully integrated with the self than with the views of others.

Arguably, the most important development that must occur when moving from external to internal decision making processes is negotiating the input of others external to the self. This is congruent with Baxter Magolda's (1997) theory of self-authorship, where emerging adults work to evaluate the views of others in order to develop their own personal, internal voices. The three defining concepts of this theory illustrate how students expressed the self. These concepts

were all differentiated by how students approached the categories that characterized the concepts; the solicitation, interpretation, and integration of input.

6.2.2 Concept: Expressing the self through others.

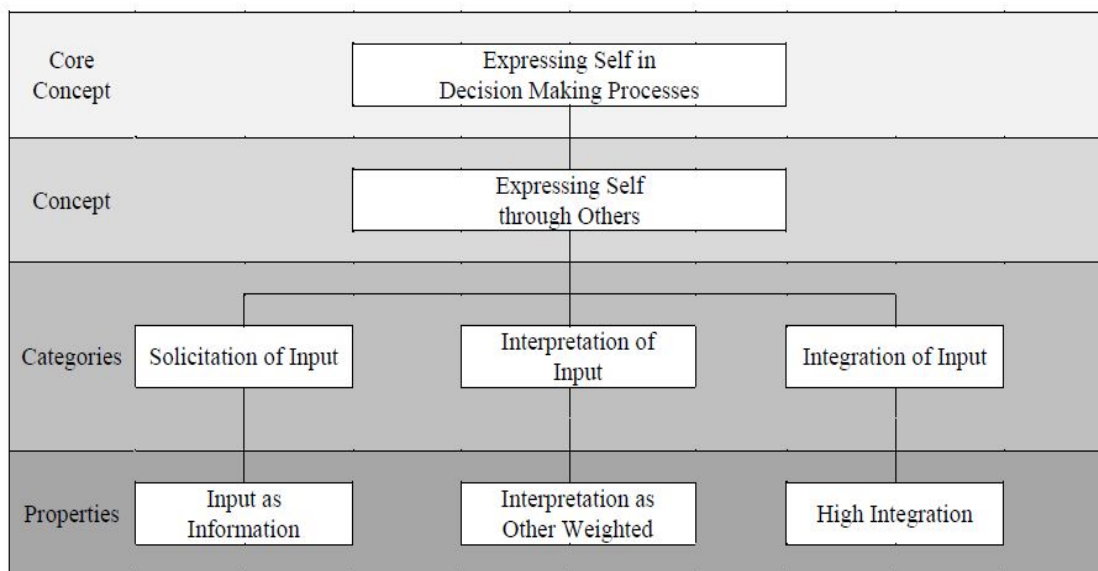


Figure 3. Expressing Self through Others

The first concept is expressing self through others. Students who exemplify this concept of expressing self, solicit input before independently thinking about the situations they are facing. In addition, the interpretation and integration of the input they receive is highly dependent on what others have offered. Therefore, while these students may claim to make independent decisions, their thought processes are clouded with the thoughts of others, which ultimately results in their expressing of self through others. Students expressing the self through others were the most dependent on the input they received from trusted others when making decisions. These students consulted with others as the first step in their decision making processes. Before devoting any independent thought to the situation, the students would seek

input in the form of information, opinions, and advice from people that they trusted to understand the situation or to know them well. These students then heavily weighted the feedback of others in relation to their own thoughts on the situation, interpreting all information through the lens of others. When integrating the input of others and their own thoughts to make a final decision, they depended on the thoughts of others and their decision reflected the information that they gathered at the beginning of the decision making process. Rarely did students exhibit decisions that were consistent with their own independent thinking.

To better explicate expressing self through others when making decisions, the following sections describe this relative to students who employ different properties of the three categories of soliciting input, interpreting input, and integrating input. It is important to remember that the categories of each concept remain constant, but the differences emerge in the properties of each category. Therefore, each concept is defined by the same three categories, with different properties. This is illustrated in Figure 2, which shows the theory, as a whole. In addition, Figure 3 illustrates the particular properties that define the categories for expressing the self through others. In this section of the overall theory, students solicit, interpret, and integrate input in a way that leads them to express the self through others.

6.2.2.1 Category: Soliciting input from others; Property: Input as information.

Soliciting information refers to the motivations that students have for asking for the advice, thoughts, and opinions of trusted others. *Students who consulted with trusted others* from the beginning of their decision making processes, talked about the importance of gathering as much information and feedback as they could gather before making a decision. This solicitation of input occurred before the student had devoted independent thought to the situation,

and well before a decision had been reached. Of all motivations for soliciting information from others, students who employed this approach were the most intentional about who they sought for input. Typically, students would solicit information from those whom they trusted to understand the situation, and could provide expertise in a specific area related to the decision that needed to be made.

Leah Volt demonstrates the solicitation of input for information when she talks about deciding to pursue the opportunity of staying at MAU for a fifth year to complete a Bachelor's of Philosophy. When the idea was originally brought to her attention by one of her academic advisors, she immediately consulted her other academic advisors, the principal investigator in the research lab where she worked, her research mentor, the dean of the honors college, as well as her friends and significant other. About this particular decision, Leah said that in the beginning of the process, "it's a lot of talking to people and seeing how much of what I want to do is feasible, and then kind of working from there." During our talks, Leah spoke extensively about gathering exhaustive information and feedback from trusted others to inform her decision making.

Other students talked about gathering as much information as possible when initially faced with a decision. For example, when deciding what she would do after graduating, Veronica Bates talked with career counselors and trusted others about possible opportunities. When making the decision, Veronica talked about using the feedback she gained from friends, faculty members, and college administrators about what she should do with her future. She described this process, saying

I actually went and contacted (the counselor) from the wellness center and, she let me come in and I talked with her about her decision, what she wanted to do in all of that, how she got there. She gave me some suggestions for programs and I also contacted the student affairs part of it – so I went and talked to my residence hall

director and she told me her side of the story, what she did, how she got to where she is, what I could do. And then I looked at both of them and I said, okay, I like all of these aspects, now what can I do, how can I form that into one? (Veronica Bates)

This example from Veronica shows the importance she placed on gathering as much information and advice about future opportunities as she could before she made a decision. She talked about this solicitation of input as the first step in her decision making, and that after she had gained information, she applied her own thoughts to the situation. Not only did she consult trusted people who hold these positions to talk to them about their experiences, but she asked for their feedback on whether the field could be a good fit for her. She was interested in practical information related to degree programs and necessary qualifications, as well their assessments of her own capacity for pursuing the career path. In this way, she did not use her independent voice to decide what she wanted to do, but rather used the advice of others to craft her decision.

When deciding to which medical schools she would apply, Bonnie North gathered information on a wide range of schools and programs. After feeling overwhelmed at the prospect of applying to all of the programs, and the possibility of being rejected by many of them, she asked her family, friends, and mentors to help her to limit the list and provide their input about which programs would be good for her to pursue. She was particularly interested in feedback from her friends, family, and mentors about her qualifications for each of the programs. Identifying people who would give her honest feedback was important to her, because she did not want to waste time applying to programs where she may not have been a competitive candidate. About this process, she commented,

It makes me feel, like, supported, that they – they can tell me the truth. Um, I guess even my friends and my boyfriend are the same. It's nice to know that they can tell me the truth. I mean, the truth hurts sometimes, but – so when they say, well...I don't think you'd be competitive enough for this, yeah, it kind of hurts,

but I know – then I realize, yeah, okay, that is the truth and I'm glad that they can tell me the truth and not have to, kind of shelter me. (Bonnie North)

Bonnie continued by saying that she likes to get input from others when making a decision, and that she makes sure to find people that she trusts to solicit feedback when making important decisions. She talked about the possibility that others, especially her parents may know her better than she knows herself, and values their feedback as an important part of her decision making processes. This is exemplified when she says that when they provide her with input during her decision making process, it can hurt, but she will realize that it is the truth. In this way, she is not only looking for information to help her to make a final decision, but looking for others' advice and opinions on what she should do. By "realizing" that others are right, she is giving greater weight to external voices than to her own internal voice.

Students who solicited input from others in order to inform their decision making process consistently relied on the input of others to make a decision. After they had reached a point of information saturation, they evaluated all input and made a final decision. Interestingly, those who solicited input for the purpose of gathering information not only looked to trusted others for information on the situations they were facing, but also others' opinions about their capacities to pursue various paths. Students soliciting others in order to gather information were interested not only in gaining expertise related to her situation, but also advice on what those trusted others thought the decision should be. In this way, students who were motivated to solicit input from others before independently thinking about the decision and the possible outcomes faced difficulty in taking ownership of the decisions that they made, and in resisting unsolicited external influences when making decisions. They chose to listen to others' voices and opinions before their own, which then heavily influenced their own thinking and subsequent decisions.

These trusted others included their parents. All students who employed this motivation for soliciting input from others also talked about the high level of control that their parents attempted to take over their decisions. This was especially the case for Leah Volt and Veronica Bates, who indicated that they turned to their parents for advice before making decisions, and typically followed their parents' advice.

6.2.2.2 Category: Interpreting input from others; Property: Input as other weighted.

After soliciting and gaining information from trusted others, students interpreted the input in relation to their own thoughts on the situation. It is important to remember that the category of interpreting input from others is tightly coupled with the category of soliciting input from others. Since students within this concept express their self through others, they tend to trust and value the thoughts and opinions of others more than their own thoughts. Therefore, when interpreting input they have received from others, they placed more value on others' thoughts than on their own. In addition, due to the timing of the solicitation of input from others, before employing independent thought processes, often students' independent thinking was clouded by the established feedback they had received from others.

When students who expressed self through others talked about decisions they had made, they had difficulty separating their personal thoughts from the input they had gained from others. For example, when asked to describe their decisions and the processes that they used, students did not use language that would indicate any personal ownership of the decision making process or the ultimate decision. These students tended to talk about the decision in relation to other's opinions, such as when Laney Quirk was faced with a decision on where to spend her holiday break. When I asked her about the decision and how she processed the situation, she said she

asked a number of people what she should do. She described that information gathering as follows,

My mom's like, "Go, that'll be fun," and my dad's like, "No, your grandparents will be upset," which I'm interpreting as my dad saying he doesn't want me to go...So then immediately after I hang up from my dad, I call my grandparents... Even though, (my dad) said, "Oh, your grandparents are gonna be upset," and then I called my grandma and she's like, "Go, that'll be so much fun, you're only young once," and then, like, my grandma was very obviously not upset, I still felt bad, like, saying, "Oh, yeah, I'll go."
(Laney Quirk)

Not once in our discussion did Laney Quirk reference what she wanted to do, or any independent thought she had given to the situation. Like those who place greater value on the input of others than on their own internal voices when interpreting input, Laney's decision was based on her parents and grandparents' opinions. Only when her grandmother told her to go did she make a decision to travel during her holiday break.

When talking about the decision to pursue a fifth year of college to complete a Bachelor's of Philosophy, Leah Volt talked about the opinions of others far more than she talked about what she wanted or how the decision would ultimately affect her. Throughout our discussions, she referenced the decision by talking about how others, such as her advisors, significant other, and parents, framed the situation, and very little about how she viewed the decision that she needed to make. When we specifically talked about how she was processing all of the information she had received and how she was thinking about the decisions, she admitted that she "frame(s) what I do around what everyone else wants," and that when she is faced with input from others that is different than what she thinks, "It typically means that I follow (others)." In addition, when talking about taking the views of others into consideration, Veronica Bates spoke of how, when she thinks about a decision that needs to be made, she has, "already heard (others') opinions on

something and that's still like in my mind.” This exemplifies the idea of weighting the input of others relative to the self when interpreting input. These students struggled to identify their own wants and voice due to the level of emphasis they placed on the thoughts of others.

6.2.2.3 Category: Integrating input from others; Property: High integration.

The final category, integrating input from others takes into account the amount of influence that others’ input has on the final decision. For those who express self through others, there is a high level of integration of the views of others relative the the thoughts of the self. Again, this category is tightly aligned to the previous two categories. Students expressing self through others solicit information early in the decision making process, before exhibiting independent thought, which subsequently leads to high value placed on that input relative to the clouded views of the self. This information from others then takes precedence over the self in the integration of input toward the final decision. This is evident by the amount of influence the thoughts of others have in the resultant decision.

In remaining true to the students who exemplify each of the categories and properties involved in expressing self through others, I revisit the decision making processes of Leah Volt, Veronica Bates, Bonnie North, and Laney Quirk, as examples of high integration of the input of others. Leah Volt’s decision about pursuing a fifth year of study was heavily influenced by the thoughts and opinions of those she consulted for information. While Leah was able to find her own internal voice and express in our first interview that she wanted to pursue the fifth year opportunity, the situation had changed by our next interview, a little over a month later. Leah’s motivation for gaining as much information as possible was due to negative repercussions of previous decisions she had made. Leah’s parents were very active in her life, and in her decision making, and she wanted to gather as much information as possible in an effort to show her

parents that she made an informed decision. After her information gathering and interpretation was complete, she told me she was leaning toward pursuing the fifth year opportunity. Yet, at our second meeting, she told me that after consulting with her parents and advisors, again, they voiced opposition, and she decided against the fifth year opportunity and pursuing a Bachelor's of Philosophy. While she had tried to preference her self over the thoughts and opinions of others, the integration of input resulted in a decision that was highly influenced by others. Ultimately, about this particular decision making process, Leah said that when her parents and some advisors voiced their opposition she, "started having to reframe things and rework things." The opposition her parents and some advisors voiced was enough for her to preference their thoughts over her own. In reference to her parents' opinions, she said that, "as much as I value my own independence and my ability to make my own choices, my parents' support is one of the most important things to me." The lack of support that she received from her parents resulted in a decision that was heavily influenced by the feedback of others.

The same characteristics of decisions were true for other students who express self through others. As in the cases of Laney Quirk and Veronica Bates, whose final decisions were influenced by the views of others, students who integrate the input of others to a high level typically do not exhibit their own personal voice in the decisions that they make. When Laney Quirk decided to travel during her holiday break, she only made the decision after consulting with numerous trusted others, and taking the feedback that the majority of those people supported. Veronica Bates listened to what her counselors and trusted others suggested she do for her future, and consequently applied to one graduate school, from which she is still expecting an answer. While she says that she thinks the program is interesting and will be fulfilling, she did not apply to any other programs. The decisions made by students who express self through others

all represented high levels of influence of the thoughts and opinions of others. Interestingly, when asked if they made independent decisions, students who exhibited this type of decision making answered that they do make independent decisions. Yet, when they described their decision making processes fully, it was evident that they gave preference to the thoughts of others above their own ideas, and, consequently, made decisions that were more heavily influenced by others than by the self.

Given the highly coupled nature of the three categories involved in trusting the self to internalize decision making processes, it follows that students' decision making is highly influenced by the properties of how they solicit, interpret, and integrate input from trusted others. For students who express self through others, this concept is characterized by a high level of dependence on the input of trusted others. These students solicit information from others early in the decision making process, which affects the independent thinking process that follows. In this way, students place greater emphasis and value on the thoughts of others than they place on their own thoughts when interpreting the input of others. This then leads to decisions that highly integrate the input of others relative to the input of the self. Ultimately, these students' expressions of self are hidden in the influence of others. While they may claim to make independent decisions, the evidence of others' influence in the resultant decisions tell a very different story.

6.2.3 Concept: Expressing self with others.

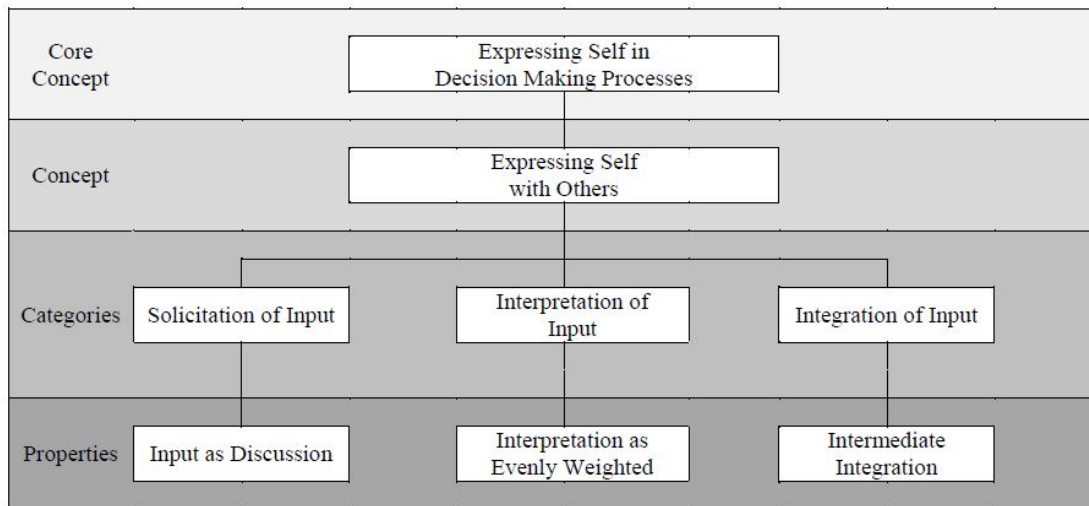


Figure 4. Expressing Self with Others

The second concept, expressing self with others, is characterized by students who solicit input after independently thinking about the situation, but before making a final decision. Therefore, their self is independent from the thoughts and opinions of others, and the students are able to interpret and integrate the input they receive alongside their own independent thoughts. This leads to the expression of self with others. The process of expressing self with others exhibits a balance in the roles others played in their decision making processes relative to the self. Students who exemplify this process consulted with trusted others only after taking time to independently consider options for the situation, yet before they had decided on one final option. These students then weighed the input of others evenly with their own personal thoughts on the situation, interpreting all information equally. When integrating the input of others and their own thoughts, the final decision exhibited characteristics of independent thought and evaluation of the thoughts of others relative to the self. While there were differences in the levels of integration of the input of others in the resultant decisions, such as students who ultimately integrated much of

the feedback, yet talked about a process that involved high levels of evaluation between others and the self, or students who ultimately trusted their own independent thoughts even though the input they received may have been contradictory, the presence of the self in the final decision was evident.

To better explicate the concept of expressing self with others when making decisions, the following sections describe this relative to students who employ different properties of the three categories of soliciting input, interpreting input, and integrating input. It is important to remember that the categories of each concept remain constant, but the differences emerge in the properties of each category. Therefore, each concept is defined by the same three categories, with different properties. This is illustrated in Figure 2, which shows the theory, as a whole. In addition, Figure 4 illustrates the particular properties that define the categories for expressing the self with others. In this section of the overall theory, students solicit, interpret, and integrate input in a way that leads them to express the self with others.

6.2.3.1 Category: Soliciting input from others; Property: Input as discussion

The second motivation for soliciting input from others was for students to test possible directions of a decision they were in the process of making. This motivation took many forms, but occurred after the students had taken time to independently think through the situation and decision they were facing. Characteristics of this motivation for soliciting information included using friends, family, and mentors as sounding boards throughout the decision making process, thinking independently about possible decisions and then asking for feedback on those possibilities, as well as soliciting input from others after reaching a point of over analysis to help define clear options for decisions that needed to be made. Students seeking input as discussion were prepared to defend the options that they had established through their period of independent

thought, but had not yet reached a final decision. In addition, they were careful to not always consult with like-minded individuals. They did not always seek acceptance, but rather looked for trusted others to challenge their thinking. Some students had established sources of input that served this purpose regardless of the situation and decision that needed to be made, while others referenced the need for people with expertise to serve as a sounding board. Many times, those who solicited input as discussion chose to talk with close family as well as mentors with knowledge of the issue to gain a variety of opinions.

Students talked about using trusted friends, family, and mentors as a sounding board when making decisions. These students all cited situations where they had established various ideas about how they would proceed through a decision, but consulted others to test their ideas and help to make sense of the situation. For example, Josh Ellis talked about consulting his parents and godmothers when making important decisions. While he spoke to me about a range of decisions, such as romantic relationships and decisions related to his major and future career, he commonly spoke about talking with his parents or godmothers to help him process what needed to be done before making his final decision. About this process, he said,

I guess technically—I never write out pros and cons lists, but...when I talk to my dad or mom or godmother, I'll be like, "Well, this is good, but this is not." And I then kinda like weigh it as I'm listening to them talk and then I'll come up with a decision. (Josh Ellis)

Using trusted others as a sounding board throughout the decision making process helped students to see other points of view that could have an effect on the decision that needed to be made. Students who relied on this type of support through decisions talked about how it helped to have the input of people who understood the situation, but were more distant from it. Therefore, others who were solicited for this purpose were not typically involved in the situation or the decision other than providing their thoughts. This was particularly important for students who saw

themselves as too close to a situation to make a decision. As was the case for Brian Kind when he was deciding to change his major. After spending time in prayer and independent thought, Brian talked with trusted others, both with knowledge and without knowledge of the specific situation, to gain a broad range of thoughts and opinions. He said that it was comforting to hear others say, “that just because you're a philosophy major does not mean that like you're doomed, you know, to be a like burger flipper for the rest of your life.” Yet, the input he received from trusted others that challenged him to fully consider all of the situation before coming to a decision were the most helpful. Students talked about the need for someone to help them to see other sides of the situation, sides that may not have been apparent without the help of others.

Additionally, students talked about relying on feedback from their friends to “help (the) thought process” (Tina Inman) when faced with important decisions. This differed from soliciting others input as a sounding board for options because students who exhibited this type of solicitation had narrowed their decision options and were looking for feedback on those options and how to proceed. Typically, students who were looking for feedback would independently determine two or three courses of action, and then consult with others about which was the best course to pursue before making a final decision. Most often, students solicited input that would challenge their thinking, asking multiple sources with different points of view to share their feedback. Sarah Mason talked about soliciting input from two particular sorority sisters because they were both “open-minded” and typically “have very different opinions.” The example of Sarah Mason shows how she sought to be challenged when making decisions, to test her ideas and gain feedback.

Students soliciting input as discussion were not only interested in testing ideas, but also in evaluating others' input alongside their own ideas to build a final decision. Similar to

soliciting input as information, students soliciting input as discussion also ask for pointed advice on what trusted others may think the decision should be. Therefore, students who express self with others will repeatedly test new ideas and options for decisions until they feel comfortable with the final decision they have made. Oftentimes, this process is a negotiation and renegotiation of independent thought and input from others. The constant testing of ideas leads to decisions made using a combination of students' internal voices and the influences of external pressures and input. Since students take the time to form initial thoughts free from external input, they are beginning to employ their internal voices to define possible options for the situation. In addition, the use of others as a point of discussion shows that these students are working to trust their internal voices, yet still require the input of others to arrive at their final decision.

6.2.3.2 Category: Interpreting input from others; Property: Input as evenly weighted.

After soliciting and gaining information from trusted others, students interpreted that input in relation to the independent thinking that they employed before soliciting others. Given the alignment of the categories of soliciting and interpreting information, it follows that students who have independently formed thoughts before soliciting information from others will place equal weight on the thoughts of others relative to their own thoughts. Therefore, when interpreting input they have received from others, they tend to trust their own voice and the thoughts of others equally, and work to make sense of the situation through a lens that is defined by the self with others.

Students who exemplify this property of interpretation talked of taking all feedback into account to interpret information that they gain from trusted others. In this way, others' input does

not necessarily receive preference over the self, but is added for evaluation alongside the independent thoughts of the self. This is not to say that every person's input received equal weight, but that they are all given an equal chance to be evaluated for integration into the final decision. For example, Anthony Benson, talked about how he typically evaluates the input he receives from trusted others. He talked about having discussion with people to gain advice and information, and that when he receives this information he uses his "filter" to make sense of the situation. About this method, Anthony offered,

I think I have a pretty well developed filter of, you know, listening and taking everything in and being a sponge and then sort of discerning what's best and I need this, don't need this, that's a good idea, that's a bad idea. (Anthony Benson)

This example of a method of interpreting input from others by offering equal opportunity for all information to be evaluated stands in stark contrast to the property of weighing the input of others above the self. Students who evaluate information from others and from the self equally speak more of the role of the self in the process. They take ownership of the interpretation process, and talk about evaluating the input of others relative to what they think is best.

Students who exemplified the concept of expressing self with others spoke of the role of gaining the input of others through discussions with them, and then stepping back to fully evaluate and interpret the information they receive relative to their own established thoughts. When Beth Conner turns to others for input in her decision making process, she treats it like a conversation, where she tells others what she is thinking, receives feedback, and further engages to determine a course of action. She described this process by saying,

I think when I'm talking to (others), it's back and forth. We think, like, "Well, there's this, and oh well, then there's this", but then I'll step away from it and still be processing it, but I'm not just taking (others' opinions) – I'm putting it with mine and trying to think it over. (Beth Conner)

This example shows the role that others play in the solicitation and interpretation process of those who express self with others. Beth is intentional about discussing her options with others in order to gain input, but then interpreting that input relative to her previously established thoughts.

Students who express self with others interpret the input of others by placing equal emphasis on it relative to their own thoughts. These students have taken the time to establish their own independent views on the situation before soliciting input from others, and this is evident in the ways that they interpret others' input as deserving of equal consideration to their own views. They do not place greater emphasis on the views of others, nor do they blindly accept what others suggest they should do. Instead, they evaluate all information equally, and work to integrate their own views and the feedback of others into their final decision. In the next section, I address how students who express self with others integrate the views of others into their final decisions.

6.2.3.3 Category: Integrating input from others; Property: Intermediate integration.

The final category, integrating input from others takes into account the amount of influence that others' input has on the resultant final decision. For those who express self with others, there is an intermediate level of integration of the views of others relative to the thoughts of the self, meaning that there is a mix of self and others' influence in the final decision. Again, this category is tightly aligned to the previous two categories of solicitation and interpretation of input. Students expressing self through others solicit information after determining their own views through independent thought, but before making a final decision. This allows for students to use the lens of an established self to work through the interpretation of others' input. In this way, the information gained from others does not take precedence over the self in the integration

of input toward the final decision. This is evident in the resultant decisions due to the obvious presence of highly interpreted feedback from others relative to the thoughts of the self. The final decisions of students expressing self with others show an integrated use of the internal voice, where others' views are respected, equally given the opportunity to be evaluated, and integrated fully into the subsequent decision.

While this category is harder to define than the preceding categories of soliciting input and interpreting input, the integration of input is exemplified in the subsequent decisions that students made. The content of the decisions is not necessarily the most important element of integration, but rather, looking holistically at the process that the students used relative to the input of others, and the resultant decision that they make. For example, Sarah Mason talked about a decision she made to travel abroad to Israel. She talked about her decision making process by saying that,

I usually try to just make decisions on my own, because I feel like I know myself well enough to know what I want. But...I'll usually get three very different opinions and then work for myself. (Sarah Mason)

For this particular decision, Sarah independently considered her options, then consulted trusted others about the opportunity. After receiving mixed feedback from her parents and friends, she took time to reflect on her options and the input from others. Ultimately, she decided to pursue the opportunity, trusting her own voice. About the final decision, Sarah said, "in my perspective, I was so ready to go." Although she faced resistance from her mother and some friends in deciding to pursue the opportunity, she carefully evaluated their concerns about safety, cost, and companionship with others, but ultimately decided that she was "ready to go" for the opportunity.

It is important to note that integrating input from others by giving equal emphasis to the self and others does not necessarily mean that the decision will always follow the self. For example, Josh Ellis spoke of the decision to move off campus and secure his own apartment. He had given careful thought to the situation, and was leaning toward moving off campus when he consulted his parents and godparents about the decision. They expressed concern that he was not financially, nor socially, ready to move off campus. After considering their feedback, Josh ultimately decided to wait one year before moving off campus. The following summer, he worked to make himself more financially secure, and to show his parents that he was ready for the move. In this decision, Josh interpreted the feedback of his parents and godparents relative to his own, deciding that they were right in their concerns. He valued their opinions, and they were able to present something that he had not thought about. Therefore, he delayed his own personal views until he could respond to the concerns of his trusted others. He talked about this process by saying that, “I don’t always listen to them,” but in this situation, they had made valid points that he knew he should consider before making his decision.

Considering the tightly aligned nature of the three categories involved in how students express self in decision making processes, how students solicit, interpret, and integrate input from trusted others play key roles in student decision making. For students who express self with others, this concept is characterized by placing equal emphasis on the input of the self and the input of others in the decision making process. Students who express self with others take into account others’ input, evaluating it alongside their own personal thoughts to present a decision that integrates the thoughts of others with the self. These students solicit information from others after they have independently determined possible options, and before making a final decision. In this way, students place emphasis and value on the thoughts of others as a means of discussion

and strengthening their resultant decision. The interpretation and integration of the input of others leads to decisions that allow the self to determine the course of action alongside input from others. Ultimately, these students' expressions of self are evident in the final decision, whether it follows the original thoughts of the self, or the interpreted and integrated input of others.

6.2.4 Concept: Expressing Self Independently from Others.

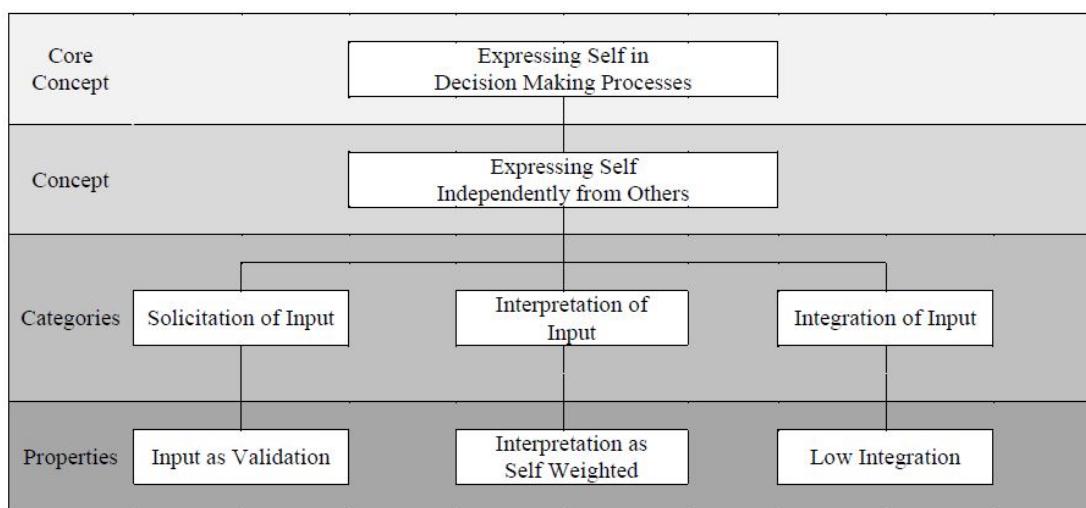


Figure 5. Expressing Self Independently from Others

The final concept, expressing self independently from others, is exemplified by students who solicit input from trusted others after thinking independently and making a final decision about the situation. In this way, they are seeking validation from trusted others, interpreting the input in relation to the decision they have already made, yet rarely integrating the feedback into the final decision that they make. Students who characterize this group express the self independently from others. Students who express the self independently from others are the least dependent on the input they received from trusted others. These students consulted with others

after thinking independently, and making an independent decision on the situation. In this way, when the students consulted with trusted others, it was as a source of validation, and not for information or as a point of discussion. Students expressing the self independently from others heavily valued their own independent thoughts and decisions when interpreting any input they received from others, typically using the feedback as a means to strengthen their independent decision. There was very little integration of the views of others into their final decisions; rarely did students change their decisions because they were invalidated by a trusted other. Instead, students would work harder to defend their decision, and move on without the support of trusted others, when necessary. To explicate the concept of expressing self independently from others, the following sections describe the properties of soliciting input, interpreting input, and integrating input that inform the concept. It is important to remember that the categories of each concept remain constant, but the differences emerge in the properties of each category. Therefore, each concept is defined by the same three categories, with different properties. This is illustrated in Figure 2, which shows the theory, as a whole. In addition, Figure 5 illustrates the particular properties that define the categories for expressing the self independently from others. In this section of the overall theory, students solicit, interpret, and integrate input in a way that leads them to express the self independently from others.

6.2.4.1 Category: Soliciting input from others; Property: Input as validation.

The final motivation for soliciting input from others while making decisions was as a source of validation after an independent decision had been reached. Students who employed this motivation for soliciting input from others did so after thinking independently about a situation and making a final decision. Students who did this did not make their decisions in a vacuum, but also did not actively consult people who were not a part of the situation for thoughts or opinions.

Students who solicited input as validation valued their established independent thoughts and did not need to gain information or test ideas with others in order to make a final decision. These students exhibited a strong view of the self.

Students who express self independently from others exhibit a high level of trust in the self to make an independent decision, which is a reason why they did not require input from others before making their decisions. Students who solicited input as validation independently considered all options, and the resultant decision was one that they believed was the best option. In this way, Daniel Underwood made the decision to accept an internship across the country from his home. Daniel talked about considering his options and knowing what would be the best for his future. He applied, interviewed, and accepted the position without consulting with others. Afterwards, he told his parents about his decision, and they were fully supportive of what he had chosen. He knew they understood that if he wanted a position in his field, that he would need to be across the country, and he also knew that they trusted him to make his own decisions. Students who solicited information as validation talked about the role that trust played in their decision making processes. They talked about knowing that others trusted them to make independent decisions, and that they didn't feel the need to consult with them because of this.

Additionally, students who express self independently from others viewed themselves as adults and fully capable of making independent decisions. In this way, they did not see the need to consult with others when making important decisions. For most students, they saw this as a transition from a time when they needed advice from others in order to confidently make decisions. This was the case for Vincent Quinn, who talked about how he no longer consults with trusted others when making decisions, nor does he ask for advice. When making decisions, he

thinks independently, spending time in prayer, and, after the decision is made, talks with trusted others, such as friends and family. For Vincent, the purpose of talking to others is,

More to inform, and not like – it's not like the snarky – like, "This is what I'm doing." It's like, "Hey, I'm just letting you know this is what I'm thinking...I just want to let you know that this is what I'm deciding to do."...it is more of an inform than an advice. (Vincent Quinn)

Vincent continued by talking about, while he is not looking for advice, he does seek validation by informing others of his decisions. He said, he talks to others about decisions he has made, “to get a fresh perspective and to pretty much validate.” This example of Vincent exemplifies the way that students expressing self independently from others employ when soliciting input from others after making a decision.

6.2.4.2 Category: Interpreting input from Others; Property: Input as self weighted.

After soliciting and gaining input from trusted others on an independently made decision, students interpreted that input in relation to the independent decision they had made. Considering the alignment of the categories of soliciting and interpreting information, it follows that students who have independently made decisions before soliciting information from others will place more weight on their own thoughts, relative to the thoughts of others. Therefore, when interpreting input they have received from others, they tend to trust their own voice, and make sense of the situation through a lens that it is defined by the self.

Students who express self independently of others spoke of using the input of others to validate their own thoughts. However, not every student who sought input for validation was supported by their trusted others. At times, these students received opposition to the decision that they had made, and were forced to interpret that input in relation to the decision that they had already made. While Nicole Rice had always felt that her parents and family trusted her to make

independent decisions, she was faced with a different reaction when she decided against graduating from college in three years. Instead, she chose to take an extra semester to take additional courses and do research. She recounted the following scene after she had made her decision.

When I told my mom that (I was staying an extra semester), she was a little bit disappointed, 'cause she was, like, I was proud of you that you could graduate in three years...but, then I talked to my sisters about it, and I was like, no, like, that's not what I want to do. I want to graduate in three and a half. That's what I'm going to do. (Nicole Rice)

This example shows the determination Nicole had to make this decision independently from the feedback of others, even her mother. When her mother voiced her opposition, she placed more emphasis on her own thoughts than on her mother's input. Her interpretation was heavily weighted toward the independent decision she had already made. Students who were invalidated by their trusted others had to interpret this response in relation to their own thoughts. Overwhelmingly, students faced with this need for interpretation used the process to further strengthen their original positions. Students rarely interpreted the input of others as equally important to their own thoughts.

In a similar circumstance, Nathan Voren made the decision to travel abroad to Israel without consulting any trusted others for their thoughts or opinions. When he had made the arrangements, and told his mother, she voiced opposition. This was not new for Nathan, who said that many of the people he trusted to consult after he had made decisions were "very good about making (him) feel guilty," about the decisions he had made. He said that these people were particularly good at bringing up "valid counterpoints," that we would inevitably consider. He talked about evaluating these counterpoints and guilty feelings in relation to the decisions that he had already made, but rarely changing his decision. This was true for his decision to travel to

Israel, as well. While he listened to, predominantly, his parent objections, and considered their points, their opinions did not factor into his final decision.

In a decision making process that slightly deviated from what I have presented thus far for students expressing self independently from others, Christina Andrews talked about how she made the decision to get married directly after she graduated. The decision was something that she had spent a great deal of time considering. After considering her options with her fiancé, she informed trusted others, including her parents and sisters that she would be getting married months after graduating from college. A number of these trusted others, including her mother, voiced concern and opposition to her plan. After this initial invalidation of her decision, Christina took into account what others were saying and consulting a number of people, including friends, priests, and ministers, about the decision that she had made. Contrary to previously discusses examples, Christina took time and effort to interpret the opposition that was voiced in the face of her independent decision, relating it to her own ideas, and integrating it into her final decision. She talked about how she was never open to the advice of others, and seldom sought it. After hearing trusted others voice opposition, she worked to think about their points of view, and reframe her decision. About this difference in how she addressed decision making situations, she said,

I would say I think I've matured a lot in how I handle (decisions) in that I'm – I'm more open – I'm more open-minded to people's advice now, if that makes sense. So I think now, generally speaking, I'm not always good at this, but now I'm good at listening to people's advice and thinking about it for myself and saying, "What parts of this do I actually need to hear?" Like, sometimes that requires humbling yourself to be like, "Okay, I need to accept that advice," or criticism, whatever it was...and then the other half of it is recognizing, okay, I know that that's something I don't want to do. Like, you're telling me to do this, but I – I know myself well enough to know that that's – that's not the way I want to handle this situation. (Christina Andrews)

In the situation and resultant decision of whether to marry directly after college, Christina did acknowledge the dissent, or what she may call “criticism,” of others, and interpreted it relative to her own thoughts and needs. She was able to speak about “humbling” herself to consider the thoughts of others, even though she had spent a great time independently thinking and making a decision on a life-changing situation. This was important to note since the role of interpretation of input from others is especially difficult to discern for those who express self independently from others. Overwhelmingly, students spoke of considering input from others after they had made their decision, but never employing others’ input into a final decision. This was not the case for Christina, nor was it the case for Aaron Vick, whose story I discuss in the coming section. Given these examples, it is evident, that the categories of interpreting and integrating others’ input are tightly coupled for students expressing self independently of others.

6.2.4.3 Category: Integrating input from others; Property: Low integration.

The final category, integrating input from others, takes into account how much of the input from others is integrated into the final decision. For those who express self independently from others, there is little to no integration of the views of others into their independently made decisions. Considering how closely aligned the three categories of solicitation, interpretation, and integration of input are with each other, it is reasonable to expect that individuals who make decision before consulting with others and heavily weight their own voice in relation the the input of others would not be influenced by that input when making a final decision. In this way, the self and the independent decision that has been made take precedence over the views of others, whether they are positive or negative. The final decisions of students expressing self independently of others show an independent use of the internal voice, where others’ views may be respected, but are rarely integrated into the final decision.

As mentioned previously, the integration of input is best exemplified in the final decisions made by the students. Again, the content of the decision is not important, but rather the process the students used relative to the input of others, and how much that input influenced the final decision. In revisiting the situation of Christina Andrews, who interpreted the dissenting input of trusted others about her plans to marry after college, the integration of that input in her final decision was minimal. She used the dissent to further inform her position, and worked to convince others that she had made the right decision, refuting many of the arguments that had posed after she had initially informed them of her decision. In the end, she will be marrying her fiancé the summer after she graduates. In this situation, even though Christina talked about listening to others' advice and humbling herself to listen to their criticism, it did not alter the decision she had initially made. Yet, while there was no direct integration of the input of others in the form of an altered decision, she did integrate the input enough to return to her thought process and talk to others for additional validation.

Similar to this, Aaron Vick talked about his decision to join a fraternity; a decision that he did not inform trusted others about until after it was made. He spoke, primarily, of his family's surprise with the decision. They questioned his reasons for joining, and did not immediately validate his decision. He listened to their concerns, and just as Christina had done, worked to further strengthen his grounding for the decision he had made. He talked about how his decision process had changed throughout college. Before coming to college, his parents were very controlling of what he did and the decisions that he made. Since coming to college and asserting his own independence in decision making, such as changing his major and joining a fraternity without consulting with friends, family, or trusted others, he feels that his decisions are his own, and that his trusted others ultimately support him. About the decisions that he makes

and the ownership that he takes over those decisions, he said, “I think every decision is my call, and if I do get pushback and I still make the decision I know they'll trust the decision.” Aaron talked about receiving pushback on some of his decisions, but never altering the final decision after considering the input of others. Therefore, he minimally integrated the input of others into his decision making, even though he did talk about considering the points that others made. Ultimately, he saw the decisions as his own to make, and did not waver from his initial decisions. Students who express self independently of others oftentimes talked about acknowledging the input of others, and taking it into account, but this rarely resulted in an integration of that input into the independently made decision.

The coupling of how students solicit, interpret, and integrate input from trusted others is particularly salient in students who express self independently from others. For these students, decision making is characterized by placing high emphasis on the input of the self and little emphasis on the input of others. These students solicit information from others after they have independently made decisions, and typically for the purpose of validation. The interpretation and integration of the input of others is minimal, with final decisions typically mirroring the initial decision. Ultimately, these students’ expressions of self are exemplified in the final decision, which is typically free from the input of others.

6.2.5 Summary

Expressing the self in decision making processes is a complex way to describe the role that the input of others plays in the decision making structures of college students. While students within my study referenced a number of analytical ways of approaching decisions, such as using pro-con lists, or flow charts to depict outcomes of all possibilities, the overwhelming

sentiment across all types of decisions was that they solicited the input of others at some point in the decision making process. The motivation that they used to solicit information directly coincided with the timing of the solicitation during the decision making process. The motivation for soliciting input from others also had a direct relationship to how students subsequently interpreted and integrated that input when making a decision. Finally, these categories all informed the way that the students expressed their own personal voice, or the self, through decisions they had made. For those students who express self through others, the input of others played a primary role in their decision making, informing the path of their decisions from the beginning, and was valued higher than the self during the processes of interpretation and integration. In contrast to this, students who express self independently from others only consulted others after they had made an independent decision, and rarely placed value on the thoughts of others when interpreting and integrating the input of others. Striking a balance between these two extremes, students who express self with others, consulted with trusted others after independently determining possible outcomes for their decision, and evaluated the input of others equally to their own voice, integrating the thoughts and views of others into their final decisions.

6.3 THEORY #2 – PARENTS AND COLLEGE STUDENT DEVELOPMENT: RESPONSE AND COUNTER-RESPONSE TO THE SELF

While students talked about the role that their parents' input played in their decision making processes, parents influenced decision making processes in a far more complex way, related to their response to their students' independent ideas and decisions. The role that parents

played in supporting students to express their independent thoughts and the development of an independent self had a powerful connection to the expression of self students exhibited in the decision making processes. In chapter four, I described the role that students and parents perceived parents to have on college student development. This included being a source of support, teaching valuable life lessons, and providing a secure base from which to explore life. While these are all vitally important, and perceived to be the most important parent roles to development by the parents and students within this study, the influence of parents on college student development related to decision making proved to be more complex. The parent figure holds an important role in providing support or challenge for the college student in a time of semi-autonomy and insecurity.

To better describe this, Figure 6 shows the process of parent response and student counter response to assertions of the independent self in decision making. This process begins with a student assertion of self. This then leads to a parent response, which results in a student counter response, and a subsequent outcome on the development of the student self. To better explicate this process, I examine each step of the process individually in the forthcoming sections. I then relate this theory to the previously delineated theory of college student decision making to further examine the specific role of the parent in college student decision making processes.

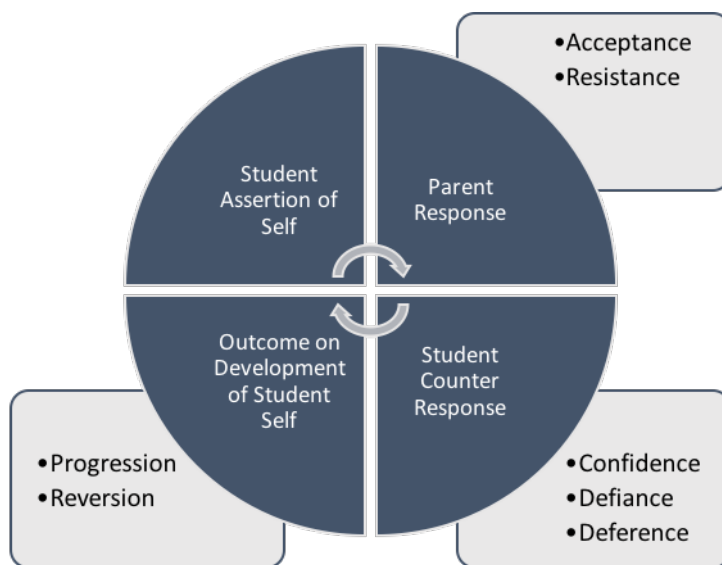


Figure 6. Process of Parent Response and Student Counter Response

6.3.1 Core Concept: Developing the Self through Response and Counter-Response

To describe this theory of the role of parents to college student development, I use the same constructivist grounded theory terminology I introduced in the beginning of this chapter. Similar to the theory of decision making described earlier in this chapter, the theory explaining the role of parents in college student development as it relates to decision making consists of a single core concept. The core concept of *Developing the Self through Response and Counter-Response* speaks to the role that parents play in the development of a student's sense of self. Again, using the terminology of constructivist grounded theory, the core concepts serves to unify the three defining concepts that contribute to the development of the self: *Asserting the Independent Self*, *Responding to the Self (Parents)*, and *Counter-Responding to the Parent Response (Students)*. In this progressive theory, students first assert the self, then parents respond to the assertion, and students counter respond to the parents, resulting in an outcome on the development of the self. These processes repeat to contribute to how the student develops a sense

of self. Figure 7 illustrates the relationship between these areas of the theory. Since all of these processes are tightly coupled, I explain the concepts and their individual properties in relation to each other to illustrate the full cycle of developing the self through response and counter-response.

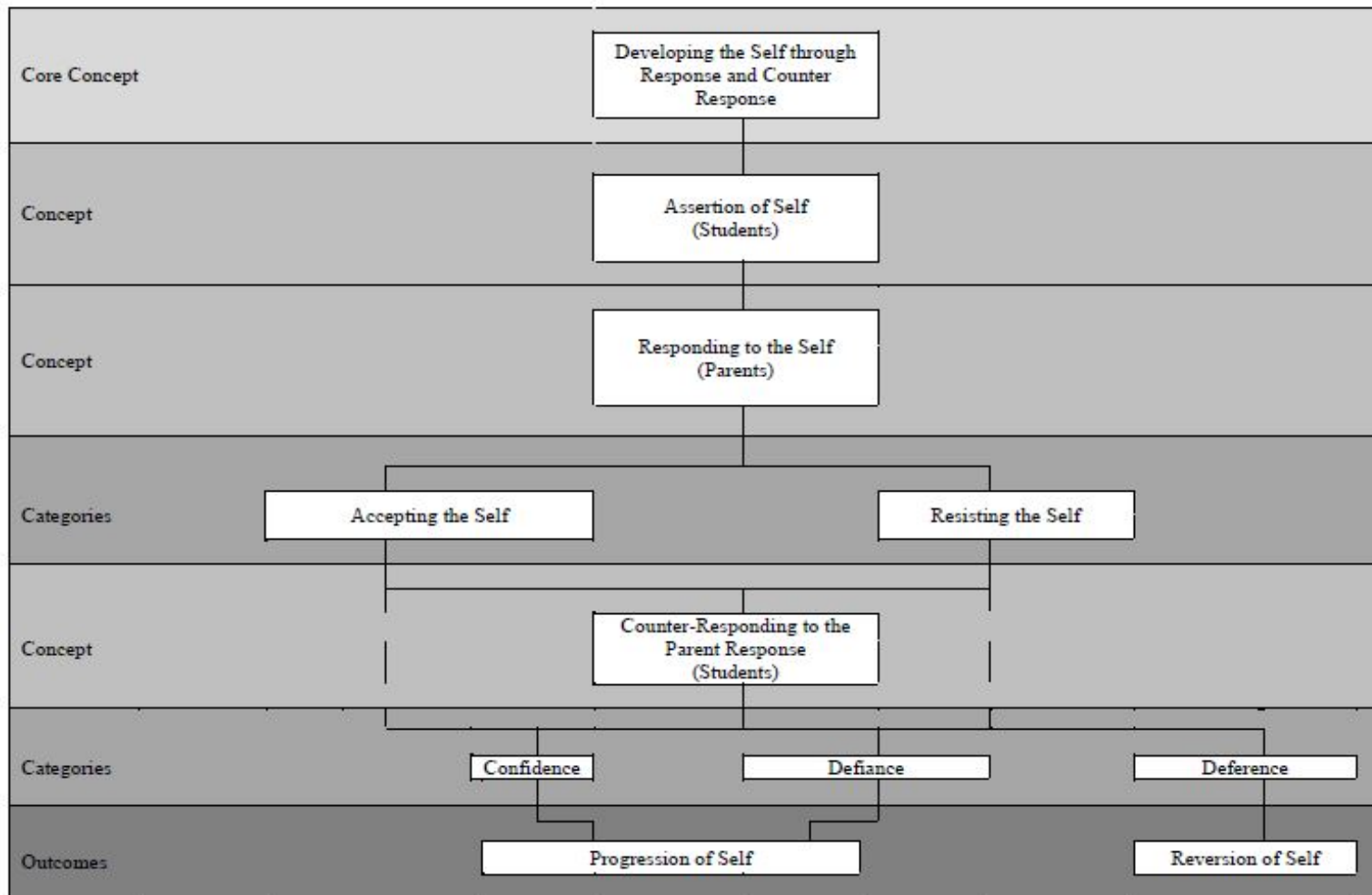


Figure 7. Developing the Self through Response and Counter Response

6.3.2 Concept: Asserting the Independent Self

The first concept of developing the self is to test the independent self through assertion. In this process, students inform parents of an independently made decision or idea. In this way, they test the independent of the self, seeking acceptance from the parent. The timing of this assertion is tightly aligned to the motivations of students for soliciting input from others. Students who tend to express self through others, and subsequently present a less developed sense of self, will assert the self early in a decision making process in order to have time to reframe and integrate the feedback of others, especially their parents. Students with this least developed senses of self are the most sensitive to the subsequent response they receive from their parents. In contrast, those who express self independently from others, and present a more fully developed sense of self, will assert the self more confidently and typically after they have made a final decision. Students with a nearly developed sense of self are the least influenced by the response of their parents. Those who express self with others, will assert the self after thinking independently, and tend to do so with a well-developed sense of self, that could still be influenced by the response of the parents.

6.3.3 Concept: Responding to the Self (Parents)

The response is linked to the parents' perception of the students' maturity, as well as the trust the parent has in the child to develop independent thoughts. It is important to remember that a parent is not inextricably linked to a response type. Therefore, these are not to be considered parenting styles. In addition, parents will react differently to different situations, decisions, and

students' assertions of self. Overall, the parent responses fall into two categories; acceptance and resistance. These categories do not necessarily reflect the parents' reaction to the content of the decision, but rather, the students' assertions of the self. Therefore, it is important to focus on the parents' response of valuing or devaluing the use of the independent voice. To better distinguish these points, I discuss the specific categories of the concept of parent responding to the self in the following sections.

6.3.3.1 Category: Acceptance.

The first type of parent response to their students' assertions of self is acceptance. It is important to remember that accepting the assertion of self does not equate to accepting the content of an independent decision or idea, but rather affirming the use of the self in an independent way. While this is often linked to accepting the content of the decision or idea, it is not required. For example, Kelly Andrews, Karen Foster, and Grace Ellis talked about disagreeing with decisions or ideas that their children posed, but the parents ensured that their children's use of an internal voice was supported. For Karen Foster and Kelly Andrews, this meant helping their daughters to continue to independently assert the self by remaining disengaged from their decision making processes, yet affirming assertion of independent voice when necessary. Grace Ellis assumed a fully passive role in her son, Josh's, assertions of self, helping him to feel supported by reflecting questions, but never taking an active role in his decision making, even when asked. She talked about refraining from giving him advice, yet helping him to work through his decisions by asking questions and reflecting with him. In addition, Larry Vanguard was explicit in telling me that he does not interfere in his daughter, Lori's, independent ideas or thinking. He talked about this when he said,

I think she realizes now more than she did...that I can't help her at school. I can't – I won't interact on her behalf...She deals with it. She deals with life problems that are hers, herself. (Larry Vanguard)

Lori Vanguard knows that her father supports her to make her own decisions and define her self, and that he will not take an active role in that process. These different approaches to the assertion of their students' self help the student to feel supported and accepted.

When parents respond with acceptance to the student's assertion of self, they verbally and non-verbally show support for the student. A defining feature of acceptance is that the parents show their support through promoting additional assertions of the self. This support takes many forms. For example, Karen Foster talked about her approach to supporting the development of her daughter, Becca's, independent self, when she said,

She really is a solid – a solid kid...and so we try to assure her that decisions that she's made are good ones...and help her evaluate some of that stuff if she's got some remorse about a decision. You know, "It's – it's just – it's just one decision. Don't freak about it," kind of thing. (Karen Foster)

Karen intentionally allows her daughter to assert independence, and then actively accepts and supports her, even when she had remorse about a decision that she has made. Similar to this, Kelly Andrews talked about supporting her daughter, Christina, when she wanted to transfer colleges. Not only did she support this idea, even though she would have rather her remain at her college, she encouraged her to explore and visit other schools if it was important to her. In this way, parents support their students' independence and assertion of self, even if it differs from what they may want for their children. About this situation, Kelly Andrews said,

I guess, the hardest thing about being a parent I think is letting them sort of make some of their own mistakes a little bit...you step in I think when, certainly if there's something concerning, but you kind of have to let them figure it out, I guess is how I would describe it...you can – you make suggestions, but you kind of have to leave it up to them to figure it out. (Kelly Andrews)

The key to this concept of responding to the assertion of self is that parents respond with support that promotes the assertion of self.

In addition, parents can respond with acceptance to their children's assertion of self in a more passive way, where the child feels supported, but does not see their parents as an active part of the process of defining the self. This is especially true in the case of Grace Ellis, who supported her son, Josh, by helping him to process independent decisions that he had made. She talked about how she approaches her son when he is making decisions when she said,

And he has to decide for himself how he's going to interact with the world. So, I kind of ask questions, often to help him see how he is responding to the situation, and then say, "Is that the way you want it to go?" You know? And you can – "Here's what I heard you say, and this is the direction that you want to go. What are some ways that you can get it to go in the direction that you want it to go?"
(Grace Ellis)

In Josh's case, he talked about how his mother was helpful in making sense of situations, but that she did not influence his decisions. Grace Ellis supported her son to find and employ his internal self by responding to his needs. Additionally, Larry Vanguard's assertion that he will not interfere in his daughter's life most clearly exemplifies a property of acceptance of the assertion of self. While he does not actively support his daughter, Lori's, assertions of self, he allows her to make her own way in the world. In this way, he supports Lori's assertion of self.

6.3.3.2 Category: Resistance.

The second parental response to students' assertions of self is resistance. Resistance is characterized by the parent disagreeing with the content of the student's decision and challenging the student to continue to refine the independent idea or decision by considering other points. In the examples of parental resistance, parents all talked about situations where their children had asserted independence, making decisions or coming to them with ideas. While Natalie Rice

ultimately supported the decisions that her daughter, Nicole, had made, she did so after outwardly disagreeing with her and further challenging her to consider other points of view.

Natalie recounted this situation in saying,

There were quite a few arguments about it and going back and forth...She made her decision, and, that's what she's doing and, you know, we've accepted her decision. We might not be quite happy about it – (Natalie Rice)

Natalie Rice did not agree with her daughter's decision to graduate in three and a half years rather than three years. She voiced her displeasure with her daughter and asked her to consider the financial implications of her decision, as well as what she saw as the prestige that would accompany her graduating a year early. While Natalie's response was initially to tell her daughter that they would not financially support her through her final semester, she withdrew that denial of Nicole's independent self, asking her to think more carefully about her decision, and ultimately supporting whatever her daughter decided.

In other cases, including that of Donna Bates, parents overrode the decisions that their children had made, further devaluing the students' sense of self. They actively resisted the student's assertion of self, to the point that they would no longer permit their child to make the decision. For example, Donna talked about how she approaches her daughter in decision making, saying,

I used to first give my opinion, (but now) I let her think it's more her decision... She wanted to be an adult, but she was still acting like a child...They think when they've hit the number 18, you're considered an adult, so you're just automatically, but she wasn't. (Donna Bates)

Donna Bates recounted her daughter's decision to attend her chosen college as one that she heavily influenced by telling her daughter that she could not visit other colleges. This direct resistance to any of her daughter's ideas and plans for her future devalued her sense of self.

Similarly, in response to her daughter, Leah's, desire to pursue a fifth year opportunity to complete a Bachelor's of Philosophy, Iris Volt disagreed vehemently and withheld all financial support. Leah Volt talked about this situation when she said,

When initially I came to the decision that I wanted to take the fifth year, my parents completely backed-off and they were no longer supportive of the decision. They said they would not financially back this decision, which although the fifth year was fully funded, that kind of meant losing their emotional support in my mind. (Leah Volt)

By refusing to allow Leah to explain her decision to pursue a fifth year, Iris resisted her daughter's assertion of self to the extent of complete denial. By withholding financial support, Iris gave Leah little other option but to reconsider her decision, leading Leah to fear that she had lost her parents' "emotional support," as well. This is an illustration of a devaluing of the assertion of self, because Iris Volt not only disagreed with her daughter's decision, but also moved to influence how her daughter should reevaluate and make the decision.

6.3.4 Concept: Student Counter-Responding to the Parent's Response

In the end, the role that parent acceptance and resistance of the students' assertion of self has on the development of the self depends on the counter response of the student. This counter response occurs in direct reaction to the parent response. The three categories of student counter response are confidence, defiance, and deference. Just as parents are not tied to the response patterns presented above, students do not all react in the same way to their parents' responses. The student counter response is largely dependent upon the development of the student self. While all students counter respond with confidence to a parent response of acceptance, students counter respond in two different ways to a parent response of resistance. For example, a student

with a well-established sense of self will counter respond differently to a parent response of resistance than will a student with a less developed sense of self. The outcome on the development of the self is tightly aligned to the student's counter response. To fully describe the concept of student counter-responding to the parent response, and the resultant outcome of the counter response, I address the categories of the student counter response in direct relation to the parent responses that precede them, as well as the resultant outcomes, in the following sections.

6.3.4.1 Category: Student counter response to parent acceptance: Confidence.

A student counter response of confidence directly follows a parent response of acceptance. Not once in my study did a student counter respond with confidence from a parental response of resistance. The alignment between acceptance and confidence is tightly linked, resulting in an outcome that advances the development of the self. The student counter response of confidence is characterized by a student who securely provides a final decision based primarily on the independent self and who continues to assert an independent self in subsequent decisions. The counter response of confidence helps to support the student in continuing to assert the independent self. In this way, it promotes the development of the self by building upon the validation of the internal voice.

For example, for Daniel Underwood, counter responding to his parents' response of acceptance with confidence meant securely pursuing opportunities independently from his parents, knowing that his parents would support his independent decisions or his decision making processes. He did not expect his parents to always agree with his decisions, but he knew that they would help him to make sound decisions and support him through difficult situations. When asked about the role of his parents in his development and decision making processes, Daniel talked about the support that they provided to him in moving across the country for

college and then remaining across the country for various internship opportunities over the summers. He said that he feels confident in his decision making because, “If I make the decision, they laid the foundation for me when I was a kid, but I can make decisions now and I know that they're going to support me.” He continued by talking about how this only applies, “if it's a reasonable decision,” and that, although there has not been much opportunity for it, he would expect his parents to challenge him if he did, “something ridiculous.” In this way, he counter responds to his parents’ responses of acceptance with confidence. This counter response of confidence results in the outcome of promoting the development of the independent self. The power of the support from the parent is enough to help the student to be confident of the assertion of the independent self, leading to greater confidence in future decisions and greater assertions of the independent self. In this way, the counter response of confidence results in the progression of the independent self.

While students with a well-developed sense of self may not have much room to develop the self, a parent response of acceptance will still result in a counter response of confidence. Yet, it is unclear whether this confidence is enough to propel the self toward progression. Instead, a student with a well-established sense of self, who counter responds with confidence to a parent response of acceptance, will continue to assert the independent self, but may not be developing as noticeably as a student with a less established self. In this way, the student confidently makes independent decisions, but those decisions and the preceding processes do not necessarily help the self to progress toward further independence due to the lack of challenge necessary to refine the independent self.

One place where the development of the self as a response to acceptance was unclear was in the situation of Lori Vanguard, a student who feels supported to make independent decisions,

but whose parents have never responded in a way that would challenge her to defend her position or to consider other points of view. Lori Vanguard talked about how she knows that she has her parents' support to make independent decisions, and because of that, will rarely consult with them. When asked to talk about her parents' responses to when she makes her own decisions or has her own independent ideas about situations, she said,

I don't think my parents have ever – I can't think of a time they ever challenged me on a decision I made...They're pretty like – they jump right on it...maybe they don't agree with it...(but) I didn't even talk to them that week, so, hey, what do I know? (Lori Vanguard)

She continued by talking about how she does not communicate with her parents frequently, so if they do have a resistant opinion on a decision she has made, they may not have a chance to voice it before she has enacted the decision. Therefore, she continues to make independent decisions, but it is unclear whether those continued independent assertions of self help her to further develop. Since Lori has had few, if any, opportunities to respond to challenges, it was unclear the outcome that her parents' constant response of acceptance, and her constant counter response of confidence, had on her development of self.

6.3.4.2 Category: Student counter response to parent resistance: Deference or defiance.

The counter response that follows from a parent response of resistance is dependent upon the status of the student's self at the time of the parent response. A student counter response of defiance or deference follows a parent response of resistance. Not once in my study did a student counter respond with a sense of confidence from a parent response of resistance. For students with a less developed sense of self, a parent response of resistance leads to a counter response of deference, while a student with a more established sense of self will counter respond with defiance to a parent response of resistance. In addition, each of the student counter responses

have different outcomes for the development of the self. A student who responds with deference will result in a reversion of self, while a student who responds with defiance will result in a progression of the self. I discuss each of these properties and the outcomes that result in the following section.

The student counter response of deference is characterized by a student who makes a final decision based primarily on the opinion of the parents and who has difficulty asserting an independent self in subsequent decisions. In this situation, the student has asserted an independent idea or decision, that has been rejected by the parent in terms of both content and process. In this way, the parent has devalued the role of the student's independent self. Students with a less established sense of self will counter respond to parent resistance with deference, conceding to the views of the parent on the situation at hand.

For example, Leah Volt was proud of the research and thought she had put into her decision to pursue a fifth year opportunity. Yet, when she told her parents of her decision, she faced extreme resistance, to the point that her parents withdrew her financial support and would not speak with her about the decision any further. Leah explained how she reacted to her parents' resistance when she said,

When initially I came to the decision that I wanted to take the fifth year my parents completely backed-off and they were no longer supportive of the decision. They said they would not financially back this decision, which although the fifth year was fully funded that kind of meant losing their emotional support in my mind...And so it made me very hesitant, and I started having to reframe things and rework things. And, as much as I value my own independence and my ability to make my own choices my parents' support is one of the most important things to me, because I have a very close-knit family, and so I came to the decision (not to take the fifth year) partly as a result of them. (Leah Volt)

In speaking with Leah both before and after she presented her decision to her parents, it was evident that she was confident in her decision to take the fifth year and that she was defeated

after her parents opposed her decision. For Leah, who has a less defined sense of self, the resistance she received from her parents led to an inevitable counter response of deference. Since she is yet to develop an established independent self, she saw her only choice was to defer to her parents and change her decision. In addition, this deference resulted in a reversion of self. Leah talked about how, now, she is less likely to present her ideas to her parents because she fears their opposition. When we talked about how she has approached her parents since they resisted her assertion of self, she said, “It's made me a lot more hesitant in terms of going to them with some of the decisions that I've made.” Instead of asserting her self with her parents, she has followed the advice that they have given. She described how she regards her parents’ advice when she said,

I mean they're my parents and they just want what's best for me. But, um, when I don't act on their opinions and such things become tense. It typically means that I follow it. (Leah Volt)

By continuing to defer to her parents’ opinions, Leah is further reverting to a more dependent self, and ceasing to exercise her independent voice.

Other students with less developed senses of self counter responded in a similar fashion when faced with parent resistance to their assertions of self, which resulted in similar reversions of the independent self. Veronica Bates talked about the role that her mother plays in her development, with special consideration to how she approaches her independence. When talking about this, she characterized her mother as strongly influencing her thoughts, and that her mother’s previous responses of resistance to her assertions of self caused her to constantly consider how her mother would react to her ideas. She said that she never makes a decision without thinking about how her mother will react to it, saying, “I always keep (my mom) in the back of my mind.” By counter responding with deference to her mother’s responses of

resistance, Veronica's self has reverted to being more dependent on and sensitive to her mother's opinions. Now, Veronica will not assert her self until she has considered how her mother will react and refined her ideas accordingly. After deferring to consistent parent responses of resistance, Veronica no longer asserts an independent self, rather her voice is constantly influenced by fear that her mother may respond with resistance.

Contrary to these counter responses of deference, students with more established senses of self counter responded with defiance to their parents' responses of resistance. Counter responses of defiance are characterized by students critically examining and questioning their initial assertion of self and returning to the situation with a counter argument that considers their parents' response of resistance, yet reflects their own independent voice. Students who counter respond to parent resistance in this way experience a progression of the self as a result. By reconsidering the initial assertion of self in an interdependent way, not a dependent way as was exhibited by counter responses of deference, the student is strengthening the independent voice, and progressing the self.

For example, Christina Andrews had consistently received acceptance from her parents when asserting her self. Yet, when she informed them of her idea to marry directly after graduating from college, she was met with a parental response of resistance. Since Christina had spent years developing an independent voice and a defined sense of self, she accepted her parents' resistance, yet did not defer to their concerns. Instead, she considered their advice, reevaluated her own position, defying their wishes to postpone her wedding, and reasserted her independent self. This was a situation that Christina did not expect to encounter, yet it gave her the opportunity to respond to a challenge of her independent self and further strengthen her

internal voice. After she had made her final decision, she recounted how she approached the process and her parents,

So that was challenging to try to kind of sort of prove myself to them and prove that I was thinking this through and being mature about this decision and I wasn't trying to rush into things and had thought all the details out. (Christina Andrews)

This example shows that students who counter respond with defiance to their parents' response of resistance work to exert further independence and maturity by showing their parents that they have considered all options fully. For Christina, this means listening to her parents' concerns and helping them to understand that she was moving forward with her decision. Doing this helped to progress the development of self by responding to challenge and defining a clear vision for the independent voice. In addition, when Christina talked about how this experience affected how she interacted with her parents, she talked about it in terms of continuing to build her internal voice and independent self. When referencing how she approaches assertions of the self with her parents, after she had faced their response of resistance, she said,

I think that conversation taught me that... So I'm at a point in my life where I know that I want to do what I want to do. Like I want to be able to make my own decisions and I don't want to require approval from others, parents specifically, so I think that whole experience kind of taught me –that I can't sit around and wait for their approval and cry when I don't get it. [Laughs] I need to, just, in as respectful of a manner as possible, stand firm and say, "Look, this is what I think, I thought this through." I need to trust myself to be able to present it to them in that manner...Rather than sitting back and saying, "Oh, I know what I want to do but like what do you think?" Rather than kind of sitting back and just letting them tell me what they want me to do I need to just say, "No, I know what I want to do. This is what I want to do. I'm open to hearing your thoughts on it but I've made my decision." (Christina Andrews)

The progression of the self is evident in Christina's comment. She talks about listening to her own independent voice, and the importance of asserting that voice with others, and no longer

requiring their approval in her ideas and decisions. This was common for students who counter responded with defiance to parent responses of resistance.

After asserting her self with her parents regarding a decision to take a trip with friends, Beth Connor's parents responded with resistance. Yet, instead of deferring to what Beth acknowledged as valid points, she worked to defend her own point of view and show her parents that she had fully considered her options. When talking about this situation, she talked about how she could have counter responded to her parents, and how she ultimately did counter respond, when she said,

I could just say "Okay", and not go, but I know that if I explain it to them, and talk about how I'm thinking, that they understand it more. So it makes me feel more comfortable with (the decision) – but...I have to acknowledge what they're saying. For instance, I said, "I know. I'm also worried about safety, but we're going to be safe." So I take what they're saying, but then I have to think about (it), from my view too. (Beth Conner)

Beth's example talked about how she could have counter responded with deference, and referenced that she may have done that previously, but instead chose to refine her position and use her independent voice to assert her intentions. Students often indicated that they considered deferring to their parents, but instead chose to re-assert further independence. In this way, students progressed in the development of their independent self. By resisting the urge to defer, and effectively cause a reversion of self, students defied their parents' advice and presented a counter point that considered their resistance, yet reflected their internal voices.

6.3.5 Summary

The roles that parents play in responding to student assertions of self have far reaching implications for the development of the students' senses of self. While parents may respond

differently to every assertion of self by their child, these responses all trigger a student counter response and a resultant outcome for the development of the self. In this way, parents play an important role in the students' definitions of self, and therefore the ways that they respond to the input of others when making decisions. The stronger the students' sense of an independent self, the more likely they are to express that self with or independently from others. In contrast, the less defined the students' sense of self, the more likely they are to express that self through others. Therefore, the role that parents play in a student's definition of self has consequences to how that student will approach the input of all trusted others when making decisions.

6.4 APPLICATION OF PARENT RESPONSE AND STUDENT COUNTER RESPONSE TO EXPRESSING SELF IN DECISION MAKING PROCESSES

The two theories presented in this chapter work in tandem to explain the role of the parent in college student development and student decision making processes. While students talked about changes to their decision making processes and the way that they regard the input of others, they often referenced the role that their parents played in this evolution. The role of the parent was especially salient throughout the process of expressing the self in decision making processes. This was particularly evident in considering the role that the parent played in accepting or resisting the students' expression of self and the integration of parents' input into the students' final decisions. Figure 8 illustrates this role that parents play, through response and counter response, in the expression of self in decision making processes. As students assert the self, parent responses of acceptance and resistance result in student counter responses that serve

to either advance the development of the independent self or revert to a more dependent self. These outcomes then play a role in how the student expresses self.

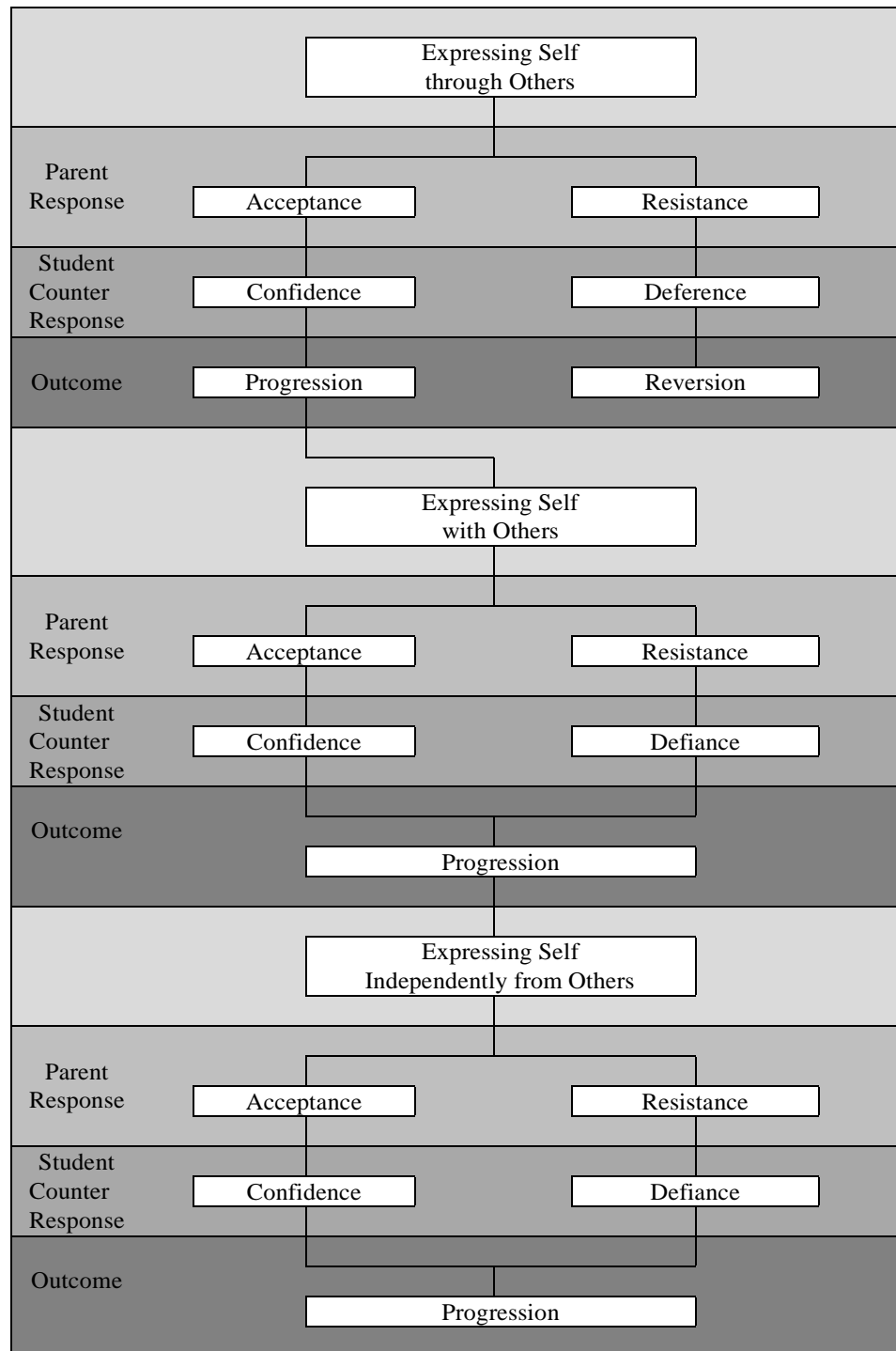


Figure 8. Integration of Parent Response, Student Counter Response, and Expression of Self

Students, regardless of how they expressed self, valued the input of their parents above all other input. Yet, as is evident in Figure 8, the role of the parent is mitigated by the development of the self. Students who express self with others or independently from others, value the input of the parent, but will not defer to the parents' response of resistance. They may take it into consideration, but it will not be integrated into the final decision without careful evaluation with the input of others and the internal voice. To illustrate the role of parents, I describe the role of parents in reference to the concepts of the first theory, which describe how students express self.

6.4.1 Application of Parent Response and Student Counter Response to Expressing Self through Others

When referencing the role of parents in decision making, students talked about the importance of receiving their input and support throughout the process. This was especially true for students expressing self through others. These students talked about their parents as their primary trusted others, to whom they would turn for input most often. For students who express self through others, this translated to closely integrating the advice of parents into the final decision. In relation to *Developing the Self through Response and Counter Response* (Figure 9), these students would rarely assert the self, but when they did, were very sensitive to the parent response they received. As students expressing self through others were met with responses of acceptance from their parents, they would continue to develop their independent self, moving toward expressing the self with others, where they would be less reliant on the input of trusted others in their decision making process. In contrast to this, when students expressing the self through others were met with a parent response of resistance, they nearly always counter

responded with deference due to their reliance on the input of others, and the high value they placed on the input of their parents. This counter response of deference resulted in a reversion of the independent self, where the student had even less capacity to assert the independent self.

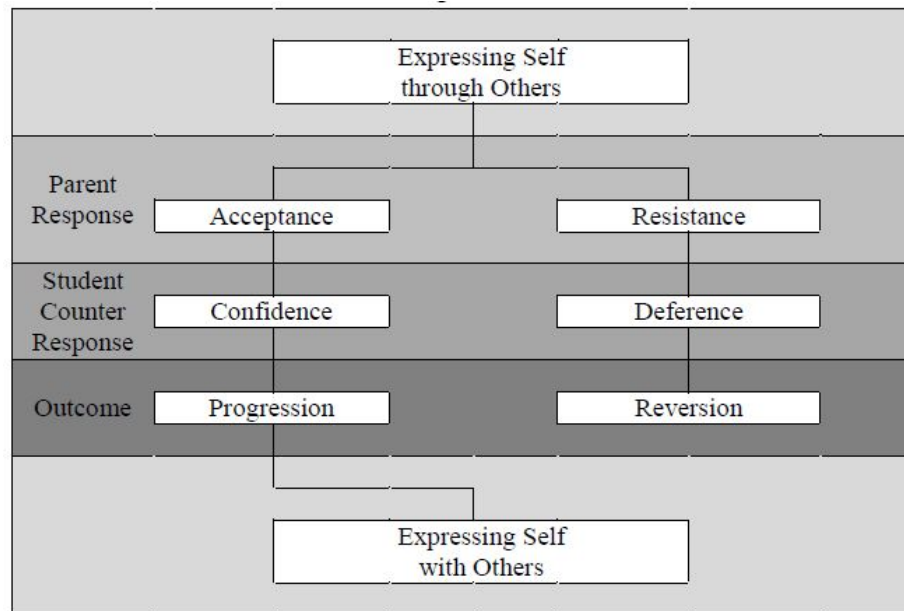


Figure 9. Integration of Parent Response, Student Counter Response, and Expressing Self through Others

For example, when talking about how she regarded her parents' input into her decision to pursue a fifth year of college, Leah Volt talked about how it did not necessarily align with what she wanted to do, but that she followed the advice. Her parents' opinions and support were more valuable to her than the use of her own voice. When I asked her about how she regards her parents' input, she responded by saying, "when I don't act on their opinions and such things become tense, (so) it typically means that I follow it." After speaking with her advisors and friends, Leah was planning to pursue the fifth year opportunity, yet when she told her parents of her plan, she was met with resistance and changed her decision, deferring to the wishes of her parents. In the end, it was more important for her to be respectful of what her parents wanted, and not follow her own voice. Students expressing self through others talked about feelings of

guilt when they did not directly listen and enact the advice of their parents. The feelings of guilt typically led them to defer to the thoughts of their parents.

In this example, Leah Volt worked to solicit, interpret, and integrate the information of her trusted others, she was working toward asserting a semi-autonomous voice to her parents. While her decision was still dependent on what her trusted others had advised, she was yet to consult her parents, and had hoped that they would respond with acceptance toward the decision she was hoping to make. Since they responded with resistance, Leah, who is yet to develop a self able to be expressed with or independently from others, deferred to her parents. In addition, when she talked about how the experience affected how she has approached decisions since, she talked about always trying to consider what her parents think before she talks to them, to ensure that they will be less resistant of what she is thinking. In this way, she is continuing to express self through what others have advised or expect. The experience with her parents was one that resulted in the reversion of the self, to a place where it depended on others to an even greater extent. In addition, students who defer to their parents do not have the opportunity to promote the use of an independent voice. This leads to further reversion of the self to a place of dependence on the external influences of others.

6.4.2 Application of Parent Response and Student Counter Response Expressing Self with Others.

While the solicitation of input from parents, for students expressing self with others, did not always lead to its integration into the students' final decisions, students did talk about the higher emphasis and value they placed on their parents' input relative to the input of others. Students expressing self with others often talked about this as giving greater weight to what their

parents thought when interpreting the input of trusted others out of respect for their parents. In relation to *Developing the Self through Response and Counter Response* (Figure 10), these students would assert the self after thinking independently and placed high importance on the parent response they received. In this way, if the parent response was one of acceptance, it would result in the student counter responding with confidence in asserting the self, leading to progress in the development of the independent self. As students expressing self with others were met with responses of acceptance from their parents, they would continue to develop their independent self, moving toward expressing the self independently from others, where they would be even less reliant on the input of trusted others in their decision making process.

In contrast, when students expressing the self with others were met with a parent response of resistance, they would consider the resistance they received, responding with defiance in that they would not defer directly to the parent. Instead, they would take the resistance into consideration when integrating the input of others into the final decision. In situations where the final decision was highly aligned with the parent response of resistance, the students expressing self with others did not defer to the parents, but did place greater importance on the parent feedback when integrating input into the final decision. This counter response of defiance resulted in the development of the independent self, where the student would continue to assert the independent self in future situations.

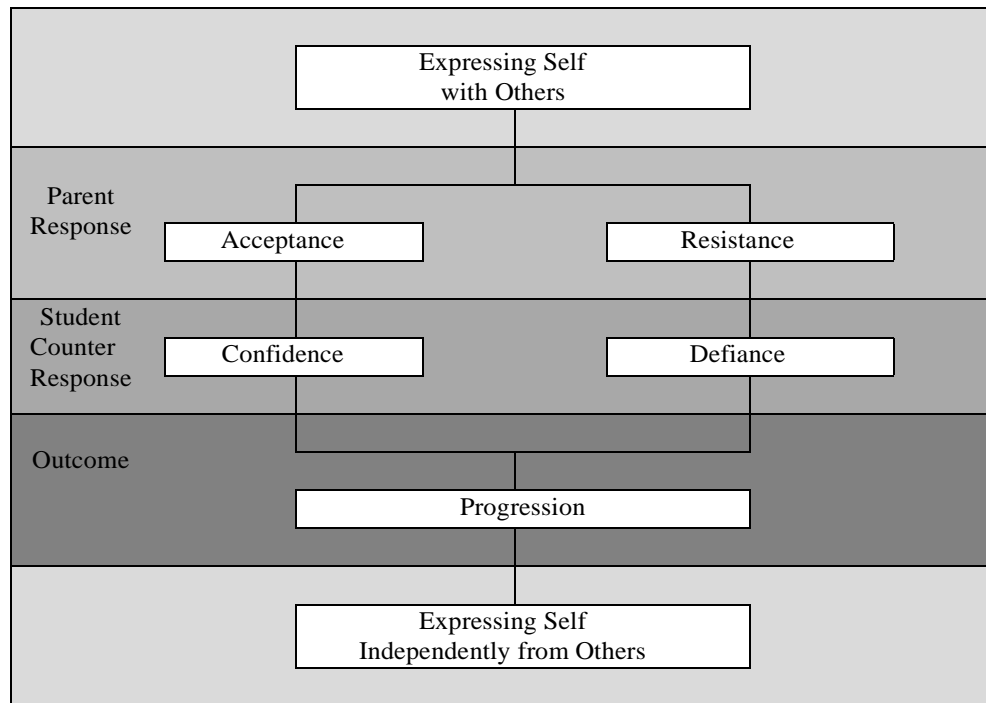


Figure 10. Integration of Parent Response, Student Counter Response, and Expressing Self with Others

As mentioned previously, students expressing self with others placed their parents' opinions as the most important input they received from trusted others. Throughout discussions of the roles of others in decision making processes, students talked about soliciting input from two types of people; people who knew the situation well and people who knew them well. For example, Beth Conner talked about valuing her parents' input above the input of others. She talked about how well her parents know her. She said that she will consider her parents input because, "when it comes down to it though, my parents know me the best out of anyone." Students frequently cited their parents as the people who knew them well, and for that reason, solicited input from them.

While these students talked about the importance of soliciting and considering the input of their parents, they did not mention deferring to that input. Rather, they talked about evaluating it with other input to make a final decision. In this way, students expressing self with others were

able to counter respond to their parents' response of resistance with a sense of defiance, where they did not defer to the wishes of the parent. As a result, students counter responded to their parents in a way that challenged them to further define their senses of self, independently from others. It is important to note that the main difference between these students and the students who express self through others, is that students who express self with others did not defer to their parents even though they may have considered and later integrated the parent input into their final decision. Students expressing self with others, defied their parents by not blindly following their input, and instead took time to evaluate it relative to their own independent voices. Therefore, the final decisions of these students were varied in terms of the amount of parental input that was integrated, but the interpretation process was always evident. In the end, some students may have made a final decision that was aligned with the input of their parents, but that decision was not made without first defying the parent and carefully evaluating their parents' advice relative to their own internal needs. As they continued to assert the self, counter respond with defiance to parent responses of resistance, and refine their own internal voices relative to the input of their parents, they were further developing the self to be expressed independently from others.

6.4.3 Application of parent response and student counter response expressing self independently from others.

Even students who express self independently from others talked of the importance of their parents as providers of input. While these students asserted the self through independently made decisions and rarely integrated the input of others into their final decisions, they did admit to valuing the views of their parents. Again, students referenced the idea of respecting parents by

considering their opinions. For Nicole Rice, this meant listening to her parents' opinions, but not necessarily following them. About her parents input, she said, "I always listen to them and I try to respect them, but I just kind of say, "Like, I know this is what you want, but that's not what I want." In relation to *Developing the Self through Response and Counter Response* (Figure 11), these students would assert the self after making independent decisions placing little importance on the parent response they received. Just as the other students, if the parent response was one of acceptance, it would result in the student counter responding with confidence in asserting the self, leading to progress in the development of the independent self. When students expressing the self independently from others were met with a parent response of resistance, they counter responded with defiance. Students expressing self independently from others would take their parents' resistance into consideration out of respect, but this resistance would rarely be integrated into the final decision. This counter response of defiance resulted in the development of the independent self, where the student would continue to assert the independent self in future situations.

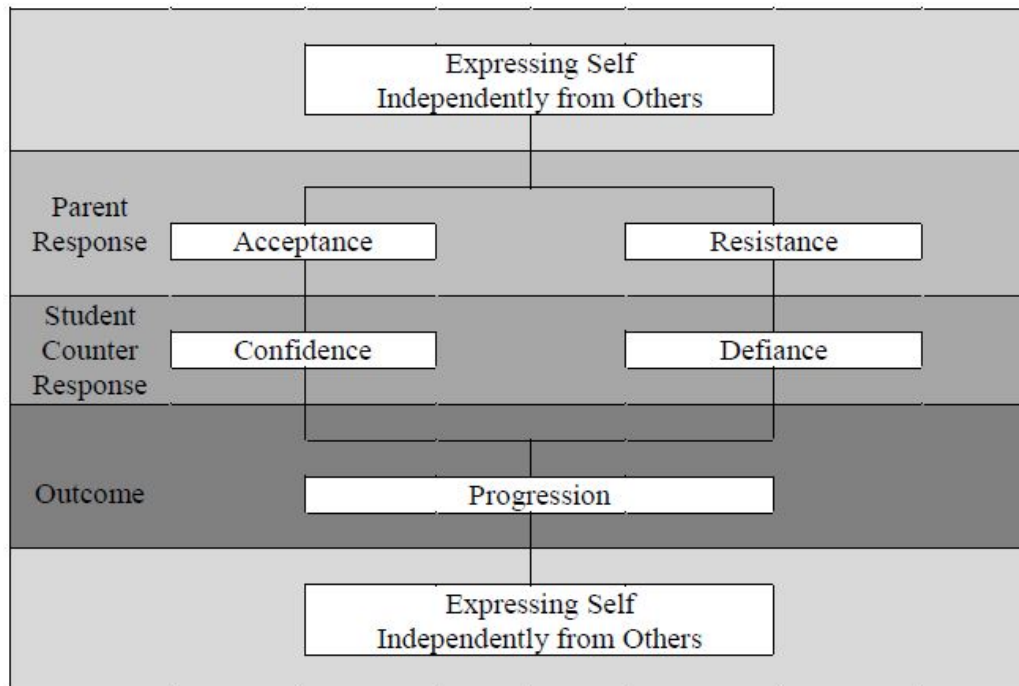


Figure 11. Integration of Parent Response, Student Counter Response, and Expressing Self Independently from Others

Where students who express self independently of others are frequently dismissive of the feedback of others, all talked about listening to the input of their parents. Christina Andrews echoed this sentiment, saying that her parents' advice is important because she trusts them and has seen them make important life decisions. Therefore, while she prides herself on making independent decisions, she is always open to hear what her parents have to say about her decisions. When talking about the role of her parents' input in her decision making process, Christina said,

Rather than kind of sitting back and just letting (others) tell me what they want me to do I...just say, "No, I know what I want to do. This is what I want to do. I'm open to hearing your thoughts on it but I've made my decision." ... (but) I still think my parents' feedback is probably slightly higher ranked than just anyone else's. (Christina Andrews)

While Christina acknowledges the higher value that her parents' input has in her decision making process, she is quick to point out that this does not mean that she will blindly follow it. For

Christina, and for all students who express self independently from others, parental input is valued, but is still evaluated with the internal voice for the final decision.

The importance of the parent is evident in these examples. While these students talked about the importance of the input of their parents, they did not mention deferring to that input. Rather, they talked about how they would take their parents' resistance into consideration, but that it often resulted in the strengthening of their own independent thoughts, and not in the integration of that resistance into the final decision. In this way, students expressing self independently from others counter responded to their parents' response of resistance with defiance. As a result, students counter responded to their parents in a way that challenged them to further define their sense of self, independently from others. As they continued to assert the self, and counter respond with defiance to parent responses of resistance, they were further advancing their expressions of self independently from others.

6.4.4 Summary

As described above, the parent plays an important role in the development and expression of the self, yet the overall influence of the parent on student decision making is dependent upon the development of the student self. For students with less developed senses of self, those who express self through others, the role of the parent is of high importance and influence. If the parent resists the students' assertions of self, then the students will likely counter respond with deference to the wishes of the parent. In contrast, students with more fully established senses of self, those who express self with others or independently from others, the role of parents takes a less prominent place in the decision making process. While these students will take their parents' resistance into consideration out of respect, the level of the parents' input that is represented in

the final decision is dependent upon the careful evaluation and interpretation of the input on the part of the student. Therefore, parents have less influence on the decision making processes of students who express self with or independently from others than they do on the decision making processes of students who express self through others. In addition, parents play a vital role in promoting the development of the self and how students express the self. By accepting and valuing assertions of self, the parent can help the student to feel more confident expressing the self with others or independently from others. Also, by challenging students who already express self with others or independently from others with resistance, parents can help the students to refine their internal voices, and progress the development of the independent self.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study examined the role of parents in college student development and decision making, as a way to extend Baxter Magolda's theory of self-authorship. Given the trend of increasing parental involvement in higher education, it was important to understand the role of parents as it relates to student development. Not only was it imperative to understand this role from the point of view of the student, but also how parents perceived their role in student development. This study contributed theory to address a void in student development research related to the role of parents in how students make decisions and the role that parents play in developing their internal voice and independently make decisions to

Constructivist grounded theory methods (Charmaz, 2014) guided data collection, analysis, and the generation of theory from the personal experiences of the research participants. Constructivist grounded theory methods emphasize the process of how participants make meaning (Charmaz, 2014). The emphasis on meaning was vitally important to my research since I focused on how and why students make decisions, and not the content of the decisions. I interviewed 18 parent-student pairs, independently, asking them to reflect on, among other things, student decision making, student development, student responses to challenge, the parent-child relationship, and the role of the parent in these areas. These 18 students and parents represented two different institutions of higher education, and hailed from multiple states and family circumstances. After utilizing theoretical sampling to refine the ideas developed in theory

building, I interviewed nine students an additional time, for 45 total interviews. I analyzed the transcripts of these interviews through three stages of coding, initial, comparison, and theoretical. In the initial level of coding, I coded using gerunds to categorize action throughout each transcript. During comparison coding, I used the initial codes to compare to one another, across interviews to develop categories toward the development of theory. In the final level of coding, theoretical coding, I used the comparisons from the previous round of coding to further define categories, elevating some to the level of concept based on their theoretical strength. In addition, I used extensive memoing to track conceptual and theoretical development, analyzing the memos as an integral element toward theory development. Subsequently, the coding and memos resulted in the development of two substantive theories that examine student decision making and the role of parents in student development and decision making.

While this was a constructivist grounded theory study, I used Baxter Magolda's (1998) theory of self-authorship abductively to refine the development of theory and to guide the generation of the interview protocols to examine the role of parents on college student development. In particular, Baxter Magolda's theory of self-authorship offers a holistic view of the development of college students. By considering development from three dimensions, cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal, Baxter Magolda (1997) explains the development of self-authorship as necessary to internally define one's beliefs relative to the external pressures of others. In addition to Baxter Magolda's theory of self-authorships, I utilized Arnett's (2004, 2006) theory of emerging adulthood, which provides a contextualization for the population of junior and senior college students, on whom my study focused. By understanding the characteristics of these students and their relationship with their parents, I was able to better contribute to the role of parents in college student development and decision making.

Findings from my study are situated in three broad areas; the parent-child relationship, student development, and student decision making. Students and parents, alike, all responded to questions and prompts that contributed to their perceptions of these three areas. It is important to note that while I interviewed students and their parents separately, their responses to these areas were tightly aligned, demonstrating similar perceptions of characterizations of the parent-child relationship, how the student had grown during college, how the student approached and made decisions, and the role of the parent to student development and decision making.

Overall, parents and students described relationships that were built on mutual respect and support, and that had evolved over the time the student was in college. One of the foundational elements of Arnett's theory of emerging adulthood is the renegotiation of the parent-child relationship from a relationship between an adult and a child to a relationship between two adults (Aquilino, 2006; Arnett, 2004, 2006). Not only was this salient in my study, but it also contributed to the role that parents played in student decision making processes. Students and parents, alike, talked about how the relationship they shared had changed since the student went to college. Many student participants spoke, specifically, about their changing perceptions of their parents from authority figures to equals. In addition, parent participants talked about relationships built on mutual respect and coming to terms with the reality that their children were adults. Parents, especially, talked about a changing relationship with their students where they began to treat their children as fellow adults, and for many parents, as equals. This aligned with Arnett's conceptualization of the renegotiation of the parent-child relationship.

In addition, the importance of the parent's acknowledgement of the child as an adult contributed to the parent's role in student development and decision making within my study. When talking about their roles in their college age children's decisions and development, the

parents who tended to take a less influential role in student decision making processes were those who acknowledged the adult status of their children. These parents did not try to influence their children's decisions in any way, but helped them to make decisions by treating them as adults and capable of making independent decisions. Other parents also talked about their children as adults, and the changes that they had made to the way they approached conversations with their children because of this status. In contrast to this, some parents were hesitant to consider their college age children as adults. Parents who were more hesitant to acknowledge the adult status of their children also exhibited more influence over their children's decision making processes. Therefore, the acknowledgement of the adult status of the emerging adult, a foundational tenet of emerging adulthood and the transition to adulthood (Arnett, 1997, 2000, 2004), played a powerful role in how parents regarded their roles in their college age children's decision making processes.

In addition, many parents and students indicated that the college environment was important to the development of the student. They referenced securing friendship groups, engagement with campus clubs, and opportunities to take leadership in clubs and organizations as instrumental to the students' development of confidence and independence. Additionally, many students and parents talked about the importance of exposure to diverse opinions and new ideas contributing to the development of maturity and critical thinking skills. Parents and students talked about ways that the parent played a supportive role in student development, as well. Both sets of participants spoke of the role of parent support through challenging times as important to the continued development of the student. Some parents talked about more intentional ways that they contributed to their children's development, such as pushing them to consider other options when making decisions that would stretch their worldviews or setting

structured communication schedule to ensure that they would not overly communicate with their children. In this way, many parents were mindful of how their interaction and involvement with their children could affect their developmental paths.

Finally, students and parents told extensive stories detailing student decision making processes. While these processes were varied as far as using analytical methods or relying on gut instinct, all participants talked about the role of others in making decisions. This was a common sentiment for students, who detailed their own decision making processes, and parents, who provided additional information on how their children approached decisions. Students solicited, interpreted, and integrated input from trusted others, including friends, family, and mentors, across all decisions that they made. The central role that others played in decision making led to its inclusion as a foundational component of the substantive theories developed in this study.

Through this study, I developed two substantive theories. The first theory contributes to how students make decisions, especially in relation to the input of trusted others, while the second theory considers the role of parents in college student development. Together, they contribute theoretical explanation to the role of parents in student decision making. The first theory explains the process of student decision making related to the input of others by how students express the self in decision making processes. Students' expressions of self happen by one of three processes; expressing self through others, expressing self with others, or expressing self independently from others. Each of these three concepts is characterized by how students solicit, interpret, and integrate the input of others. Students who express self through others solicit input as information to be used early in the decision making process. In addition, they place high emphasis on the input of others when interpreting it relative to their own internal thoughts, and make final decisions that are highly integrated with the input of others. In contrast

to this, students who express self with others solicit input as discussion after independently thinking about a decision. They then interpret that input equally with their own internal voice, resulting in a final decision that is integrated equally with the input and the internal voice. Finally, students who express self independently from others solicit input as a source of validation after making an independent decision. These students value their own independent voice over the input of others, making a final decision that has little integration with the input they have received. This process of expressing the self in decision making processes is influenced by the role that parents play in college student development.

The second substantive theory examines the role of parents in college student development through a process of parent response and student counter response toward the development of the student's sense of self. As students assert the self, parents respond with acceptance of the self or resistance to the self. This parent response then triggers a student counter response, which results in an outcome on the development of the self. A parent response of acceptance leads to a student counter response of confidence and a resultant progression in the development of the self, while a parent response of resistance leads to a student counter response of deference or defiance. A student counter response of deference to a parent response of resistance leads to a reversion in the development of the self since the student abandons independent self and defers to the parents' wishes in the final decision. In contrast, a student counter response of defiance to a parent response of resistance leads to a progression in the development of the self because the student evaluates the parents' resistance relative to the internal voice integrating the parental response or internally defining a final decision. In this way, the development of the self progresses toward independence.

The two theories generated from my study inform the role of the parent in student decision making when considering the influence of the parent over the development of the self. As I have described, students who express self through others are more sensitive to the parent response of resistance since they are yet to establish their independent self. This leads to decisions that are tightly aligned with the input of the parent, since these students will defer to the parent response of resistance. In contrast to this, students who express self with others or independently from others have a more established and developed independent self, which leads to a student counter response of defiance to a parent response of resistance. Therefore, while all students talked about valuing the input of the parent in decision making, the influence and role that the parent has in college student decision making is determined by the development of the self.

7.1 REVISITING BAXTER MAGOLDA'S THEORY OF SELF-AUTHORSHIP

Baxter Magolda's (1998) theory of self-authorship takes into account how college students build the capacity to internally define their views, beliefs, and identities. Through a continuum of development that begins with students as relying on external meaning making structures to make sense of the world and ends with students internally defining their own philosophies of life, Baxter Magolda illustrates how students develop and come to rely on their internal voices. One of the hallmarks of Baxter Magolda's theory is the negotiation of external sources of information, such as friends, family, and trusted others. The substantive theories developed through my study address these negotiations of external sources of information on the

road to developing internal meaning making structures. In particular, I focus on the role of the parent in this processes.

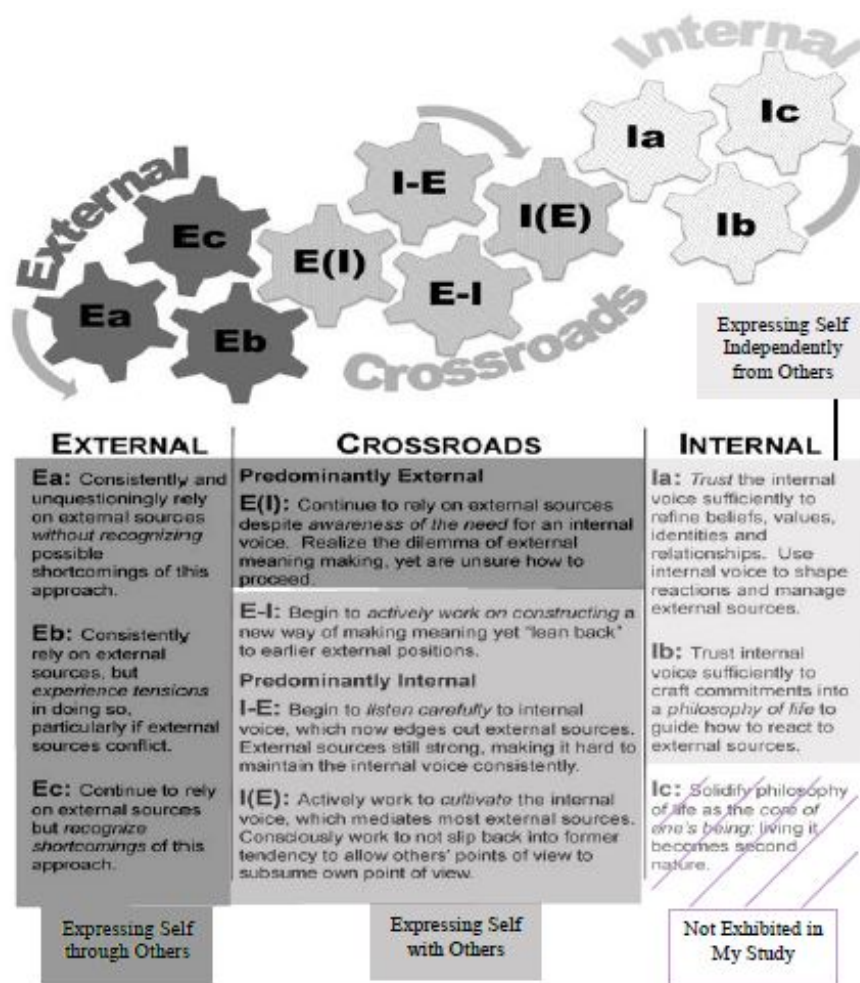
Considering that Baxter Magolda's theory is predicated on the interplay of the cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal properties of development, it is important to discuss the relations of parents to these properties of development. Baxter Magolda indicates that the foundational questions guiding the development of self-authorship are "How do I know?" (cognitive property), "Who am I?" (intrapersonal property), and "How do I construct relationships?" (interpersonal property) (Baxter Magolda, 2004). About the interplay and influence of these three properties of development, she writes,

Self-authorship requires evaluating one's own view in light of existing evidence and constructing a reasonable perspective as a result (the cognitive property). Doing so, however, hinges on one's ability to be influenced rather than to be consumed by others' perspectives (the interpersonal property). Being influenced but not consumed by others, or being interdependent, requires the possession of an internally generated belief system that regulates one's interpretations of experience (the intrapersonal property). (Baxter Magolda, 1998, p. 144)

The role of the parent in each of these properties of development is evident in how they influence the development of the self. Students consistently indicated that they valued the opinions of their parents when making decisions and asserting the self in an independent way. Therefore, the role of the parent bridges the three developmental properties. First, in responding to the student's "reasonable perspective," or assertion of self, the parent contributes to the cognitive dimension of development. This reaction to the cognitive dimension of development then triggers a student's counter response, characterized by the student's "ability to to be influenced" or "to be consumed by others' perspectives." This counter response, which is a result of the parent's response engages the interpersonal dimension of development through the relationship between the parent response and student counter response. Finally, the student's counter response results

in an outcome on the development of the self, characterized by “the possession of an internally generated belief system.” This outcome directly reflects the parents’ role in the process of response and counter response, and contributes to the intrapersonal dimension of development, characterized by the student’s capacity for an internal system of meaning making. Therefore, the influence of the role of parents on the properties of development are exemplified by my second substantive theory of the development of self through response and counter response.

In addition to the interplay of the three properties of development, parents also play a role in the foundation of Baxter Magolda’s theory, the journey from external meaning making to internal meaning making. Figure 12 illustrates Baxter Magolda’s continuum of development, to which I relate my theory in an effort to extend the theory to consider the role of parents to students’ development through this continuum. This illustration of Baxter Magolda’s self-authorship theory shows the relationship of each of the ten areas of development along her continuum to internal meaning making.



Adapted from (Baxter Magolda, King, Taylor, & Wakefield, 2012)
 Reprinted with the permission of ACPA-College Student Educators International

Figure 12. Baxter Magolda's Continuum of Development Toward Self-Authorship in Relation to Substantive Theories

With relation to my substantive theory of student decision making in relation to others, students expressing self through others coincides with the external stages and first stage of the crossroads from Baxter Magolda's continuum. In these stages, students are still relying on external sources to make meaning, which aligns with the way that students express the self through others within my theory. Even though some of these students are starting to realize that they need to develop an internal voice for meaning making, they are unsure of how to proceed.

Students in my study who expressed self through others acknowledged that they wanted to be independent and make independent decisions, but had difficulty breaking from the external influence of others. Next, students who express self with others align with the final three stages of the crossroads within Baxter Magolda's continuum, characterized by an increased use and development of the internal voice, but recognition and integration with external sources of meaning making. These students are working to build and develop their internal meaning making structures, exhibited by the way they evaluate the input of others and integrate it into their decisions. These students, while they have developed an internal voice, still rely on the input of others to make a final decision. Therefore, they are working to trust the internal voice, but still have some reliance on external influences. Finally, the first two stages of internal meaning making align with the students who express self independently of others in my theory. These students are using internal meaning making structures and their independent voices to make decisions and assert the self. They acknowledge external influences but are able to mitigate them in relation to their own internal structures of meaning making.

It is important to note that Baxter Magolda's continuum of development includes a final stage within internal meaning making that reflects the student as interdependent, or able to consider how the student's internal voice could affect the broader world. Therefore, the students on which Baxter Magolda based her theory had progressed from a place of dependence on external meaning making, to independence from external meaning making, and finally to interdependence with external sources of meaning making. This directly coincides with the development of internal meaning making structures. While some students within my study did exhibit signs of interdependence, they did not fully align with the development of internal meaning making structures. Therefore, there were no students within my study who would be

characterized by a fully integrated philosophy of life where the role of others becomes one of interdependence. I did not expect any of the students within my study to have reached this level of self-authorship since the participants in Baxter Magolda's own study did not reach those levels until they were out of college. Therefore, the participants within my study provide me with the data to inform the extension of Baxter Magolda's theory with relation to the areas of external meaning making, the crossroads, and the early stages of internal meaning making. I am not able to extend the role of parents beyond that point since I did not encounter any students who had reached a point of self-authorship to the extent that they had fully defined internal philosophies of life that were interdependent with the broader world.

Baxter Magolda (1998) wrote at length about the conditions under which development can occur, which included "encountering the complexities of the world" (p.153) as a necessary element for development. She acknowledged that one of the challenges of higher education is to provide times of dissonance that can create these opportunities to experience life's complexities while also balancing the support necessary for developmental growth. These conditions include times of dissonance that challenge the student to evaluate her thinking across the three dimensions of development. As described by Barber and King (2014), students in their study encountered "developmentally effective experiences" (p. 434), which occurred when the student faced experiences that created a high level of dissonance, yet had the support to promote developmental growth. These experiences propelled the student toward developmental growth, and were necessary for students to develop toward areas of internal meaning making within Baxter Magolda's theory of self-authorship. Parents have the ability to both challenge and support students through developmentally effective experiences.

I contend that the relational changes that occur between parent and student in a time of parent resistance and student defiance propel a student forward developmentally. In addition, parents can serve as supports to development as they respond with acceptance toward their children's assertions of self. In these ways, parents serve a role in promoting developmental movement toward internal meaning making, and also a role in promoting developmental reversion or stagnation. Students indicated that they placed a great deal of value on the opinions and responses of their parents to their assertions of self. While it is important to remember that the parent responses to the self are not the only forces involved in promoting the development of internal structures of meaning making, they do play an important role. As I describe in the following sections, parents can help to promote development, advancing the student toward higher levels of meaning making, just as well as they can contribute to reversing development and increasing reliance on external sources of make meaning.

The journey to internally define one's life directly corresponds to what I referenced in the previous section as the development of the self, which is influenced by the parent through a process of parent response and student counter response to assertions of self. For students who express self through others and are still working to define the self, or students who exhibit characteristics of Baxter Magolda's area of external meaning making or early areas of the crossroads, the role of the parents' response is very different than for students who express self with or independently from others, or exhibit characteristics of Baxter Magolda's areas of the later crossroads or internal meaning making. Therefore, the role that parents play in accepting or resisting the student assertion of self influences how students journey through areas of meaning making toward self-authorship.

As Baxter Magolda indicates, the ability for students to journey toward self-authorship and internal meaning making requires a balance of support and challenge. Since all students counter respond with confidence to parent responses of acceptance, this is indicative of the support necessary for development, and the parent responses of resistance reflect the necessary challenges. Student counter responses of confidence to parent responses of acceptance result in the progression of the self. The valuing of the assertion of self and the use of the independent voice helps students to continue to assert the self. This results in development toward areas of internal meaning making. The more often the students feel that the self is valued, the more they will assert it, which will help them to build an internal voice and internal structures of meaning making. While the role of support is vitally important to the development of internal meaning making structures and the development of the self, it is not the only way parents contribute. Since the parent response of resistance results in a student counter response of defiance, and creates a sense of dissonance for the students, the student counter response to the parent response of resistance plays an additional role in the development of the self and a student's journey toward internal meaning making.

Students, when faced with resistance, are challenged to decide if they will continue to assert their internal voice or if they will defer to external pressures to that voice. Students who exhibit characteristics of external meaning making and early areas of the crossroads respond similarly to the influence of external pressures, such as resistance from parents. Therefore, with respect to Baxter Magolda's continuum, students who exhibit characteristics of stages of external meaning making and the early crossroads would likely counter respond with deference to their parents' responses of resistance, and not work to progress the development of the self or journey toward properties of defining an internal voice or areas of internal meaning making. Students

without a clearly defined sense of self have difficulty using their internal voice to respond to the challenge of their parents' resistance. For these students, the value that they place on their parents' responses to their assertions of self, and their lack of ability to use their limited internal voice to defy their parents, likely impedes the student's development toward internal meaning making. The challenge of resistance leads to deference and reliance on external voices, which would hinder movement toward the development of internal meaning making.

In contrast, students who have a more clearly defined sense of self, and exhibit characteristics of the areas of the later crossroads and internal meaning making, will leverage their internal voice to defend their positions and defy their parents' responses of resistance. In this way, they are continuing to refine their internal voices and advance the development of the self. For students who have a more clearly defined sense of self, and exhibit characteristics of the areas of the later crossroads and internal meaning making, parent responses of resistance serve as challenges that propel development toward internal meaning making. These challenges lead to dissonance and force the students to make active decisions about trusting their internal voices, and effectively help to advance development toward internal meaning making. These situations would be characterized as developmentally effective experiences due to the presence of challenge that leads to developmental growth.

As mentioned previously, the role of the parent, and their level of influence, is dependent upon the development of the self, or in relation to Baxter Magolda, their placement on the continuum of development toward self-authorship. Therefore, the developmentally effective experience of counter responding to a parent response of resistance would have a larger influence on students who characterize a lower level on Baxter Magolda's continuum of development. For students who have achieved a level of internal meaning making, it is reasonable to expect a

parent response of resistance to have a much smaller effect on their development than would a similar parent response on a student who is entering the crossroads.

In extending Baxter Magolda's theory of self-authorship, parents play two roles in the development of students toward internal meaning making. In the first role, parents can support their children to develop their internal voices by responding with acceptance to student assertions of self. When students are met with a response of acceptance, they counter respond with confidence. In this way, parents contribute to the support necessary for development. Conversely, when parents respond to a student's assertion of self with resistance, they create dissonance and the conditions for a developmentally effective experience. By presenting a challenge to the student, they force the student to counter respond with either deference or defiance. The student's counter response then leads the student to refine the internal voice and progress toward internal meaning making, or revert back to rely on external sources of meaning making. In this way, the parent is not unlike other factors of the student's life that can trigger developmentally effective experiences. Given the dissonance that can be associated with these experiences, these times of challenge and conflict have implications on students' developmental growth, and result in a progression in the developmental continuum toward internal meaning making.

It is important to note that, since parents were yet to be considered in the development of college students, it was necessary for me to use theoretical understandings of the role of parents outside of higher education research to further characterize the role of parents in the lives of their college age children. By using Arnett's (2004) theory of emerging adulthood, I was able to better contextualize the characteristics of the parent-child relationship during the stage of emerging adulthood. There were two clear areas of Arnett's characterization of emerging adults that

informed elements of this study. The first is the perception of the parents in how they regard the adult status of their college age children. The parents' views of their college age children as adults was central to how they responded to the student assertions of self. For example, parents who did not see their children as adults were more likely to intervene in their children's decision making. In this way, parents who did not view their college age students as adults, were more likely to respond with resistance to student assertions of self, and provide developmental challenge to their children. Contrary to this, parents who viewed their children as adults tended to respond to their children's assertions of self with acceptance, or with resistance that still valued the underlying assertion of the self. Therefore, the idea of the parent accepting the student as an adult was an important contribution of Arnett's theory of emerging adults to this study of the role of parents in college student decision making.

The second area of Arnett's characterization of emerging adults that was important to this study was the renegotiation of the parent-child relationship. A foundational tenet of the stage of emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2004, 2006; Aquilino, 2006), the renegotiation of the parent-child relationship to a relationship between two adults had implications for how students developed toward internal meaning making. Parent-child relationships that had transitioned to adult-adult relationships were characterized by participants as based in mutual respect and trust. This trust and respect provided a secure base for students, from which they felt supported to assert the independent self. As the students asserted the self, the relationship they had with their parents helped them to defy any parent responses of resistance, and continue to develop their internal voices. This defiance was made possible by knowing that their parents would respect their assertions of self, even if they did not agree with their content. Once students and parents reached this type of relationship, conceptualized by Arnett (2004, 2006), they were better able to

refine and development their internal voices toward advanced levels of Baxter Magolda's (1998) conceptualization of self-authorship.

In addition, participants who spoke of this type of parent-child relationship also talked about the role of their parents' support during times of challenge. Therefore, parents not only directly contributed to the development of the students' internal senses of self through their parent responses of acceptance and resistance, but were able to balance the challenge of the college environment by providing support to the student. While my study focuses on the role of parents in college student development by addressing their role in college student decision making, the role of the parent as a source of support was vitally important to students as they worked to define their own independent voices. When asked about the role of parent to student development, student participants routinely indicated that their parents' support was foundational to their development. The role of parent support to overall development is one area that needs to be further addressed as this research progresses.

7.2 IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORY

This study has implications for the future of college student development theory. In particular, the study informs an extension of Baxter Magolda's theory of self-authorship, which has implications for how it can be used in the future. In addition, there are implications for the use of theories outside of higher education to further develop conceptualizations of college student development, as well as the future study of college student development theory.

7.2.1 Using The Extension of Baxter Magolda's Theory of Self-Authorship

The ability of parents to impede or promote development has implications for the future study of Baxter Magolda's theory of self-authorship. Moving forward, it is vitally important to continue the study of the role of parents to college student development, especially in the parents' ability to promote and impede development. While this study provides an understanding of how parents promote development by creating opportunities for developmentally effective experiences, it is equally important to further define conditions that can impede this development. Over-challenging students with a less developed sense of self by resisting their assertions of self is one of these conditions that can impede development. In addition, it is important that the presence of over-supporting a student be examined more fully. Researchers (Dubas & Peterson, 1996; O'Connor, Allen, Bell, & Hansen, 1996) have argued that there may be a threshold of development where a parent's support is detrimental to development. While this was not evident within my study, it is an idea that warrants further research as this theory is expanded and the role of parents in impeding development is expanded. It is important to note that in my study, the parents with the most influence over their children's lives and decisions were overly challenging to the assertion of the self. In this study, I would not categorize any of the parents as overly supportive.

In addition, in extending Baxter Magolda's theory to account for the role of parents, I have repositioned one of the stages within her work, as well as questioned the inclusion of the final stage in a model of college student development. First, I have included the first stage of the crossroads as a part of my first level of development, expressing self through others, due to the reliance on external sources for meaning making. In my study, simply acknowledging that there needs to be a change in how they approach external sources of meaning making was not enough

for the student to exercise her own internal voice in decision making situations. For this reason, I have included this area of Baxter Magolda's conceptualization of self-authorship theory within the most externally-driven stage of development in my theory. Also, the final stage of Baxter Magolda's theory warrants further examination. As the final stage of the continuum was added as a result of the longitudinal interviews of her participants after they had left college, its inclusion in a model of college student development needs to be evaluated. As none of the participants in my study could be considered as reaching this final position, it raised the question of whether college students can reach this level of internal meaning making during college. As this research progresses, it is important to further consider if the final position of Baxter Magolda's theory is appropriate for the higher education context.

7.2.2 Using Theories Outside of Higher Education to Contribute to Student Development Theory

Since there is little established research in higher education regarding the role of parents, I used Arnett's theory of emerging adulthood to conceptualize the role of parents in the lives of college students. Arnett's theory applied to people between the ages of 18 and 25, which is the age range for traditional age college students, on whom this study is focused. The use of Arnett allowed me to further contextualize the parent-child relationship to determine the role that the parent plays in college student development. In particular, it provided a framing for how parents and students renegotiate their relationships, as well as the role of the parents' acceptance of the adult status of their college age children. Given that the renegotiation of the parent-child relationship occurs concurrently with many developmental changes for college students, the

theory provided a more comprehensive look at the role of the parent in the college lives of the students.

Without the use of Arnett's conceptualization of the emerging adult, there would have been no foundation for me to understand the parent-child relationship during this particular stage of life. This foundation was vitally important to building theory around the parents' perception of their college age students' adult status and the role this played in the parents' level of intervention in college student decision making. The usefulness of the application of outside theories to higher education for my study, in particular, has implications for how we approach further studies in higher education when engaging with possible influences outside of the college environment. The field of higher education research is a naturally interdisciplinary field, as we often rely on the foundation of multiple other areas of study to apply to the higher education context. As the field of higher education study continues to evolve, it will be necessary to use outside theories, and possibly marry them with research inherent to higher education, to provide more comprehensive understandings of our field.

7.2.3 The Future Study of College Student Development Theory

The current landscape of college student development theory is very different from just 10 years ago. While pursuing my master's degree in student affairs in higher education 10 years ago, we studied the foundational theories of Chickering and Reisser's (1993) psychosocial theory of development, Perry's (1968) theory of intellectual development, and Schlossberg's (1984) transition theory, as well as individual social identity development theories and ecological models of development. These theories, while they remain the foundation of the field, are receiving less and less emphasis in favor of theories that address development multi-

dimensionally. Theories such as Abes' (2007) reconceptualized model of multiple dimensions of identity (RMMDI), bring multiple facets of development together, such as identity development, meaning making, relationship development under one theoretical model.

While the foundational theories of college student development did not include any discussion of the role of parents, outside of the need for separation and individuation from parents for positive development (Chickering & Reisser, 1993), the newest conceptualizations of college student development theory do little more to explicate the role of parents in college student development. Given the trend of increased involvement of parents in higher education, and what this study demonstrates as a clear role of parents in the development of the self, there are implications for not addressing the role of factors outside of the immediate college environment on college student development. While the RMMDI, for instance, does include, in its model, the role of contextual influences, one of which is family, it does not expand on the role of family, and treats it as context and not as an active factor in college student development. My study suggests that parents do, in fact, play an active role in the development of college students. Since these new models of development were predicated on studies conducted at the very beginning of the changes in parent interaction, it is important that those who study and teach college student development theories address how these changing interaction patterns and active roles of parents influence development.

7.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study examined the specific role of parents in college student development and decision making. By interviewing both students and their parents, I was able to understand the

perceived role of the parent by both the student and parent, and develop a more complete understanding of this role. The research resulted in two substantive theories that described the role of parent. There are opportunities to advance this research, related to the use of constructivist grounded theory methods, the limitations of the sample of this study, and emerging ideas from the study. In this section, I describe opportunities for further research, using the substantive theories developed through this study as a starting point for examining, more comprehensively, the role of parents in college student development and decision making.

7.3.1 Constructivist Grounded Theory Methods

I used constructivist grounded theory methods for many reasons, but especially due to its strengths in focusing on process and allowing the research participants to construct their own realities. While traditional grounded theory methods similarly provide guidance on data collection and analysis toward theory building, CGT helped me to focus on the process of how parents and students build and maintain their relationships. In addition, by breaking down the wall between participant and researcher, CGT allowed me to fully embody my participants in an effort to understand their realities. The ability of CGT to make the research process one of interaction and relationship created a space for me to understand the perspectives of my participants and build relationships with them where they felt comfortable sharing a journey of meaning making with me, which was vitally important to my study.

In addition to the importance of CGT to my study, my study also contributed to the growth of the method in using it to examine dyads in qualitative research. Charmaz (2014) offered numerous examples of studies using CGT to help the reader to use the methods in her guide, *Constructing Grounded Theory*. All of the studies that she cited used interviews with

multiple research participants about their perception of a common issue that they had experienced, such as loss of a loved one, terminal illness, and bullying, to broadly understand the phenomenon. While I was, also, trying to broadly bring understanding to a central issue, the role of parents in college student development and decision making, my study was slightly different from those that Charmaz (2014) used as guides in her book. Since I interviewed parents and students about their personal perceptions of the role of parents in college student development and decision making, in my analysis, I had to take into consideration both points of view about one specific situation or experience before beginning to construct meaning on the broader area. Given the relative newness of CGT to qualitative research, and the constant evolution of research methods, it is important that future research continue to advance the use of CGT in new ways. The use of the method to study parent/student dyads in an effort to advance understanding of the relationship they share and the role of parents in the lives of the students is one such advancement.

7.3.2 Limitations to the Study – Understanding Diverse Perspectives

One opportunity for advancing this research is in respect to the limitation of the sample in this study. While there are a number of limitations to this study, the greatest limitation is that the sample of participants were homogenous in terms of race/ethnicity, sex/gender, socioeconomic status, first-generation status, family type, and the type of relationship that students had with their parents. In terms of race/ethnicity, 16 of the 18 student participants and 17 of the 19 parent participants in my study are Caucasian, one student and parent are African-American, and one student and parent are Asian-American. In addition, there is no representation in my sample from sexual/gendered minorities. Therefore, there is a large proportion of the college student

population whose views were not represented in this study. In the future, research can use the substantive theories of this study as a reference point to focus on the experiences of racially, ethnically, and sexual/gendered diverse college students, as well as students from varied socioeconomic statuses, family types, and first-generation statuses, in efforts to gain an understanding about the role of parents on the development and decision making of all populations of college students. This need is increasingly important as the identities of college students continue to evolve and diversify.

An additional limitation to my study is in the family types represented. While there was some diversity in marital status among the participants in my study, all students grew up in traditional family units. Therefore, diverse family units, such as multi-generational households, same-sex families, and independent students, were not represented in this study. Future research needs to address nontraditional types of families in the lives of college students. Another limitation to this study is that students and parents selected to participate. This suggests that the parent and student had a positive relationship since both parties were willing to share personal stories and experiences with an unknown researcher. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that this study is limited in its ability to address different types of relationships that college students may have with their parents. While my sample did display different types of relationships with regards to interaction levels, perceived closeness, and mutual dependence, none of the students or parents in my sample indicated a largely negative relationship. Students and parents, alike, spoke about navigating challenges in their relationships, but there was no indication of a characteristically poor relationship between parent and student. Future research should work to capture more diverse relationship patterns among students and parents to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the role of parents in the lives of college students, especially for

those whose relationship is not positive. Finally, while I had intended to maximize variation within my sample by collecting data from two different types of institutions, there were no patterns of difference that emerged from the students at either institution. Therefore, it is necessary to continue to broadly sample to gain any understanding of how parent-student relationships may differ among that various types of institutions of higher education.

7.3.3 Understanding How Parents Parent

One of the areas of future research emerged while speaking with the parent participants. Listening to the parents talk about how they parent their children led me to question why some parents talked about intentional parenting, and others did not. When asking parents about their communication patterns with their children, many parents talked about intentional ways that they had pulled back from interacting with their children to give them space to become more independent, while others talked about parenting in more reactive ways where they were having trouble not being involved in their children's day to day lives. In continuing to understand the role that parents play in their children's development, it is important to understand what factors have influenced how the parents, parent their children. Areas of particular interest for advancing this study would be to focus on the parents who attended college, to determine how their own experiences as students affect how they approach their children as students, as well as on parents who did not attend college, to understand if there are any differences in the way parents approach their roles with their college age children. This research would have important practical implications for how higher education professionals approach educating parents about interacting with their college age children.

7.3.4 Understanding the Role of Parents Relative to Others

A final opportunity to extend this research is to expand the interviews to capture the importance of parents to student development and decision making relative to other sources of challenge and support. By asking questions about the role of parents, participants were prompted to consider the role of parents in development and decision making. By using a broad interview protocol that allows the students to determine the factors that are most important to their development and decision making, future research would be able to discern the role that parents play in the lives of college students relative to other elements of the inside and outside of college environment. This has important implications for research as well as in practice for student affairs professionals who work to support students in developmentally appropriate ways. One implications for further understanding the role of parents relative to others, is in positioning the role of the parent in relation to other forces that are outside of the college environment. While my study contends that parents play an active role in development and decision making, they are not the only active force in development. It is important to identify the other active forces in development and decision making, and broadening the scope of this study would help to address the role of others outside of the college environment to college student development and decision making.

7.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Given the changing and increasing interaction between parents and college students over the last 15-20 years, this study has clear implications for how we talk about parental involvement

in higher education as well as implications for higher education practice. These implications include considerations for how to work with parents of college students, helping them to understand the developmental paths of their children, as well as how to best support and challenge their students in developmentally appropriate ways.

7.4.1 Implications for Parents

My study provides a picture of the role of parents in college student development and decision making. Overall, the takeaway for parents is that they have the ability to both facilitate and impede the development of their child's independent self based on how they respond to their children's assertions of self. The key factor for parents is to gain an understanding of the developmental characteristics of their child in order to contribute to growth, through both acceptance and resistance. For many of the parents in this study, building developmentally effective experiences began with standing back and supporting the students in asserting independence or intentionally creating opportunities for the student to assert independence. After providing a secure base for students to assert independence, parents can continue to create opportunities for development by challenging students to refine their independent voices and critically evaluate their own ideas with the ideas of others. By resisting assertions of self and pushing students to reconsider or defend the independent self, students are able to further strengthen their internal voices.

In addition, parents play a role in directly and indirectly providing support for students in efforts toward development. While parents can directly support students' assertions of self when they are presented by students, leading to student counter responses of confidence and development of the internal voice, parents can also provide indirect support to students when

they are faced with challenges from the college environment. While not an element of this study, student participants consistently spoke of the role of parent support through challenge as being pivotal to their development over their college years. Therefore, it is important to remember that parents can support students through independent decision making, but also can provide the balance of support to challenges presented by the college environment. Again, parents should be aware of their children's developmental progress and strength of self in order to offer the needed balance of support for challenges their children may be facing.

7.4.2 Implications for Student Affairs Practice

With the attention paid in the media about the role of the parent in higher education, institutions are constantly working to engage parents effectively without disrupting the developmental pathways of the student. This study joins others in suggesting how student affairs professionals can partner with parents to help promote positive developmental experiences for college students.

7.4.2.1 Student-Parent Contact

It is important for student affairs professionals to remember that, while college student development theory talks about development broadly, each student will develop differently from one another. The same is true when considering the role of parents in college student development. In the substantive theories I presented, I spoke about the broad role of parents in college student development, but the influence the parents had on the development of their children was dependent on the developmental trajectories of the students. Each student interacted very differently with their parents in both how frequently they interacted and by what means they

used to interact, and there was no clear discernible pattern of communication that impeded development. Instead, impediments to student development were dependent upon the specific developmental location of the student and specific interactions with the parents. With this in mind, when working with students, it is important that student affairs professionals not condemn all interaction with parents as detrimental to development. For instance, there were students who participated in my study who interacted with their parents multiple times per day, as well as students who interacted with their parents monthly, who were similarly in advanced stages of development within my substantive theories. Therefore, the amount of contact with a parent has far less influence over the student's development than the content of interactions may have. For the students in my study, how frequently they communicated with their parents varied throughout the academic year, and there were no patterns of communication that related to the development of the independent self.

In my study, students progressed or reverted developmentally based on specific contacts with parents that involved assertions of self, parent responses, and student counter responses. When working with students, it is important to remember that students and parents will all have unique relationships and communication patterns, and that this will play less of a role in the development of students than the content of isolated interactions that involve student assertions of self. It is important that this difference is acknowledged. Far too often, frequent contact with parents is mistaken for over-parenting and an over-reliance on parents. Other studies (Creamer & Laughlin, 2005; Laughlin & Creamer, 2007; Meszaros, et al., 2009) have also called for a change in the way that we approach the relationship of parents and college students. In the aforementioned studies, the researcher worked to actively reframe the mistaken perception that frequent contact between college students and their parents corresponded to a dependent

relationship. My study further supports that the frequency of student-parent contact is not indicative of the type of relationship that students and parents share, nor is it indicative of the progression of the student's independent self. It is the process of parent response and student counter response through isolated interactions that plays an active role in influencing the development of the student self.

7.4.2.2 Understanding initiation of contact and interaction patterns

In this study, I provided a brief examination of the initiation of contact, and patterns of interaction between college students and their parents, which can help practitioners to understand when and why high student-parent contact may occur. Students and parents offered information on changes to their interaction patterns, such as times when they interacted more frequently and times when they interacted less frequently. Parents and students, alike, indicated that they interacted less frequently during busy times of the semester, but more frequently during times of high stress, such as midterm examinations or when there were problems with a tuition or rent bill. In addition, when talking with students and parents about the initiation of contact, that majority of participants indicated that the student takes the lead in initiating contact, while some talked about an equal mix between the student and parent. In addition, as students and parents explained why the initiation is led by the student, the responses overwhelmingly pointed to a level of respect that the parents had for the students' schedules, their own personal time, and not interrupting their lives at school. While this may not be novel in itself, when considering that students are more likely to initiate contact with their parents, and that they are in contact more frequently during high stress times, we can see a trend developing of how students solicit and rely on parents for support during challenging times. In terms of practice, this means keeping parents informed of the possibility of times of high stress, as well as giving them tools for how to

help their children manage stress and independently take responsibility to address challenges. Practitioners can work to partner with parents and families to inform them of the potential challenges facing their students. As student and parent communication patterns continue to evolve, it is imperative that student affairs practitioners work to understand the needs of the student as well as how they can best inform parents as partners in supporting their college age children's development.

7.4.2.3 Working with Parents

In line with the previous understanding of interaction patterns and initiation of contact, my study contributes information as to how parents need to be aware of the changing developmental needs. While the idea of helping parents to understand college student development is not new (see Wartman & Savage, 2008), my study adds further support to this role for student affairs practitioners. As my study suggests, parents play an important role in college student development and decision making, and can serve to advance and impede the student developmentally. Therefore, it is important for parents to understand what their students' developmental needs may be, and how best to contribute to their students' positive development. This includes helping parents to understand times when they could stymie the development of the self by offering too much challenge or too much support. As the substantive theories suggest, parents can promote the expression of an independent self by responding in developmentally appropriate ways of acceptance and resistance. It is important for practitioners to communicate the developmental pathways and needs of the student as they progress through college, as well as tangible examples of developmentally appropriate behavior for parents. This can be done through orientation sessions for parents, through ongoing newsletters sent to parents and families throughout the students' collegiate careers, and by engaging with parents during visitation days.

Practitioners need to communicate with parents the general developmental pathways of college students, what the parents can do to promote positive development in their college age children, and the expectations of the institution for the parents' developmentally appropriate engagement with their child. By partnering with parents in this way, student affairs practitioners can help parents to understand the many changes that will occur, and how to best support their children as they develop.

7.5 CONCLUSION

This study addressed the role of parents in college student development and decision making. Due to the increase in parent and college student interactions over the last 15 years, and the uncertainty regarding the role of parents in college student development, this research is both timely and important. One of the foundational ideas of student development is that students must face challenges and independently make sense of situations in order to develop autonomy and internal structures of meaning making (Baxter Magolda, 1998, 2004, 2008). This includes facing challenges independently from parental intervention. In response to the growing involvement of parents in the lives of college students, researchers (Cullaty, 2011; Pizzolato & Hicklen, 2011) questioned whether developmental moments where students can independently solve problems were less likely to occur. My study shows the complexity of this relationships, where students can have developmentally effective experiences of challenge and dissonance, as well as support, within the confines of the parent-student relationship.

Through this research, I developed two substantive theories that work together to examine the overall role of parents in college student development and decision making, and

extend Baxter Magolda's theory of self-authorship. Ultimately, I found that parents play an active role in the development of internal structures of meaning making through their responses to students' assertions of self. In fact, parents were able to contribute to opportunities of challenge by resisting the students' assertions of self, directly creating conditions for developmentally effective experiences. In addition, the support parents provide through challenging experiences as well as in direct relation to students' assertions of self played a role in the developmental progression of the independent self. Yet, while parents played a role in developmental progression, they also played a role in developmental reversion through providing too much challenge and too little support to students' assertions of self. Therefore, I contend that parents play an important role in development, and while they have the ability to contribute to developmental progress through providing support and challenge, they also can provide impediments to development by overly challenging the use of the independent voice, and not supporting students to define internal structures of meaning making. As parent and student relationships and interactions continue to evolve, this study provides a starting point from which researchers can continue to examine the role of parents to the development of students. Given the trend in the increasing levels of interaction between today's college students and their parents, this research could serve to be increasingly important to how institutions and researchers engage and partner with parents as active contributors to college student development and decision making.

APPENDIX A

BAXTER MAGOLDA'S THEORY OF SELF-AUTHORSHIP CONTINUUM OF DEVELOPMENT

Table 2. Baxter Magolda's Theory of Self-Authorship Continuum of Development

Stage	Cognitive Dimension	Interpersonal Dimension	Intrapersonal Dimension
<i>External Meaning Making</i>			
<i>Trusting External Authority</i>	Knowledge is absolute and only held by experts. They rely on those experts to convey ideas of right and wrong, and do not question authority.	In relationships, they view themselves as less important and will defer to others to make decisions	They base their identities on how others see them, and on an externally defined system of beliefs and values.
<i>Tensions with Trusting External Authority</i>	As individuals begin to experience conflicts with external authority, they begin to recognize that some knowledge is contestable and subjective.	Begin to share ideas in relationships with others, but only do so to gain approval.	View themselves in relation to external sources such as society's expectations, they know that they could internally define their identity, but find that process to be intimidating.
<i>Recognizing Shortcomings of Trusting External Authority</i>	See knowledge as increasingly uncertain, and begin to find comfort in that.	Individuals start to become aware of when relationships do not meet their expectations or align with their values.	They can see the influence of others on their identity, but cannot yet address it, although they do see the need to understand more about who they are.

Table 2. Baxter Magolda's Theory of Self-Authorship Continuum of Development (continued)

<i>The Crossroads</i>			
<i>Questioning External Authority</i>	They begin to realize that they could make decisions and construct knowledge based on their own internally defined belief system, but they are yet to construct this system.	In this position, individuals recognize the need to change how they depend on external authority, but find difficulty redefining their relationship to these external influences.	Since they are still trying to define who they are and how they will relate to others, individuals in this position have difficulty in internally defining their decisions and the meaning they make.
<i>Constructing the Internal Voice</i>	Their knowledge construction is still controlled by external sources, although the internal voice begins to compete with external sources in some contexts.	Intrapersonally and interpersonally, the individual continues to explore the self and how to construct a system of beliefs, a personal identity, and mutual relationships with others.	Intrapersonally and interpersonally, the individual continues to explore the self and how to construct a system of beliefs, a personal identity, and mutual relationships with others.
<i>Listening to the Internal Voice</i>	The first position where the internal voice takes precedence over external influences. Individuals now have the ability to internally make decisions and recognize how to process external influence.	As individuals learn to listen to their internal voices, they also begin to control the external forces that are still present throughout the three dimensions of development.	They begin to internally define their senses of self, strengthening the internal voice in relationships with others to evaluate how external forces are shaping their identities.
<i>Cultivating the Internal Voice</i>	They continue to evaluate their beliefs, goals, and values to internally define their identities	While making strong strides to strengthen their internal voice within the cognitive and intrapersonal dimensions, individuals in this position still struggle to separate their internal points of view from those with whom they share close relationships.	As the internal voice becomes more established, individuals recognize the importance of depending on internally defined beliefs and mediating external forces when making decisions.
<i>Internal Meaning Making</i>			
<i>Trusting the Internal Voice</i>	Individuals within this position take ownership over their decision making and construction of knowledge and no longer look to others to influence their decisions.	In relationships with others, individuals continue to work on trusting the self to internally define what they want in relationships. This often leads to redefining their relationships to others, and possibly ending relationships that are not able to evolve to a place of shared respect.	Intrapersonally, they understand that they are in control of their own lives and begin to construct their own joy.

Table 2. Baxter Magolda's Theory of Self-Authorship Continuum of Development (continued)

<i>Building an Internal Foundation</i>	In this position, individuals begin to construct an internally-defined philosophy of life across all three developmental dimensions that they can use to guide their decision making, meaning making, and identity construction. This philosophy helps them to mitigate external influences, evaluate the viewpoints of others in relation to their own internally held system of beliefs, and build relationships with others based upon mutual respect.
<i>Securing Internal Commitments</i>	The final position within Baxter Magolda's continuum completely blurs the three dimensions of development into an overall internal commitment to the development of the self. Often referred to as the development of wisdom by Baxter Magolda's participants (2012), this position is characterized by "the ability to "know" internally and intuitively because knowledge had become central to the core self" (p. 93).

APPENDIX B

STUDENT AND PARENT RECRUITMENT LETTERS

B.1 STUDENT RECRUITMENT LETTER – MID-ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY

Dear Student,

My name is Dana Winters and I am a doctoral student in Social and Comparative Analysis in Education at the University of Pittsburgh. I am the principal investigator on the study entitled “Student Development: Self-Authoring in an Era of Increased Parental Involvement”. This study is designed to learn about the role of parents on college student development and decision making processes, and serves as my dissertation. All students who have completed at least the second year of college, have lived away from their parents while enrolled in college, attend the Mid-Atlantic University or Holy Ghost College College, and their parents will be eligible to participate. Approximately 20 students from the Mid-Atlantic University and Holy Ghost College College and 20 parents of those students will be invited to participate in this research study.

If you agree to participate in this research study, you will be interviewed and asked about your views regarding the role of parents on college student development and decision making processes. The interview will last approximately one hour, and you may be contacted for a follow-up interview to clarify or elaborate on something you have said. To help me more accurately capture your views, I will audiotape your responses. Students will be compensated in the form of gift cards for student and parent participation. After the completion of one student and one parent interview, the student will receive \$30. In addition, the student will receive \$20 for any subsequent interview of the student or parent. Both the student and parent must complete an interview in order for the student to receive the incentive.

If you are interested in participating in this study, or you have any questions or concerns, please contact Dana Winters at dmw67@pitt.edu or 724-255-2822.

Thank you for your consideration.

B.2 STUDENT RECRUITMENT LETTER – HOLY GHOST COLLEGE

Dear Student,

My name is Dana Winters and I work with the Fred Rogers Center at Saint Vincent College. I am also a doctoral student in Social and Comparative Analysis in Education at the University of Pittsburgh. I am the principal investigator on the study entitled “Student Development: Self-Authoring in an Era of Increased Parental Involvement”. This study is designed to learn about the role of parents on college student development and decision making processes, and serves as my dissertation. All students who have completed at least the second year of college, have lived away from their parents while enrolled in college, attend the Mid-Atlantic University or Holy Ghost College College, and their parents will be eligible to participate. Approximately 20 students from Mid-Atlantic University and Holy Ghost College College and 20 parents of those students will be invited to participate in this research study.

If you agree to participate in this research study, you will be interviewed by the principal investigator. The interviewer will ask about your views regarding the role of parents on college student development and decision making processes. The interview will last approximately one hour, and you may be contacted for a follow-up interview to clarify or elaborate on something you have said. To help me more accurately capture your views, I will audiotape your responses. Students will be compensated in the form of gift cards for student and parent participation. After the completion of one student and one parent interview, the student will receive \$30. In addition, the student will receive \$20 for any subsequent interview of the student or parent. Both the student and parent must complete an interview in order for the student to receive the incentive.

If you are interested in participating in this study, or you have any questions, please contact Dana Winters at dana.winters@stvincent.edu or 724-255-2822.

Thank you for your consideration.

B.3 PARENT RECRUITMENT LETTER

Dear Parent,

My name is Dana Winters and I am a doctoral student in Social and Comparative Analysis in Education at the University of Pittsburgh. I am the principal investigator on the study entitled “Student Development: Self-Authoring in an Era of Increased Parental Involvement”. This study is designed to learn about the role of parents on college student development and decision making processes, and serves as my dissertation. You are being contacted because your student has indicated interest in participating in this study. All students who have completed at least the second year of college, have lived away from their parents while enrolled in college, attend Mid-Atlantic University or Holy Ghost College College, and their parents will be eligible to participate. Approximately 20 students from the Mid-Atlantic University and Holy Ghost College College and 20 parents of those students will be invited to participate in this research study.

If you agree to participate in this research study, I will interview you via phone and ask about your views regarding the role of parents on college student development and decision making processes. The interview will last approximately 20-40 minutes, and you may be contacted for a follow-up interview to clarify or elaborate on something you have said. To help me more accurately capture your views, I will audiotape your responses.

There is no risk involved in this study. Your identity will not be revealed in any description or publications of this research. Although I will audiotape the interview, I will not refer to you by name during the taping, and I will retain the tapes only until the completion of the study; we will then destroy them. Your responses will not be shared with any other respondent in the study, including your student. All responses are confidential.

You will receive no direct benefit from participating in this study. However, you may learn more about yourself as a result of completing the interview. There are no costs to you for participating in this study. Students will be compensated in the form of gift cards for student and parent participation. After the completion of one student and one parent interview, the student will receive \$30. In addition, the student will receive \$20 for any subsequent interview of the student or parent. Both the student and parent must complete an interview in order for the student to receive the incentive.

To schedule an interview, or if you have any questions or concerns, please contact Dana Winters at dmw67@pitt.edu or 724-255-2822.

Thank you,

Dana Winters

APPENDIX C

STUDENT INTERVIEW #1 – PROTOCOL

Table 3. Student Interview #1 Protocol

Question	Purpose/Research Question
Introduction	
Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research. As you know, I am interested in understanding more about the role of parents in decision-making and college student development. I have always been interested in the relationship between parents and their children throughout the lifespan, and how parents contribute to their children’s development. As a parent myself, I am particularly interested in how the relationship between parents and children evolves as the child grows. This research is an element of that evolution.	
Initial Phase	
Can you tell me a little bit about yourself? <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Where are you from?– What are you studying?– Do you have roommates?– What do you like to do outside of school?	Background/Demographic – these questions are intended to build rapport with the respondent and begin a conversation
Primary Phase	
How would you describe your family structure? <ul style="list-style-type: none">– How would you describe your relationship with your parents? Siblings? Grandparents? Aunts/Uncles?	Background/Demographic 2) How do students perceive relationships with family contributing to their development?

Table 3. Student Interview #1 Protocol (continued)

<p>How do you interact with your parents while at college?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How often do you interact? – What do you usually talk about? – Compared to your peers, do you think you interact more or less often with your parents? Why? – What do you think about your level of interaction with your parents? Is it too much? Not enough? Just right? Why? 	<p>2) How do students perceive relationships with family contributing to their development?</p>
<p>How have you changed and grown since coming to college?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What were you like before coming to college? – Who are you now that you weren't before? – How has college affected this growth? – How have your parents affected this growth? – How have others contributed to this growth? 	<p>2) How do students perceive relationships with family contributing to their development?</p>
<p>Can you tell me about some times when you have faced challenges while you were at school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How did you address this challenge? – How did you feel about these challenges? – Who did you turn to for support? – How did your parents support you during these times? – How was your parents' support similar to what you expected? – How was your parents' support different from what you expected? 	<p>2) How do students perceive relationships with family contributing to their development?</p>
<p>Can you tell me about some decisions you have made? Deciding on your major? Career? Relationships with others? Engagement in activities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Why were these decisions important to you? – How do you usually approach important decisions? – Who do you turn to for support? – When trusted people give you advice, how do you use that advice? – How do you feel after making an important decision? 	<p>1) How do students arrive at the decisions they make?</p> <p>a) How are families involved in student decision-making?</p>

Table 3. Student Interview #1 Protocol (continued)

Thinking about a really important decision you have made recently, can you tell me about the process you used to make the decision?	1) How do students arrive at the decisions they make?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Did you consult anyone for advice? – How was this decision making process typical to how you approach other decisions? How was it different? – What role did your family play in the decision-making process? – Why is this particular decision important to you? – If you could change anything about the way you made this decision, what would it be? 	a) How are families involved in student decision-making?
Concluding Phase	
In light of what you have told me today, how would you describe your parents?	2) How do students perceive relationships with family contributing to their development?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How would you describe your relationship with your parents? – How would you describe your relationship with your parents before coming to college? – How has your relationship with your parents changed since coming to college? 	
What else would you like to tell me that I haven't thought of?	

APPENDIX D

PARENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Table 4. Parent Interview Protocol

Question	Purpose/Research Question
Introduction	
Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research. As you know, I am interested in understanding more about the role of parents in decision-making and college student development. I have always been interested in the relationship between parents and their children throughout the lifespan, and how parents contribute to their children's development. As a parent myself, I am particularly interested in how the relationship between parents and children evolves as children grow. This research addresses an element of that evolution.	
Initial Phase	
Can you tell me a little bit about yourself and your household? – Did you attend college? – Is your child from the University of Pittsburgh your first child to attend college?	Background/Demographic – these questions are intended to build rapport with the respondent
Primary Phase	
How would you describe your relationship with your child? – Could you talk a little about your family structure?	Background/Demographic 3) How do families perceive their relationships with their children during college contributing to their children's development?

Table 4. Parent Interview Protocol (continued)

Initial Phase	
<p>How do you interact with your child while he/she at college?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How often do you interact? – What do you usually talk about? – Compared to your peers, do you think you interact more or less often with your child? Why? – What do you think about your level of interaction with your child? Is it too much? Not enough? Just right? Why? 	<p>3) How do families perceive their relationships with their children during college contributing to their children's development?</p>
<p>How would you describe your child?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How has s/he changed/grown since coming to college? – How has the college experience contributed to this change/growth? – How do you see yourself contributing to this change/growth? 	<p>3) How do families perceive their relationships with their children during college contributing to their children's development?</p>
<p>Can you tell me about some times when your child has faced challenges while he/she was at school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How did you help him/her to address this challenge? – How do you see your role in helping your child address challenges? 	<p>3) How do families perceive their relationships with their children during college contributing to their children's development?</p>
<p>Can you tell me about some decisions your child has made?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How does your child usually approach important decisions? – Who do they turn to for support? – How do you view your role in your child's decision making? – How do you support your child in making decisions? 	<p>1) How do students arrive at the decisions they make?</p> <p>a) How are families involved in student decision-making?</p> <p>2) How do families perceive their relationships with their children during college contributing to their children's development?</p>

Table 4. Parent Interview Protocol (continued)

Thinking about a really important decision your child has made recently, can you tell me about the process he/she used to make the decision?	1) How do students arrive at the decisions they make?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How was this decision making process typical to how he/she approaches other decisions? How was it different? – What role did you and your family play in the decision-making process? – Why is this particular decision important? – Would you have changed anything during the decision-making process? How did you deal with that? 	a) How are families involved in student decision-making?
Concluding Phase	
In light of what you have told me today, how would you describe your relationship with your child?	3) How do families perceive their relationships with their children during college contributing to their children's development?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How would you describe your relationship with your child before college? – How has your relationship with your child changed since college? 	
What else would you like to tell me that I haven't thought of?	

APPENDIX E

THEORETICAL SAMPLING INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. Could you talk to me about a time when you exerted independence or made an independent decision?
 - a. Could you tell me how your parents reacted to this decision/independence?
 - b. How did you feel about the way your parents reacted? Was it what you expected? If not, how was it different?
 - c. How did it alter the way you approached your next decision?
2. Could you talk to me about times when you would turn to your parents for support through a decision and times when you would turn to your friends/a mentor for support through a decision?
 - a. Could you talk to me about a time you turned to your parents for support through a decision?
 - i. Was this support what you expected? If not, how was it different?
 - ii. How did it alter the way you approached your next decision?
 - b. Could you talk to me about a time you turned to friends/a mentor for support through a decision?
 - i. Was this support what you expected? If not, how was it different?
 - ii. How did it alter the way you approached your next decision?
 - c. Could you talk to me about how the support you received from your parents differed from the support you received from your friends/a mentor?
3. How would you describe a time when you thought your parents trusted you?
 - a. How did that make you feel?
 - b. How did it change the way you reacted to other situations?
 - c. Would you say your parents trust you regularly? Why or why not?
 - i. How do you know that your parents trust you?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abar, C.C., Abar, B., Turrisi, R., & Belden, C. (2013). Communication technology used among parents and their college teens: Implications for college health promotion and risk prevention programs. *Journal of the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition*, 25(1), 61-76.
- Abes, E. S., & Jones, S. R. (2004). Meaning-making capacity and the dynamics of lesbian college students' multiple dimensions of identity. *Journal of College Student Development*, 45, 612-632.
- Arnett, J. J. (1997). Young people's conceptions of the transition to adulthood. *Youth & Society*, 29, 1-23.
- Arnett, J. J. (1998). Learning to stand alone: The contemporary American transition to adulthood in cultural and historical context. *Human Development*, 41, 295-315.
- Arnett, J. J. (2000). Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties. *American Psychologist*, 55, 469-480.
- Arnett, J. J. (2004). *Emerging adulthood: The winding road from the late teens through the twenties*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Arnett, J. J. (2006). Emerging adulthood: Understanding the new way of coming of age. In J.J. Arnett and J.L. Tanner (Eds.), *Emerging adults in America: Coming of age in the 21st century* (pp. 3-19). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Astin A. W. & Osegura, L. (2004). The declining "equity" of American higher education. *Review of Higher Education*, 27, 321-341.
- Aquilino, W. S. From adolescent to young adult: A prospective study of parent-child relations during the transition to adulthood. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 59, 670-686.
- Aquilino, W. S. (2006). Family relationships and support systems in emerging adulthood. In J. J. Arnett (Ed.). *Emerging adults in America: Coming of age in the 21st century* (pp. 193-217). Washington, DC: APA Books.
- Baker, T. (2006). Navigating state and federal student privacy laws to design educationally sound parental notice policies. *New Directions for Student Services*, 122, 81-103.

- Barber, J. P., & King, P. M. (2014). Pathways toward self-authorship: Student responses to the demands of developmentally effective experiences. *Journal of College Student Development, 55*, 430-450.
- Baxter Magolda, M. B. (1992). *Knowing and reasoning in college*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Baxter Magolda, M. B. (1998). Developing self-authorship in young adult life. *Journal of College Student Development, 39*, 143-156.
- Baxter Magolda, M. B. (1999). Constructing adult identities. *Journal of College Student Development, 40*, 629-644.
- Baxter Magolda, M. B. (2004). *Making their own way: Narratives for transforming higher education to promote self-authorship*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Baxter Magolda, M. B. (2008). Three elements of self-authorship. *Journal of College Student Development, 49*, 269-284.
- Baxter Magolda, M. B. (2009). The activity of meaning making: A holistic perspective on college student development. *Journal of College Student Development, 50*, 621-639.
- Baxter Magolda, M. B. (2010). The interweaving of epistemological, intrapersonal, and interpersonal development in the evolution of self-authorship. In M. B. Magolda, E. G. Creamer, & P. S. Meszaros (Eds.), *Development and assessment of self-authorship: Exploring the concept across cultures* (pp. 25-43). Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Baxter Magolda, M. B., & King, P. M. (2004). *Learning partnerships: Theory and models of practice to educate for self-authorship*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Baxter Magolda, M. B., King, P. M. Taylor, K. B., & Wakefield, K. M. (2012). Decreasing authority dependence during the first year of college. *Journal of College Student Development, 53*, 418-435.
- Blos, P. (1985). *Son and father: Before and beyond the Oedipus complex*. New York: The Free Press.
- Bowen, H. (1977). *Investment in learning: The individual and social value of higher education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Brooks, D. (2001). The organization kid. *Atlantic Monthly*. Accessed November 10, 2013, from <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2001/04/the-organization-kid/302164/>.
- Brown, S. C., Stevens, Jr., R. A., Troiano, P. F., & Schneider, M. K. (2002). Exploring complex phenomena: Grounded theory in student affairs research. *Journal of College Student Development, 43*, 173-183.
- Brubacher, J.S. & Rudy, W. (1997). *Higher education in transition: A history of American colleges and universities* (4th ed., Vol.4). New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

- Carney-Hall, K. (2008). Understanding current trends in family involvement. *New Directions for Student Services*, 122, 3-14.
- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. London, Sage Publications.
- Charmaz, K. (2011). A constructivist grounded theory analysis of losing and regaining a valued self. In F. J. Wertz, K. Charmaz, L. J. McMullen, R. Josselson, R. Anderson, and E. McSpadden, *Five ways of doing qualitative analysis: Phenomenological, psychology, grounded theory, discourse analysis, narrative research, and intuitive inquiry* (pp. 165-204). New York: Guilford.
- Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory (2nd Edition)*. London, Sage Publications.
- Coburn, K.L. (2006). Organizing a ground crew for today's helicopter parents. *About Campus*, 11(3), 9-16.
- College Board. (2013). *Trends in student aid 2013*. Retrieved on January 30, 2013 from <https://trends.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/student-aid-2013-full-report.pdf>.
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2015). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory (4th Edition)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Creamer, E. G., & Laughlin, A. (2005). Self-authorship and women's career decision making. *Journal of College Student Development*, 46, 13-27.
- Cullaty, B. (2011). The role of parental involvement in the autonomy development of traditional age college students. *Journal of College Student Development*, 52, 425-439.
- DeBard, R. (2004) Millennials coming to college. *New Directions for Student Services*, 106, 33-45.
- Dubas, J. S., & Petersen, A. C. (1996). Geographical distance from parents and adjustment during adolescence and young adulthood. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, 71, (1), 3-19.
- Erikson, E. H. (1968). *Identity: Youth and crisis*. New York: Norton.
- Evans, N. J., Forney, D. S., Guido, F. M., Patton, L. D., & Renn, K. A. (2009). *Student development in college: Theory, research, and practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Glaser, B. G. (1978). *Theoretical sensitivity*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.
- Glaser, B. G. (1992). *Basics of grounded theory analysis*. Mill Valley: Sociology Press.
- Glaser, B.G. (1998) *Doing grounded theory: Issues and discussions*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

- Glaser, B. G. (2003). *The grounded theory perspective II: Description's remodeling of grounded theory methodology*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.
- Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Goldscheider, F. K., & Davanzo, J. (1986). Semiautonomy and leaving home during early adulthood. *Social Forces*, 65, 187–201.
- Greene, A. L., Wheatley, S. M., & Aldava, J. F., IV. (1992). Stages on life's way: Adolescents' implicit theories of the life course. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 7, 364-381.
- Hofferth, S.L. & Sandberg, J.F. (2001). Changes in American children's time, 1981-1997. In T.J. Owens & S.L. Hofferth (Eds.), *Children at the millennium*. Oxford: Elsevier.
- Howe, N. & Strauss, W. (2000). *Millennials rising: The next great generation*. New York, NY: Harper.
- Howe, N. & Strauss, W. (2003). *Millennials go to college: Strategies for a new generation on campus, recruiting and admissions, campus life, and the classroom*. Washington, DC: American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers.
- Jamieson, L., Taylor, P. J., & Gibson, B. (2006). From pathological dependence to healthy independence: An emergent grounded theory of facilitated independent living. *The Grounded Theory Review*, 6(1), 79-107.
- Kegan, R. (1982). *The evolving self: Problem and process in human development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Kegan, R. (1994). *In over our heads: The mental demands of modern life*. Boston: Harvard University Press.
- Kenyon, D. B., & Koerner, S. S. (2009). Examining emerging-adults' and parents' expectations about autonomy during the transition to college. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 24, 293-320.
- Keppler, K., Mullendore, R., & Carey, A. (Eds.). (2005). *Partnering with the parents of today's college students*. Washington, DC: National Association of Student Personnel Administrators.
- Keniston, K. (1971). *Youth and dissent: The rise of a new opposition*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- King, P. M., Baxter-Magolda, M. B., Barber, J. P., Brown, M. K., & Lindsay, N. K. (2009). Developmentally effective experiences for promoting self-authorship. *Mind, Brain, and Education*, 3, 108-118.

- Kiyama, J. M., Harper, C. E., Ramos, D., Aguayo, D., Page, L. A., & Riester, K. A. (2015). Parent and family engagement in higher education. *ASHE Higher Education Report*, 41(6).
- Lareau, A. (2003). *Unequal childhoods: Class, race, and family life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Laughlin, A. & Creamer, E. G. (2007). Engaging differences: Self-authorship and the decision-making process. In P. S. Meszaros (Ed.), *Self-authorship: Advancing students' intellectual growth* (pp. 43-51). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Lefkowitz, E. S. (2005). "Things have gotten better": Developmental changes among emerging adults after the transition to university. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 20, 40-63.
- Levine, A., & Dean, D.R. (2012). *Generation on a tightrope: A portrait of today's college student*. Jossey-Bass.
- Levinson, D. J. (1978). *The seasons of a man's life*. New York: Ballantine.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (2000). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.) *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.) (pp. 163-188). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lowe, K., Dotterer, A. M., & Francisco, J. (2015). "If I pay, I have a say!": Parental payment of college education and its association with helicopter parenting. *Emerging Adulthood*, 3, 1-5.
- Mattingly, D., Prislun, R., McKenzie, T., Rodrigues, J., & Kayzar, B. (2002). Evaluating evaluations: The case of parent involvement programs." *Review of Educational Research*, 72, 549-577.
- Merriman, L. (2007). Managing parents 101: Minimizing interference and maximizing good will. *Leadership Exchange*, 5(1), 14-19.
- Meszaros, P. S. (2007). The journey of self-authorship: Why is it necessary? In P. S. Meszaros (Ed.), *Self-authorship: Advancing students' intellectual growth* (pp. 5-14). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Meszaros, P. S., Creamer, E., & Lee, S. (2009). Understanding the role of parental support for IT career decision making using the theory of self-authorship. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 33, 392-395.
- Nelson, L. J., Padilla-Walker, L. M., Carroll, J. S., Madsen, S. D., McNamara Barry, C., & Sarah Badger, S. (2007). "If you want me to treat you like an adult, start acting like one!" Comparing the criteria that emerging adults and their parents have for adulthood. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 21, 665-674.

- O'Connor, T. G., Allen, J. P., Bell, K. L., & Hauser, S. T. (1996). Adolescent-parent relationships and leaving home in young adulthood. *New Directions in Child Development*, 71, 39-52.
- Pascarella, E., & Terenzini, P. (1991). *How college affects students: Findings and insights from twenty years of research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Pascarella, E., & Terenzini, P. (2005). *How college affects students: Volume 2 a third decade of research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Patel, M. X., Doku, V., & Tannakoon, L. (2003). Challenges in recruitment of research participants. *Advances in Psychiatric Treatment*, 9, 229-238.
- Pizzolato, J. E. (2003). Developing self-authorship: Exploring the experiences of high-risk college students. *Journal of College Student Development*, 44, 797-812.
- Pizzolato, J. E. (2004). College with conflict: Self-authorship, coping, and adaptation to college in first-year, high-risk students. *Journal of College Student Development*, 45, 425-442.
- Pizzolato, J. E. (2005). Creating crossroads for self-authorship: Investigating the provocative moment. *Journal of College Student Development*, 46, 624-641.
- Pizzolato, J. E. (2010). What is 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* (pp. 187-206). Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.
- Pizzolato, J. & Hicklen, S. (2011). Parent involvement: Investigating the parent-child relationship in millennial college students. *Journal of College Student Development*, 52, 671-686.
- Pizzolato, J. E., Nguyen, T. K., Johnston, M. P., & Wang, S. (2012). Understanding context: Cultural, relational, & psychological interactions in self-authorship development. *Journal of College Student Development*, 53, 656-679.
- Reichert, J. (2007). Abduction: The logic of discovery in grounded theory. In A. Bryant and K. Charmaz (Eds.), *Handbook of grounded theory* (pp. 214-228). London, England: Sage.
- Rice, K. G. (1992). Separation-individuation and the adjustment to college: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 39, 203-213.
- Rice, K. G., & Mulkeen, P. (1995). Relationships with parents and peers: A longitudinal study of adolescent intimacy. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 10, 338-357.
- Samuolis, J., Layburn, K., and Schiaffino, K. M. (2001). Identity development and attachment to parents in college students. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 30, 373-383.
- Savage, M. & Petree, C. (2013). National survey of college and university parent programs. Unpublished report.

- Semyonov, M., & Lewin-Epstein, N. (2001). The impact of parental transfers on living standards of married children. *Social Indicators Research*, 54, 115-137.
- Sorokou, C., & Weissbrod, C. (2005). Men and women's attachment and contact patterns with parents during the first year of college. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 34, 221-228.
- Strauss, A. L. (1987). *Qualitative analysis for social scientists*. Cambridge University Press.
- Sullivan, K., & Sullivan, A. (1980). Adolescent-parent separation. *Developmental Psychology*, 16, 93-99.
- Tanner, J. L. (2006). Recentering during emerging adulthood: A critical turning point in life span human development. In J.J. Arnett and J.L. Tanner (Eds.), *Emerging adults in America: Coming of age in the 21st century* (pp. 21-55). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Taub, D. J. (1997). Autonomy and parental attachment in traditional-age undergraduate women. *Journal of College Student Development*, 38, 645-654.
- Taub, D.J. (2008). Exploring the impact of parental involvement on student development. *New Directions for Student Services*, 122, 15-28.
- Tavory, I. & Timmermans, S. (2014). *Abductive analysis: Theorizing qualitative research*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Taylor, K. B. (2008). Mapping the intricacies of young adults' developmental journey from socially prescribed to internally defined identities, relationships, and beliefs. *Journal of College Student Development*, 49, 215-239.
- Terry, R.B., Dukes, C.M., Valdez, L.E., & Wilson, A. (2005). Changing demographics and diversity in higher education. In K. Keppler, R.H. Mullendore, & A. Carey (eds.), *Partnering with the parents of today's college students* (pp. 11-19). Washington, DC: National Association of Student Personnel Administrators.
- Torres, V. (2010). Investigating Latino ethnic identity within the self-authorship framework. In M. B. Baxter Magolda, E. G. Creamer, & P. S. Meszaros (Eds.), *Development and assessment of self-authorship: Exploring the concept across cultures* (pp. 67-84). Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Torres, V., & Hernandez, E. (2007). The influence of ethnic identity on self-authorship: A longitudinal study of Latino/a college students. *Journal of College Student Development*, 48, 558-573.
- Trice, A.D. (2002). First semester college students' email to parents: Frequency and content related to parenting style. *College Student Journal*, 36, 327-335.

- Ullom, C., & Faulkner, B. (2005) Understanding the new relationship. In K. Keppler, R. Mullendore, & A. Carey (Eds.). (2005). *Partnering with the parents of today's college students*. Washington, DC: National Association of Student Personnel Administrators.
- Wartman, K.L., & Savage, M. (2008) Parental involvement in higher education: Understanding the relationship among students, parents, and the institution. *ASHE Higher Education Report*, 33(6).
- Wawrzynski, M., & Pizzolato, J. E. (2006). Predicting needs: A longitudinal investigation of the relation between student characteristics, academic paths, and self-authorship. *Journal of College Student Development*, 47, 677-692.
- Weissman, S. H., Cohen, R. S., Boxer, A. M., & Cohler, B. J. (1989). Parenthood experience and the adolescent's transition to young adulthood: Self psychological perspectives. In S. C. Feinstein, A. H. Esman, J. G. Looney, G. H. Orvin & J. L. Schimel (Eds.), *Adolescent psychiatry: Developmental and clinical studies* (Vol. 16, pp. 155-174). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Weinstock, M. (2010). Epistemological development of Bedouins and Jews in Israel. In M. B. Baxter Magolda, E. G. Creamer, & P. S. Meszaros (Eds.), *Development and assessment of self-authorship: Exploring the concept across cultures* (pp. 117-132). Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.
- Wildman, T. M. (2007). Taking seriously the intellectual growth of students: Accommodations for self-authorship. In P. S. Meszaros (Ed.), *Self-authorship: Advancing students' intellectual growth* (pp. 15-30). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Winters, D. (2013). The impact of parents on student persistence and degree completion. Paper presented at the 2013 Ohio State University Student Affairs Assessment and Research Conference in Columbus, OH.
- Wintre, M. G., & Yaffe, M. (2000). First-year students' adjustment to university life as a function of relationships with parents. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 15, 9-37.
- Woempner, C. (2007). *Teaching the next generation*. Denver, CO: Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning.
- Wood, P., Kitchener, K., and Jensen, L. (2002). Considerations in the design and evaluation of a paper and pencil measure of epistemic cognition. In Hofer, B. K., and Pintrich, P. R. (eds.), *Personal Epistemology: The Psychology of Beliefs About Knowledge and Knowing* (pp. 277-294). Erlbaum, Mahwah, NJ.