The Role of Performance in Teacher Education:
Teaching Developmental Psychology Developmentally

By Dana Fusco

Audio services: What do you mean you need *two* video playback units?
Professor: A student needs *two* units for his presentation.
Audio services: Is this an art history class or something?
Professor: No, it's an Education course.
Audio services: Oh!#$&^*(%&#

This actual exchange illustrates the commonly held beliefs about teaching and learning in a college classroom. Creative endeavors are allocated to the Arts. Fields that lie outside the artistic are expected to espouse both the knowledge and methodology of *that* domain. In the case of teacher education, students are to be culturally appropriated to the values and artifacts of social science, and preservice education programs are hired as the cultural coach. Specifically, the role of a preservice education program is to provide knowledge of general and specific content areas, content-specific pedagogy, and general principles of teaching and learning (Reynolds, 1992).

Dana Fusco is a professor of psychology and education in the Department of Political Science and Psychology at York College of The City University of New York, Jamaica, New York.

An introduction course in Developmental Psychol-

ogy falls within this later grouping. An understanding of development is deemed necessary to an understanding of teaching and learning. The beginning teacher "must be able to provide equitable and appropriate learning opportunities for students and effectively help them acquire the content and skills *common to their grade and level*" (Lanier & Little, 1986, p. 546, *italics added*). From this perspective, children at certain grade levels should possess particular developmental capacities common to their age and instruction should be adapted accordingly/ appropriately. Teachers should create an environment that maximizes learning within the bounds of what has already developed. This view of the relationship between learning and development is situated historically within Developmental Theory and has come to reflect the very structure of many teacher education programs. That is, if teachers must understand and assess the developmental capacities of children as a prerequisite to adapting instruction, a logical structure for teacher preparation is a course in Developmental Psychology as a prerequisite to educational methods and pedagogy.

My role as an instructor, then, is to provide students with the knowledge and scientific methodology of acclaimed Theories of Development. I should facilitate their learning of Development, and/or their development as learners (depending on one's understanding of the relationship between development and learning). However, where is my own understanding of the relationship between learning and development? Is there any space where I can help to create our development as developers? Is it possible to create an adult classroom environment where people learn and develop? That teacher education curriculum requires courses in Human Development as a *prerequisite* to Learning and Instruction reflects the very assumptions about learning and development that I wanted to challenge and change.

In this article I attempt to make a stronger case for the ongoing and intimate connection between development and learning. I will argue that both the content and form of Developmental Psychology within teacher preparation must account for postmodern critiques of the study of development and provide opportunities to develop teachers who think critically about knowledge claims as they create and play with method and pedagogy. This article addresses my attempts to answer, in practice, the questions, how can I teach Developmental Psychology developmentally? What does performance bring to a college classroom? I will draw upon journals (my own and those of my students) and class projects to answer these questions, focusing on how we created (and failed to create) a performatory and developing environment. The class content will be discussed to the extent that it helps to achieve this goal. I self-consciously make my position explicit, for in no other way would I feel I could share my experience of this project without sounding as if I hold the answers. While I do have confidence in this work, I made mistakes along the way and continue to learn from them, even as I write.

The Learning-Development Connection and Its Implications for Teacher Education

According to a recent conversation among educational researchers, two predominant, if not exclusive, metaphors for learning are the acquisition metaphor and the participatory metaphor (see Sfard, 1998 for review). The acquisition metaphor focuses on learning as the accumulation of material goods/knowledge. Teachers distribute knowledge while students gratefully accept what is offered. From this vantagepoint, development is an internal state that occurs apart from (and prior to) instruction. Conversely, in the participatory metaphor students are actively involved in a collaborative effort of constructing meaning (Palinscar & Brown, 1984; Rogoff, 1990). The repetition of knowledge from teacher to student is replaced by the joint participation in activities of knowing. Development, as integrally connected to learning, is seen as the result of sociocultural activity, as a process of enculturation that occurs through "an apprenticeship in thinking" (Rogoff, 1990).

However, Sfard (1998) recognizes the pitfalls of even a participatory metaphor as leading to "an epistemological dead end." That is, what remains common to both metaphors is that what is to be learned is knowledge (and/or cultural ways of knowing) and what develops is cognition. Both metaphors exclude the totality of our humanness. Whether my students are provided with the knowledge afforded by a Developmental Psychology course and/or participate in the sociocultural practices of Developmental Psychology, both metaphors imply that development is something to be learned about (or constructed), rather than something to be created. Further, both leave unchallenged the assumption that we know the Truth, or can come to know the Truth, about development. Learning developmental theory does not occur outside of a specific methodology. For instance, structured research projects, in which children are observed, are encouraged in order to facilitate "deep" thinking about teaching and learning (Kagan, 1992). Not just *what* we "know" about development, but *how* it came to be known is mimicked in the college classroom. Did Piaget find the Truth about cognitive development? Are we sure that developmental achievements must occur before learning can be maximized, e.g., that logical, causal, and abstract reasoning must inherently develop before children can understand concepts such as racism?

As Walkerdine (1984) points out, "the developing child is premised on the location of certain capacities *within* the child and therefore within the domain of psychology" (p. 154). For instance, child-centered classrooms assume that children are inherently curious and seek opportunities to learn about the world. The teacher must get to know the interests of each individual child and create the environment for children to flourish. Learning comes to be expressed in terms of individual cognitive development that is itself a culturally produced model of learning/development, and pedagogy is centered around these "basic" principles (Walkerdine,

1984). Development is something to be observed, measured, and nourished once it has already bloomed.

This uncritical focus on the methods by which such knowledge claims get produced makes invisible the historical role that psychology has played in staking claims on development (Morss, 1996; Walkerdine, 1984). Development has been borne of Truth, observed and measured by its paternal (Science) and nourished by its maternal (Education). Increasingly, practices are emerging that critically examine our scientific methods and their sociopolitical roots—many of which lay to rest the elitist claims of objectivity, discourse analysis (Giroux, 1997), building communities of differences (Fine, Weis, & Powell, 1997), teacher action research (McNiff, 1993), and critical pedagogy (hooks, 1993; Shor, 1992), to name a few.

These approaches, from my perspective, illustrate the call to what John Morss (1996) has termed "an emancipatory project," that is, the search for anti-Development alternatives. Morss states, "human development is too important to be left to psychology." My understanding of this statement is that psychology has produced vast amounts of "knowledge," often in the form of Truth claims, that have impacted how we see and relate to children. We have transformed what we think it means to learn and develop and in so doing have, albeit unintentionally, transformed what it means to be a child (and an adult). Everything a child does now comes with an attached meaning, label, and prescription for everything a child should be doing. Morss and others, from my understanding, are calling for nothing less than a complete challenge to the scientific study of development. We can no longer operate under the positivistic assumptions of science, under the premise "that the methods of experimentation in the fields of botany, in which one variable is likened to another, may be transferred to the fields of human experience" (McNiff, 1993, p. 12). As Lubeck (1996) argues, the problem with blindly accepting scientific knowledge claims about child development is the assumptions upon which such claims have been based.

> By subscribing to a universal child and a scientific practice, we fail to interrogate our own cultural practices—and, tellingly, fail to see child development knowledge as a cultural construction so in line with our beliefs that we cannot assess its limitations. And yet, to question our own cultural values is to question virtually everything we believe and do. Observation, a time-honored practice in the field, suddenly becomes a look through our own cultural lenses to a child who may have been reared according to mores not our own. (Lubeck, 1996, p. 158)

> Postmodernism challenges us to ask not what is "true" but rather what fits the situation, and to evaluate what assumptions and consequences are embedded in the alternatives. (Lubeck, 1996, p. 159)

Un-Scientific Study of Development

As a college instructor I felt a responsibility to teach all of Developmental

Psychology, including its sociopolitical roots. I could not in good conscience "prepare" teachers by having them believe there is a definitive and "correct" knowledge base from which they can develop their practice that stands objectively apart from history and the methodologies by which it was created. Yet, I also wanted to go beyond a cognitive critique of developmental psychology to an activity-based, performatory practice of development. I borrowed largely from Vygotsky (1978; 1987) to do so. Development, to my current way of thinking, involves the ongoing activity of going beyond or stretching our capacities (not just cognitive capacities) in new performances that are created in a collective environment of intellectual and emotional honesty. Development is the activity of doing what we don't know how to do. In this context, a performatory practice of development encompassed our performances as learners, developmental psychologists, educators, researchers, and embraced our performances as anxious, concerned, interested, outspoken, quiet, etc.

Also, I wanted to experiment with my teaching practice, to "study" development in practice and to describe this process as a vehicle for exploring and perhaps enhancing our understanding of where "development" lies in a teacher education program. Is development to remain part of the content or part of the teacher education experience? Self-study as a means of personal and professional development has revealed itself as a powerful, informative, and humanistic methodology in the area of teacher education (Guilfoyle, 1995; McNiff, 1993; Northfield, 1996). It situates research in the ongoing, emergent practice of teaching and learning. As such, the research methodology allows for the researcher to continue to grow simultaneously with his/her practice, rather than fixing a pedagogical method in place in an effort to study it in a linear fashion.

I see intimate connections among the offerings of Vygotsky and the practices of critical pedagogy, teacher action research, and self-study in that all open possibilities for re-examining our assumptions about learning, teaching, and researching—or knowing. The boundaries of what it means to know and to come to know are being challenged, expanded, and stretched. There is an objection to a singular notion of Truth. What Vygotsky adds to the dialogue is development. What Holzman, Pineau, and others add to the dialogue is performance. I have attempted to create a practice that brings to life these theories as a unified whole. Involving preservice educators in the activity of stretching beyond their assumptions about knowing, learning and developing (not just theoretically, but in practice, through performing/playing with pedagogy) is from my perspective how Developmental Psychology can be taught developmentally.

Development and Performance

Vygotsky's seminal work (1978) points to play, not as an egocentric form of behavior, but as a central activity for creating the child's zone of proximal development. In play "it is as though he were a head taller than himself" (p. 102).

Unbound by preexisting rules the child stretches beyond that which s/he already knows how to do. A five-year-old child does not exactly *know* how to write a book (nor is she concerned about knowing) yet she can utilize the environment, including the people in it, to create/imitate both the process of writing a book and the book itself. Adults are often fully supportive of young children's willingness to go beyond what they do not know how to do. They are fully supportive of the child's performance as a writer. Together they create a collective performance, hence expanding the child's zone of proximal development. As such, the child both is, and is becoming, a writer. Unlike the Piagetian child, whose learning as a writer can only be nourished once he innately develops the capacity to use written language, the development of the Vygotskian child is led by the activity of writing/learning how to write. Children develop as writers in an environment that supports the creative performatory imitation of writers (Vygotsky, 1987). It is here that we see learning/instruction leading development in a dialectical unity. As Vygotsky points out,

> Instruction is only useful when it moves ahead of development.... This is also what distinguishes instruction of the child which is directed toward his full development from instruction in specialized, technical skills such as typing or riding a bicycle.... Instruction would be completely unnecessary if it merely utilized what had already matured in the developmental process, if it were not itself a source of development. (1987, p. 212)

Unfortunately, according to Holzman (1997), early on young people stop engaging in the human endeavor of play, of taking risks, of performing ahead of who they are. The "cute" babbling prose or scribble of the child is no longer cute. The child now needs to know how to write (and how to do so individually). As standards replace the creative improvisational performances of childhood, competing replaces completing. Children become increasingly concerned with getting it right, making the grade, and winning the teacher's approval (Ames, 1984; Ames & Archer, 1988). Learning for mastery replaces the "learning leading development" of childhood.

And this occurs into adulthood. As adults, we often feel foolish imitating others in performances, even if they might allow us to go beyond what we already know how to do. Because adults stop playing in this way, performance is a tool for creating new zones, and for re-initiating development (Garcia, 1996; Heathcote, 1992; Holzman, 1995, 1997; Pineau, 1994). "In effect, to be a scholar or teacher of performance means welcoming students to join us in that uncertain magical space of personal and communal transformation" (Pineau, 1994, p. 21). Pineau (1994) specifically addresses the advantages of incorporating performance into teacher education programs. From Pineau's perspective, performance is a method of participatory instruction. It supports performers (teachers and students) in a process of critical inquiry, "not in the pursuit of truths but in collaborative fictions- perpetually making and remaking world views and their tenuous positions within them" (p. 10).

However, Pineau limits performances to those prescribed by the curricula. Performances arise from predetermined content objectives rather than from everyday classroom life. This limits the improvisational activity of collectively creating new plays of teaching/learning using everything in the environment. I felt that our "content" would include who we are and who we are not (after all, it is who we are not that leaves room for development). For example, I have spoken to many colleagues who believe it is not their job to teach college students how to write a paper; "they should already know" or should "go to the writing center for support." I disagree. A collective writing performance would not be ruled out in my developmental psychology class. If I narrowly believed that the sole objective of the class is to learn about development and developmental psychology then perhaps a writing performance would be labeled as outside of the curriculum. However, in a model that advocates for the practice of development, all of what we bring to the room is potential mortar to build our learning environment.

From my perspective, what is most valuable about performance is that it allows people to consciously play with their characters, to create and recreate selves, thereby breaking out of prescribed roles and automaticized behavior. Performance frees people to be other than who they are, in the case of adults, sometimes allowing us to go beyond the limitations imposed by our worries about looking stupid and feeling humiliated. In the classroom, performance can help us to create our relationship as teacher and students, rather than be produced by our historical conception of what it means to interact as teacher and student. For instance, a student asks a question and the standard script requires that the teacher/knower provide the answer. A new performance might be created where questioning is celebrated as an occasion of not-knowing and looked upon as an opportunity for creating a non-judgmental, philosophical environment. Here, the learning environment is simultaneously created with learning. In a world where we often feel embarrassed for what we do not know how to do, creating such an environment is what is developmental. From this perspective, a focus on development *is* a focus on learning where performing replaces knowing (Holzman, 1997).

The Backdrop

This was a class of 20 graduate students. As part of the preservice teacher training program, the course was titled, Advanced Human Development. And, indeed, I was hoping to advance our conceptions of development. I wanted to create with students a learning environment where we would not only learn about development but develop. The methods by which this occurred varied from session to session. I agree with Bartolome (1994) when she says, "creating pedagogical spaces that enable students to move from object to subject position produces more far-reaching, positive effects than the implementation of a particular teaching methodology" (p. 176).

On the first day of class I asked students, how do we want to learn about

development? I wanted us to take responsibility for collectively creating an environment where we all could learn and develop. A seemingly simple question brought on perplexed expressions and silence. I suggested that we add ourselves to our study of development. If we were going to study human development we might think about our own development, individually and collectively. I had no clue how, or if, this would occur, and I experienced many periods of emotional unrest along the way. At times, I would leave class thinking, "Maybe my students would best be served if I went back to lecturing." I should note that I do not believe there is anything inherently "wrong" with lectures. Lectures afford an efficient way to quickly provide people with a wealth of information and there were times during the semester when lecturing seemed appropriate, i.e., when it was clear students did not understand the reading material. However, while I want students to learn the subject matter that I am hired to teach them, I also have an interest in their development. Most college students are efficient learners; they know how to learn. Learning about a new area, e.g., Developmental Psychology, in my opinion could only be developmental if we embarked on something that they didn't already know how to do. I did not know what this would be in advance of our getting to know each other.

The Scene

During the first class I asked, "What is development?" Students, at first reluctantly, answered the question. As one student recollects, "I, for one, sat in silence. I remember actually being a little annoyed because the course didn't require any background in psychology so why was the class being questioned on a subject that we, presumably, knew nothing about. Why is she asking us? Shouldn't she be teaching, or telling us?"

The learning environment was predetermined by our collective histories—namely, that "teaching" is often equated with "telling" (Sfard, 1998). Students were the non-knowers and I was the Knower. Yet, as students responded to the question, "what is development?," we discovered that they could easily point to both biological (maturation) and environmental (experience) determinants of development or to the "curriculum" of any introduction course in psychology. Further, we developed a new question for the class to take on, How does developmental psychology help us to learn about development? Through further discussion a preliminary answer to this question surfaced: Developmental psychology, as with psychology in general, is in the science of providing theories that describe and explain changes over time and help organize reality. We discovered at least one assumption that we held, namely, that we can "describe and explain" development and doing so "helps organize reality." I left class wondering "whose reality and why do we want to organize it? Is it disorganized?"

In addition to discovering our assumptions of content, I was also interested in challenging assumptions that the class held about our learning environment. Any

standard textbook in educational psychology teaches that "Q & A" is a useful tool for an informal assessment of students' knowledge. While I was interested in determining what we would bring to a discussion on development, I was also interested in "shaking things up" or freeing myself from the position of Knower (while simultaneously giving what I had to give, which often was knowledge). Staying in the position of Knower assumes that I have the "correct" answers (that we as a field have the correct answers) about development. I'm not convinced that we do. I wonder, for instance, has special education helped to alleviate "developmental delays" or did it create them? These are the types of philosophical questions that we can ask when we are freed from our investment in knowing/getting it right. However, given that our roles as learners and teachers are pervasive, crossing boundaries requires nothing less than a complete re-organization of how we relate to each other as professor, students, and peers. It requires a new classroom performance.

During our second meeting, I wanted to build an environment where students did not direct their questions only to me but could pose questions to the group as an occasion to philosophize. To aid this process I suggested we work on our development as a group. Since the group had collectively decided that we add ourselves to our study of development, we played the alphabet game. The first student chooses a word beginning with the letter 'A' and the second student adds a word beginning with 'B' that helps create a story. Students must listen not only to the immediately preceding response but also to the totality of what is in the process of being produced. Interestingly, when I asked people what their reactions were to the exercise, responses were focused on the content of the story we produced rather than on our activity as a group (that we were producers). I then asked people how they experienced what we did as a group. They still struggled with answering this question. I shared my experience that "it was hard. We struggled with building something together. We wanted to get it right." One student remarked in a journal entry, "I found that I was really caring and hoping that everyone would come up with a good word."

Interestingly, he continues, "it was at this point that I began to sketch a graph of development.... I could visualize the fuzzy boundaries.... I felt that trying to pinpoint the stages of development was possibly futile because we are dealing with human development and humans are incredibly complex." How did this student take this leap from a simple language game to sketching a graph of development and then determining that stage theories were "futile?" I do not know. Maybe he was bored. Maybe he didn't see the point of the activity we were engaged in but felt self-determined to learn something about development. Or maybe, his "mental cramp" was relieved (Wittgenstein, 1958). As Wittgenstein (1958) describes the activity of playing new language games with "known" concepts,

> I made you see that it was absurd to expect the concept to conform to these narrow

> possibilities. Thus your mental cramp is relieved, and you are free to look around the field of use of the expression and to describe the different kinds of uses of it.

Language games, according to Wittgenstein, "bring into prominence the fact that the *speaking* of language is part of an activity, or a form of life" (p. 11). The alphabet game diminishes the absoluteness of the words themselves and affords the opportunity for the group to play together, to become less inhibited by saying the right thing and to create something together. It is noteworthy that this was not a simple task. My experience was that the group struggled to let go of a good outcome. It became important that individual people "came up with a good word." Yet, it seemed that through this nonsensical process the group was more comfortable talking with each other (and not just to me) though not necessarily less concerned about looking good. In fact, people became so eager to make their point, they began to talk over each other.

Again, I redirected our performance of a conversation, hopefully in a direction away from the distance and alienation being created in our need to get it right. That is, I felt that to the extent that individuals wanted to remain focused on their individual learning the group's development would suffer. As Holzman (1995) states, "When the group develops, everyone learns. When individuals learn, no one develops" (p. 9). Introducing a "talking stick" (actually an empty water bottle) into the mix, the student speaking would throw the bottle to the next person who wanted to speak. As students threw the bottle to each other the group again changed. People became more aware of each other, not in a self-validating sense (Can I relate to what she is saying? Can I ask a smart question?) but in a relational sense (Are my words building a story with the people in the room?). At some point the water bottle was no longer needed.

Conversation flowed and class ran fifteen minutes late. While no one interrupted, the class was overcome by silence after about five minutes. I did not pick up on this "sign." Later a student reminded me what time class was over (and hence, it was my responsibility to end the class on time). On the train home I thought maybe I needed to cut conversations short in the interest of time. But then I recalled that during class students were carrying the discussion in new and interesting directions. Had I stuck to an authoritarian role and enacted my "power" as professor, I would have missed opportunities to see the potential growth of the class. It wasn't so much ending class on time that I began to think about but what happened during class in relation to where we were in the syllabus. When I asked myself why *I* should be the person to re-direct conversations it seemed clear that one reason would be predetermined by a curriculum, or my role in keeping us on track. Students should receive the information they came for, right? But while learning about development is certainly a goal of our group, what about our own development? What if allowing the group to take responsibility for what it wants to do is developmental, even if what they end up doing is not? This is interesting in light of our inquiry during that class that arose from a discussion on scaffolding—is changing the level of

responsibility given to students a precursor to development, an antecedent, or both? The class believed it was both. You can only give a child a certain level of responsibility depending on what s/he could handle *and* giving students more responsibility facilitates development. I wondered, why would we want to determine what individuals can handle? Doesn't our playing and completing each other expand what we can handle? How would we determine what is enough? How would I have determined whether cutting short conversation in the interest of time was growthful for the class? One student reflects,

> Since we didn't have straight lectures in class, we, as a class, were left trying to figure out what exactly was going on. We were removed from our accustomed role of being given the text, being lectured on the text, and finally being tested on some combination of the two. So, rather than being led along a direct path towards "knowledge acquisition" the class was encouraged to engage in open discussion of the material. The result was that the classroom activity took precedence over the material. I was often, early in the course, left thinking, "how are we supposed to learn the material this way?" By the end of the course I'd come to think that the "material-to-be-learned" was not the primary focus of the class, as I had imagined, but rather it served as background to the primary focus of establishing a developmental environment.

On the third week I had to cancel class due to illness. My students later told me that the group carried on class without me. I was thrilled and somewhat in disbelief that within two short weeks the class was taking greater responsibility for itself.

We spent the next four classes covering Piaget's and Vygotsky's theories of development. Students had decided they would do the readings and come to class with questions for discussion. At times this occurred but it was not a consistent process. When students did not have specific questions for the group, I would lead the discussion. During one class we discussed infant babbling and its relationship to development. I presented the different views of babbling and child monologues put forth by Piaget and Vygotsky, and I asked if adults babbled. What connotations does the word "babbling" have in our society? Students quickly established that "crazy" people babble or "talk out loud to themselves." I asked what function, if any, talking aloud to oneself serves and we began to discuss the relationship between language and thought.

Eventually I challenged the group by saying that babbling as adults (or talking aloud to others when we are not sure what we are talking about) can be a developmental activity; it allows people to go beyond an "I don't know" response to trying something on. Of course, this requires that as listeners we do not deem it important that the speaker Knows. In fact, my own development throughout the semester was integrally connected to ongoing conversations with colleagues where I was permitted to babble. Several students became very confused and so we tried a "babbling" exercise. One student volunteered to "babble" about his understanding/lack of understanding about babbling. At the end of class another student said,

rather problematically, "I came in thinking that I knew what babbling was. Now I have no idea." I left class feeling unsure of our activity. I wondered whether people were struggling with the fuzzy boundaries involved in exploring concepts, playing language games, and not knowing a definitive answer, or whether they were instead struggling with their struggling. I felt frustrated and concerned that I was still being expected to possess the answers (the Truth) about development. I wanted students to be accepting of not knowing; after all, wasn't this required in order to learn something new? I wrote in my journal:

> What is our struggle? I don't know. I suspect, however, that it is in no small part related to my expected "role" as teacher (knower) and their role as students (not knowers), and that I should provide the answers when students express not knowing; I should ease their worries. If I do not do this do students begin to question my credibility as a knower?

While I certainly was interested in teaching them the theories of development, I could also offer a performatory methodology that included our critical inquiry and philosophizing together. Our activity was one of questioning, pondering, and creating new possibilities together. I would not consider my role to be one of facilitator since I believe I was more directive than that. When students asked a question I did not subtly lead them to a "desired" response by asking pedagogically sound questions. Sometimes I would ask what other students thought; sometimes I would simply respond, clearly indicating that my response was not a definitive answer to the question but rather my opinion or perspective. I realized that I did not have to be withholding or put aside the personal (subjective) for the scientific (objective).

During the eighth class we watched an educational video and in the two weeks that followed created dramatic performances. Many students were initially intimidated about performing in front of the class. Several less intimidated students took the lead to create an environment where everyone (well, most people) felt accepting of the activity. One student writes,

> Dana wanted us to perform something and the class was being a little stiff and overanalytical. Peter then proceeded to take our development as a group to a new level by stating that he didn't feel "safe" making certain comments in the class. This opened up an impassioned discussion of the nature of our group and how much we have evolved. Most people, I think, felt that the group was pretty "safe" but I think that most of us felt a little careful in our class participation. I know that for myself, I didn't want to say something stupid in class so I was somewhat careful. This discussion really brought our group together because I think that we all want our group to be a place where we can say something and not be criticized and this established a new attitude of openness. Then, throwing caution to the wind, in response to Dana's request for more performing and less analyzation, I proceeded to perform a lesson from my class.

Following this student's lead, the rest of the group developed an improvisa-

tional scene of misbehavior in a classroom. The performance was funny and made learning a creative, relational activity. From my perspective, this activity also allowed people to do something they did not know how to do—perform in a college classroom. While learning about misbehavior was not the objective, the "scene" offered an opportunity to "study" misbehavior through creating a collective performance where misbehavior was in the script. Here we begin to recognize that understanding misbehavior as a child's problem ignores the environment that supports the performance of misbehavior. If we engage the performatory aspect of the child's "behavior," the problem vanishes. One student who began bringing performance into his high school science class writes:

> Performing as a means of learning seems to me to be an intimate, personal approach. Children are being allowed to learn in their own world rather than being made to conform to a traditional structured model of group education. Through performing, an interaction with other children can be created in which learning can really precede development.

The notion of performance as an intimate, humanistic approach emerged throughout the semester. From my perspective, intimacy was created in the classroom because we built an environment for learning using everything in it, including students' cautions about saying the wrong thing, etc. One student described it in these terms:

> I became more certain that we were practicing rather than learning about development. This, in essence, means establishing an air of mutual respect and trust between teacher and student and being aware of student needs; I think of it as a humane approach in which the teacher must avoid the seductive trap of the positions' power.

The remaining weeks of the class comprised students' final presentations. We used these "evaluative" moments as opportunities to continue to learn and discuss. Students had their choice of content and format for their final presentations. Many chose dramatic performance. The request for *two* video playback units was made by one student whose presentation was entitled, "The Meaning of Psychosis as a Developmental Stage." Addressing the question, what is madness, the student performed being in a mental institution, feet and arms bound by rope. His mouth silenced by duct tape allowed him only to mumble under the shortness of breath caused by his frenetic attempt to free himself. Simultaneously playing on two screens were *Clockwork Orange* and an airline commercial. The room was dark. He writes in his journal of the experience that led him to pursue this interest.

> I walked out of school planning to get back and pick up my son from daycare. I had been teaching, and it was early afternoon on October 31st: Halloween. On the way to the subway, walking along 96th street, I stopped to see why some of my colleagues were watching the street and talking. There, in the middle of the road was a bearded

> naked man, with long bedraggled black hair, dancing. Police had surrounded him, and in the distance I could hear the sound of more cop cars coming to the aid the officers on the scene. I left, knowing that they would soon lift the man into "protective custody." The police were doing their job. The man was "clearly" insane.

His performance was emotionally riveting. I cried. Others were silent. He used this opportunity for dramatic performance to bring together his life experience and his understanding of a postmodern account of psychosis. In doing so he created something new, something that could be shared with the group in a way accessible to us. I must admit his paper was less accessible. For example, he writes, "desire is rather a positive force, much like Nietzsche's will to power. Desire is absolutely critical and was, before the introduction of the capitalist axiomatic, capable of positive force. If one sees three objects on a table—a glass, a coaster, and a sandwich, all of these together are a desiring combination, or an assemblage of desiring machines. Humans are another desiring machine, made up of a plethora of desiring machines....Thus, the capitalist system actually sets up the conditions for desire as lack to occur." Without having seen the performance I might have been left with the question, Huh?

The Grand Finale

I have attempted to sketch my experience of trying to bring performance into a college classroom. During the course of the semester we created conversation performances, participation performances, babbling performances, writing performances, and theatrical performances. We created new performances by playing together. We played with concepts, language, ideas, meanings, and even water bottles. We imitated Vygotsky, Piaget, Freud, and each other. We created the learning environment using our emotions, our ideas, our bodies, and our resources.

So now you may be asking, was it effective? Did it work? Well, not exactly, if "effective" or "works" means that students left the semester with an abundant knowledge base of developmental psychology (though I'm not sure this would have been true in any introductory course and, in fact, I never tested them on their mastery of content). Yes, if effective means students left with a qualitatively different capacity to perform as thinkers, learners, and teachers. This, to my way of thinking, suggests a much more complex understanding and experience of development and gives students a tool that they can continuously use and re-create as teachers. As one student wrote:

> I remain somewhat a novice in the field of developmental psychology. I did acquire enough background knowledge to do some additional reading and follow along and maybe I actually did acquire more knowledge than I think. What I did acquire was something entirely different, something I couldn't have foreseen at the start, a knowledge of how a developmental environment feels. It's not something that I could intellectualize and necessarily describe, and as was often said it's not a

> magic prescription to cure the ills of the classroom, but it's a knowledge that I have gained nonetheless.

Recently a student called to thank me for "pushing her to think." She is enrolled in a new semester and finds that while her classes are informative, they do not provide the same opportunities she experienced in our class. She feels the limitations imposed on her development in a learning=knowing environment. The capacity for thinking often emerged in students' reflections and to one woman was described as empowering.

> My initial goal for this project was to find out more about prominent theories of child development and how they have influenced American education. I hoped to come away with an understanding of the "correct" theory of adolescent development and, consequently, the "best" way to teach in the classroom. Had I clung to that strict explanation, I would have been sorely disappointed. Rather than being disappointed, I feel more empowered to make my own decisions and that I am certainly not the only one that doesn't know the "right" answer.

> This paper began as an investigation into the definition of development and it's educational application. It has become a revealing self-exposure of the ways in which I live my own life. It has moved beyond first level metacognitive understanding (a developmental paper about development) to aid in my meta-meta-comprehension of webs that connect previously unrelated (at least in my mind) realms of my existence. A developmental paper about development that has, in a tool-and-result way, created the potential for further development.

Salient to students' experience of development and empowerment, I think, was that we created the environment in which we could perform, take risks, and discover ourselves and our development. Cognitive psychologists have described the process of development as an "apprenticeship in thinking" (Rogoff, 1990). To Rodriguez (1998) cognitive and constructive psychology ignores "the complex socioeconomic and cultural complexity of schools by not acknowledging that not all children may be willing to learn the prescribed Western ethnocentric curriculum; and that not all children (apprentices) may be able to trust the teachers (masters)." Further, he wonders, "Is it possible that a learner may refuse to believe in the established knowledge of the existing communities of practice? Would this be a bad thing? Is it possible that learners may just 'play the game' as apprentices to ensure their admittance into the desired community of practice?" (p. 597).

Another question to be considered is, why is the construction of knowledge separate from the construction of the game itself? As many examples in educational reform show (e.g., Kamen, 1991), when teachers and students collaboratively participate in the reform process they create the game, rather than simply adhere to predetermined rules. They formulate the questions, not only the answers. Constructed is not only knowledge but a new context for learning. Sociocultural activity encompasses not only participation in practices already created but participation in

the creation of culture. During the semester, we created our learning environment. Students were asked to go beyond their traditionally scripted performances as students, and were invited to create pedagogy, play with method, complete each other in zones of proximal development. To me and to many of the students, this creative performatory process reconnected students sensually to themselves as learners and is what allowed students' to experience development/develop.

> The nature of the course was such that my mind was constantly active. I was always thinking, evaluating, and devising new strategies. The group dynamic was very conducive to stimulating thought.... So, as I look back at this course, at myself, and as us as a group, I see a process, a gradual change. It is true that I have learned things in this class about Piaget and Vygotsky. What I feel was most valuable to me was the fact that I developed as a person and as a teacher.

A song in the ZPD
I guess what you're telling me
But do not dare say
Is that we're together
We just look far away
My world had seemed narrow
My world had seemed thin
Till you were the sparrow
And I was the wind

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