

Kegan's (1982) Theory of Self-Authorship
Cross Campus Leadership Initiative
Theory Workshop

- I. Common title given to the model:**
Self-authorship; Theory of Self-Authorship
- II. Most often cited author or translator of the model:**
Robert Kegan: 1982, 1994
Marcia Baxter Magolda: 1992; 2001*
*The CCLI intentionally utilizes Robert Kegan's work as it fits well with the Immunity to Change theory utilized and is researched in more diverse populations than Baxter Magolda's.
- III. Other research/theory from which the model is derived:**
Though Kegan coined the concept of self-authorship, he utilized the work of many of the initial thinkers in developmental psychology, including but not limited to: Freud, Erickson, Piaget, Perry, Maslow, Gillian, Dewey, Kohlberg, and many others.
- IV. Definition of the model or concept:**
A self-authorship is: "an ideology, an internal identity, a *self-authorship* that can coordinate, integrate, act upon, or invent values, beliefs, convictions, generalizations, ideals, abstractions, interpersonal loyalties, and intrapersonal states. It is no longer *authored by* them, it *authors them* and thereby achieves a personal authority." (p. 185, italics in original)
- V. How could this model be used to look at the ongoing process of leadership learning for students?**
Often the learning outcomes set for any student program require students to also meet developmental milestones. Many of the concepts articulated in the CCLI would require self-authored ways of knowing (e.g. evaluating opinions, understanding oneself and social identities, etc.). Think of self-authorship as a pre- or co-requisite of the leadership program you're developing. In order to understand the leadership models you are presenting, students have to be developing while they learn.
- VI. How could this model be used as a theory to teach in CCLI services and programs?**
Often, presenting students with the concept of self-authorship prompts their development toward it, because one step in the process of becoming more developed is to recognize there is another way to be. The model can be taught directly using Kegan's content, or it works well if you utilize the theory to inform how you present information to students (it operates as a structure in the background).
- VII. Is student understanding of this theory likely to be immediately evident or unfold over a period of time?**
Kegan articulates a developmental process that plays out over the course of a person's lifetime. Given that Kegan argues that most adults never reach self-authorship, students will likely struggle with the concept of self-authorship, but will learn more about it as they experience challenges (dissonance) and work through them. Having a mentor to discuss these with also helps them make sense of these experiences, and, thus, the theory.
- VIII. What measures are used (could be used) to assess students' progress in learning this theory?**
Self-authorship is difficult to assess utilizing standard measures. Interview protocols exist (Wabash Study). It's easier to assess an individual's progress within each of the developmental domains from the theory. I would recommend utilizing the Socially Responsible Leadership Scale's assessment on cognitive complexity, consciousness of self, and congruence/group and look for overall growth as a trend on this. If you have taught the concepts within the program, you could also ask students to directly reflect on how their development has changed.

- IX. What is different about students who deeply understand and use this model in their leadership?**
Students won't be using this model in their leadership efforts, so much as self-authorship changes the way they see the world and make sense of their experiences. Self-authored ways of knowing help students understand themselves and work better with others, see the complexity of the world and make better decisions overall because they themselves are more complex beings.