

BOOKS

Knowing and Reasoning in College: Gender-Related Patterns in Students' Intellectual Development

Marcia B. Baxter Magolda
San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1992, Hardback, \$33.95.

In a unique longitudinal study conducted over five years, Baxter Magolda discovered four distinct ways of knowing. Her qualitative approach, using in-depth interviews of more than 100 students, revealed gender-related patterns and predominant characteristics at each class level from freshmen through graduate students. The result of her study is an "Epistemological Reflection Model" that identifies the role of learner, peers, instructor, and evaluation. It also identifies four levels of knowledge: absolute knowing, transitional knowing, independent knowing, and contextual knowing. At each level Baxter Magolda identifies gender-related patterns.

This research is invaluable for several reasons. First, it studies intellectual development for college students of both sexes. William Perry's 1970 study of males, *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years: A Scheme* had been the guiding study until in 1986, *Women's Ways of Knowing* was published by Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule. Baxter Magolda found patterns that matched Perry's and Belenky's studies rather closely. However, because her study included both sexes, she noted that the patterns were not exclusive to one gender. She used a "prevailing wind" metaphor with the hope that differences would not be generalized. She feels that both approaches should be seen as equally complex and desirable forms of knowing.

Second, this study is helpful because it reveals students' perceptions of professors, teaching strategies, class structure, and evaluation. For ex-

ample, the approximately 70 percent absolute knowers on the freshman level "expected the instructor to provide answers and judged those who used unguided group discussion as ineffective." However, transitional and independent knowers wished to make contributions and wanted to be challenged to think for themselves.

Baxter Magolda identifies three principles underlying successful teaching: (1) validating the student as a knower, (2) situating learning in the student's own experience, and (3) defining learning as jointly constructing meaning. She sees these as standing in "stark contrast to the more traditional assumptions in education: individualistic learning, student subordination, and objectification of knowledge." The students in her study saw learning as a relational activity. Even the males

who tended toward a more individualistic approach appreciated the relational components in learning. The relational theme was even more important in the women's stories. Baxter Magolda suggests that "this notion of relation, or connectedness, is the central message of this book."

Since the study was conducted at Miami University, where 97 percent of those studied were white, the majority reported parental incomes above \$40,000, and 85 percent

stated that their parents lived together—it may not be possible to generalize the findings for other groups. In spite of these limitations, college professors will find the book a valuable source of information as they reflect on their own practice. They will be challenged to adjust their methods to construct learning environments that meet the needs and preferences of the four levels of students identified in this study.

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Putting on the Brakes

Patricia O. Quinn and Judith M. Stern
New York: Magination Press, 1991. Paperback, 64 pages, \$8.95 (20 percent discount for orders of 25 or more).

Some days teachers try to convince me, as a

superintendent, that every child enrolled in their classrooms has Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. Therefore, I was happy that a teacher from Sligo Adventist School offered to lend me *Putting on the Brakes*. I am now better acquainted with the ADHD problem.

I still maintain that many children who can't sit still or who talk out without self-control do so more because of a lack of consistent discipline than because of ADHD. I also believe those who do show the symptoms explained in this book should see a professional who specialized in identifying learning problems to discover if they are among the five percent who have ADHD. Classroom teachers and school administrators lack the skills required to diagnose the problem.

The authors of this book have excellent credentials. Dr. Patricia O. Quinn is a developmental pediatrician who practices in the Washington, D.C. area. She specialized in child development and psychopharmacology. Dr. Quinn also works extensively in the areas of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, learning disabilities, and mental retardation.

Judith M. Stern, M.S., is a certified classroom and special education teacher with a specialty in reading instruction. She consults privately in Rockville, Maryland, and works with ADHD children and their parents.

The reading and interest levels of this book allow 8- to 13-year-old students to read *Putting on the Brakes* with understanding. The book has two major parts. The first defines and describes ADHD by asking and answering five questions ADHD students frequently ask. Part 2 tells students and parents how to get control.

In Part 2, student readers learn how to get support and make friends. They also learn about the medication the doctor may prescribe, and how to become more organized. The section on organizing themselves offers suggestions all students could use to good advantage.

Conference office of education staffs should provide a copy of this book for each teacher. If money is a problem, perhaps they can find a benefactor to underwrite the cost of the books. Each school should have a number of copies to loan to parents of children with ADHD. Parents probably will want to purchase a reference copy once they have read *Putting on the Brakes*. ☞

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