

# Kegan's Theory of the Evolution of Consciousness

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Full Citation:

Kegan, R. (1982). *The evolving self*. Harvard University Press.

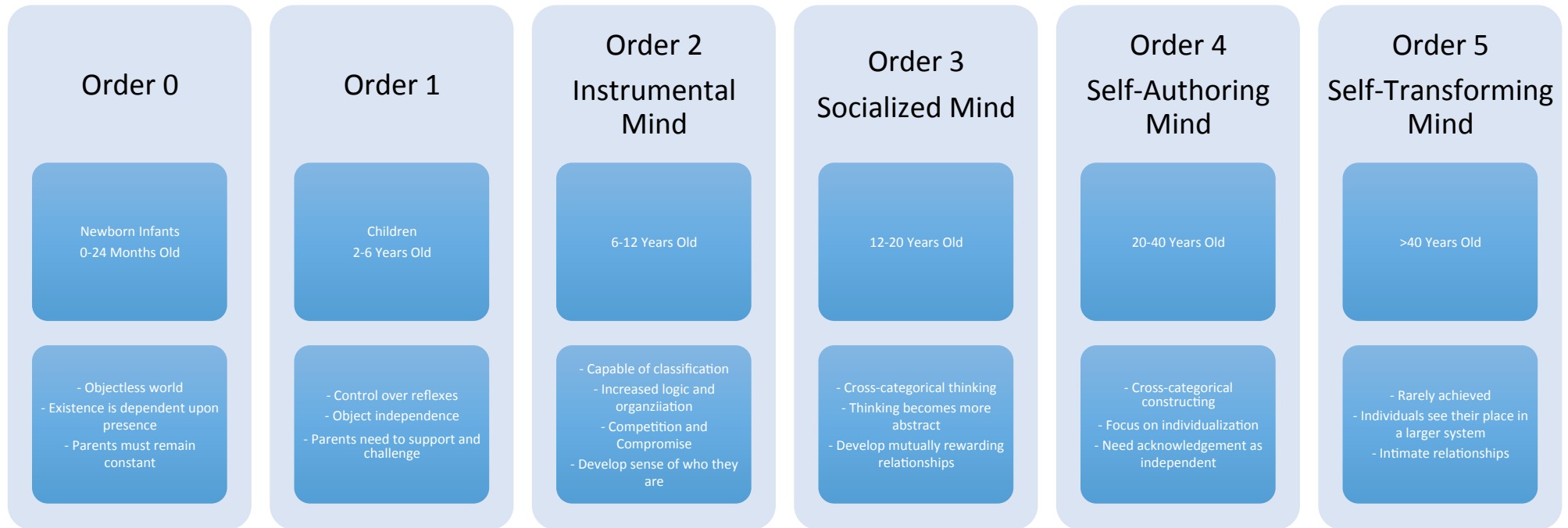
Kegan, R. (1994). *In over our heads: The mental demands of modern life*. Harvard University Press.

## Basic Description

The focus of Kegan's theory is the "evolution of consciousness, the personal unfolding of ways of organizing experience that are not simply replaced as we grow but subsumed into more complex systems of mind" (p. 356).

## Key Takeaways:

1. Five stages (1982, 1994 version) or six orders (2000 version) in Kegan's theory, and until complete one stage then can move to the next stage.
2. Holding environments' two functions: support current stage, encourage movement to the next.
3. Applications to student affairs (order 2, 3, 4 involved) and modern life (order 4 required) as well as postmodern life (order 5 required).



Application

Student Affairs

-practitioners can recognize the pain of transition these students will experience, while informing the students of their expectations along the path

Stages 2-3

Compare others' perspectives with their own

Stages 3-4

Learn to think critically