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Human Development as Cultural Negotiation: Indigenous Lessons on Becoming a Teacher

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Human development in a cultural negotiation perspective is a theoretical, not merely a descriptive, stance. As have others, the author finds encounters with indigenous life to open up understandings of the cultural nature of human development obscured by formal instructional settings. Examples of both in- and out-of-school learning in indigenous contexts demonstrate the blurring of learning-teaching roles in joint endeavors embedded in relationship, the significance of right context, and the seriousness of integrated personal and cultural /developmental goals or future pictures. Beyond current individualistic models of cognitive or social constructivism, a cultural constructivism – education as culture-in-the-making – is presented. Indigenous lessons support the movement from an intrapsychic, positivistic, and normative cognitive psychology to a contextualized/situated, interpretive/intentional, and participatory /constructivist cultural psychology of human development. A shift in conceptualizing teachers' roles, from primarily instructors and evaluators to focal cultural negotiators, is proposed, with some examples of relevant practice.

Le développement humain dans une perspective de "négociation culturelle" constitue un prise de position non seulement descriptive, mais aussi théorique. Comme d'autres ont pu le faire, l'auteur considère le fait de cotôyer la vie indigène comme un moyen d'élargir la compréhension de la nature culturelle du développement humain obscurcie par les cadres d'instruction formels. Des exemples d'apprentissages intra et extra scolaires dans des contextes indigènes démontrent la superposition des rôles d'apprenant et d'enseignant dans les tentatives communes fixées dans la relation, la signification du bon contexte, et l'importance de buts de développement ou d'images du futur qui intègrent les dimensions personnelle et culturelle. Au-delà des modèles individualistes actuels relevant du constructivisme cognitif ou social, un constructivisme culturel -considérant l'éducation comme une "culture en train de se faire"- est présenté. Les leçons indigènes vont dans le sens d'un mouvement qui irait d'une psychologie intra psychique, positiviste et cognitive normative à une

psychologie cuturelle du développement contextualisée/localisée, interprétative/intentionnelle et participatoire/constructiviste. Un renversement dans la conception des rôles de l'enseignant, d'une personne avant tout instructrice et évaluatrice à un rôle central de "négociateur culturel", est proposé, avec plusieurs exemples pratiques à l'appui.

> Our best strategy would be to envision culture in dynamic terms and to perceive our responsibility as toward culturing not only the young, but also ourselves, throughout our lives. (Wax, 1993, p. 109)

Human development, it will be argued here, is equated with Wax's vision of dynamic culturing, or *cultural negotiation* as the perspective is elaborated in what follows. Development in this perspective is a theoretical not merely a descriptive stance, and is concerned primarily with the process or nature rather than the norms of human development. Culture is not merely a mediating variable or an issue of ecological validity in the study of human development but is the very core of development. Wax reminds us that "the 19th-century notion of culture implied a process of growth and development, of *culturing* an organism, or, later, of the human organism *becoming cultured*. We educators, [he proposes] need to resurrect and maintain that dynamic imagery" (1993, p. 109).

In exploring cultural negotiation as the essence of human development and foundation of education we encounter the confusion of shifting disciplinary boundaries and multiple emerging vocabularies. Wolcott insisted almost a decade ago that

> one cannot hope to achieve a full or balanced understanding of what educators are up to or how they are going about it if the cultural dimensions of human behaviour are ignored or obscured because of traditional and psychologically-dominated 'ways of looking.' (1985, p. 201)

More recently the editor of *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* noted that education has always been dominated by a disciplinary perspective – psychology for many years, then sociology, and now the prediction of an era of anthropologists in education in the 1990s and beyond (Emihovich, 1992, p. 88). Certainly recent years have seen a culturalist turn in our approaches to human development; a recognition "that personal life takes shape in cultural terms" (Rosaldo, 1984, pp. 140, 152). However, as Bruner observes (1990, pp. 2-3), disputing disciplinary labels is losing relevance as psychology joins forces with its neighbours in the social sciences and humanities in exploring the cultural nature of human life and mind. At least

in the Canadian context it seems appropriate for the present to maintain the psychology label as it expands beyond behavioural through cognitive to cultural conceptions of human development: a cultural psychology.

It is of great interest to me that Wax, Wax, and Dumont (1964/1989), and such other pioneering advocates of a cultural perspective on learning and development as Harry Wolcott (1967/1984), spent periods in the 1960s carrying out the first systematic studies of the encounter between formal education and the informal traditions of learning and teaching – of culturing – in indigenous North American communities. Other leaders in the contemporary evolution of a cultural psychology pursued similar encounters on other continents: the Russian troika of Vygotsky, Leont'ev, and Luria, exemplified by Luria's work among Uzbekis of central Asia (1976); Shweder among Oriyas in Orissa, India (Shweder & Bourne, 1984, pp. 167-172); Lave among Vai and Gola (1988; in preparation),and Cole among Kpelle (1990a) in north-western Africa. "Like many of those who have 'discovered' the idea of cultural psychology, I found my thinking was enormously influenced by the experience of going to a radically different culture," observes Cole, in his case "to illuminate the sources of difficulty faced by Kpelle (Liberian) tribal children when they were confronted with mathematics in American-style schools built in the Liberian hinterlands" (p. 291).

It has been my experience also that such encounters with indigenous life open up understandings of the cultural nature of human development often obscured by the limited focus of institutionalized settings and instruction. I begin here by describing some of my lessons from indigenous contexts in ways of learning and teaching and the developmental meanings indigenous teachers make of these ways. From this background I then discuss current movements towards a cultural negotiation perspective in the human development foundations of education. Finally I look briefly ahead towards a growing emphasis on the preparation of teachers as negotiators in the culturing of their students.

Recognizing the Cultural Negotiation Context of Education: Some Indigenous Lessons

> All human beings have a culture. There are many different ways of being human. We still educate our children for cultural survival. (Stoney Chief John Snow, unpublished conference speech, 1979)

Over the past 16 years I have regularly spent time working with indigenous colleagues in their schools and communities, originally in Inuit settlements of the eastern Canadian Arctic and more recently in Mohawk

communities of southern Ontario. My role has expanded from being primarily a consultant in the development of indigenous schools and teacher education, very much a participant, to now at times also being an observer-researcher in the larger community. My experience convinced me that a range of very creative things, in addition to the destructive things we know of only too well dating from the residential school era, were going on in education as indigenous ways encountered and negotiated with the conventional ways of formal schooling. This negotiation of ways did not include just content knowledge and methods of teaching and learning, but encompassed ultimate developmental and educational goals. A few years ago I sought a situation where I might learn a critical cultural skill with a traditional community teacher, thereby perhaps also learning more about valued indigenous patterns of human development as they were being negotiated with the purposes and values of schooling.

It was my good fortune to meet an extraordinary woman in Igloolik, Northwest Territories, one of the three or four eminent seamstresses in this community of about 1200. Susan, close to 50 years of age, had only moved into the community from her semi-nomadic camp life in the last 10 years. Once she agreed to work with me in making a pair of sealskin boots, ***kamiit***, she carefully explained her position. She was glad to have me because her daughter did not have time to learn the sewing of animal skins. In Igloolik, 300 kilometres north of the Arctic Circle, the winter hunting of sea mammals remains essential for community survival (see Wenzel, 1991) and fur clothing is still of critical survival value for hunters on the sea ice, superior to any manufactured material yet devised. However survival for Susan's daughter now required new skills – reading and typing and computer technique – skills that would sustain her life in a changing future. By seeing these literacy-related skills in the same survival focus as skin sewing, Susan was able with some reluctance to accept her daughter's choice. Hope remained that the daughter might return home and learn to sew, as well as possible at an older age, once her survival based on other skills was assured.

I was reminded of John Snow's final words in our epigraph above: "We still educate our children for cultural survival." It was my sense that Susan saw culture as dynamic, and the essence of human development and education as acquiring changing survival skills in harmony with the cultural configuration of the moment. It was also my understanding that, by equating sewing with survival skills from my world, Susan was instructing me to take my learning seriously as a meaningful effort not just the technical mastering of a craft. I was to see the human development purpose in my learning, not just the "picking up" of a skill. This sense of seriousness was reinforced by the steps I had to follow before being accepted by Susan as a learner. Two

other women did not wish to sew with me because I was too busy to concentrate and devote my time to completing a correct pair of kamiit. I would have to return on another trip specifically for the task and find a place in the community to work – a place akin to their workplaces in either the shed-tents adjacent to their homes or in a communal sewing setting. Further, it was necessary for me to show some effort to learn on my own, however poor the first attempts of my weak hands to work the tough stiff skins, before a mentor was really ready to guide me. The learning-teaching roles were to be blurred in a joint endeavour embedded in relationship; I was to enter fully into the task in a proper context; and I was to seriously attend to the intertwined personal and cultural goals inherent in creating a correct pair of kamiit.

My thinking about human development as cultural negotiation was pushed further by the ongoing sharing of experience with another Inuit friend and colleague whose history is the mirror image of Susan's. Betsy, now close to 40, moved in to a settled community and began school at about 10 years of age. Ever since that time she has been involved in schools as a student and as a teacher, teacher educator, program developer, and educational committee member. She recently analysed with me her current experience as a consultant in a team developing new Inuktitut social studies curricula for the intermediate grades.

The process was backwards for Betsy in two ways. First she noted that the project was set up within existing southern school structures and the non-Inuit staff of content and pedagogical experts was hired before she and Inuit elders were brought in as consultants. In Betsy's eyes Inuit now need to be building their own institutions as they go, from family patterns to schools to businesses, to continue negotiating life in contact with the Qallunaat (non-Inuit) world. Education involves the mutual development of institution and individual, of culture and person – cultural creativity not just cultural knowledge. The school system process in this case replaced institution-building with a project expressing conventional school priorities, even generating competition for ownership and credit among the non-Inuit developers involved. Cultural negotiation of content and methods, much less of fundamental student-community developmental goals, was precluded.

The second and even more disturbing backwards feature Betsy pointed out was the problem of floating lessons. The experts determined that more Inuit history, local archeology, and knowledge from oral traditions were the keys to relevance and success of the program. In fact this material from the past seemed even more alienating to these adolescents than had the disconnected content from southern Canada. One lesson involved the making of several traditional tools. Despite well-researched material and excellent

pedagogy by conventional standards, these tools remained merely toys for the students. Traditional integrated learning of values and skills – in this case, for instance, care, correctness, and right relationship to the human, animal and material world – was not taking place. The lesson was not related to present survival issues, to current responsibilities and life choices. Students must, in Betsy's view, first face the present and the future, "who they are and will be," before they could open to and value the past. Once focussed on "future pictures" in her words, visions of culturally negotiated personal and Inuit survival in my words, then students would – and did in later lessons Betsy developed – actively seek out elders' knowledge and traditional ways in the process of such negotiation.

Inuit point out that change is a strong cultural value for them and that growth is continual. Traditional Inuit hold an active image of a most genuine person, ***inummarik***, as the ideal of maturity. This image is always in progress, "a lifelong process of developing correct interactions, through both attitude and skill, with people and animals, community and environment" (Stairs, 1992; Annahatak, in press; see also Brody, 1975). Person and culture develop in dialectical relationship. I have been told that non-Inuit often do not understand this value, but hold Inuit and other traditional people to static cultural models. Frequently in the school context, wrong or inauthentic role models are chosen which reflect isolated cultural features symbolizing Inuit or fitting with a residual stereotype. Simplified features of sharing and consistent communal cooperation, for instance, are often used to typify Inuit. A person who drops out, either out of traditional community life to spend time in the south or out of school to return to the land and extended family, is easily rejected by outsiders as an appropriate role model and teacher for Inuit youth. In fact it is such people who are often actively negotiating their cultural identities in their unique developmental paths and who might ground the floating lessons for their students.

Among the strongest cultural leaders and educators I know in indigenous communities are these people whom we sometimes call "come backs" – people who spent periods away from their communities and have returned to do the culturally creative work of negotiating developmental goals with and for youth and others as well as themselves. An outstanding education counsellor and community activist at a nearby Mohawk reserve returned home as a young adult after long difficult years elsewhere, and now sees herself as, among other things, a literacy broker for the community – a link between the traditional world and the outside world of institutions, governments, and other agencies impinging on indigenous culture and each individual life. For such leaders, the cultural negotiation process can be very self-conscious, and in fact the generation of self-consciousness regarding cultural-personal

development is a stated goal for many including a group of innovative educators at the Akwesasne Mohawk reserve. Students in an Aboriginal Science and Mathematics Pilot Project are led through material contrasting Eurocanadian to indigenous North American knowledge and world views with the goal of "enabl[ing] youth to walk forward in this world with, in one hand the Aboriginal teachings and wisdom and in the other hand an understanding of the western way of knowing" (Akwesasne, 1991, p. 15).

There is great danger, suggests Betsy from her Inuit perspective, in being "too pure" about traditional developmental values – kinship networks of sharing, for instance, must be modified to deal with money as well as meat from the hunt. There is also danger in being "too simple" in approaching developmental dilemmas with only practical educational issues in mind, without the deeper cultural negotiation of values and meaning (Annahatak, in press). She cites, for instance, a debate of concern to a Qallunaat researcher over whether children should be allowed to miss school when needed to care for siblings or to do major community work (including vital wage-earning) such as unloading the annual sealift (supply ship), or whether the school should pay elders for their traditionally-expected teaching (Douglas, in press). Making rules about such things is trivial and arbitrary if no attention is given to underlying cultural norms or *laws* under negotiation. In this case the laws of role responsibility and obedience to whomever is presently in authority is the focus, requiring ongoing negotiation of the roles and relative authority to be attributed to teachers and the school, family, elders, and a new class of community organizers and officials. Things matter; even small changes are not trivial and must be worked out seriously and deeply at the level of cultural laws rather than behavioural rules.

Together with the other encounters I have described, and many more, I understand this perspective to reflect an indigenous sense of personal development as embedded in cultural development, to be approached through multileveled cultural negotiation rather than through surface prescriptions for conduct. Negotiation must reach the deeper level of meaning and developmental goals, schooling must be seen as culturing, culture-in-the-making, and the developmental process must be open to impure nontraditional choices within the evolving historical context – seriously engaged choices such as dropping out, learning to type rather than sew, paying elders to teach, or self-consciously comparing culturally inherited ways to those of other traditions.

Shifting the Human Development Foundations of Education

How can we know the dancer from the dance?
(W. B. Yeats, 1924/1951, "Among School Children," line 64)

The lessons I am receiving over and over again in indigenous settings regarding the cultural nature of human development lead me increasingly farther away from cognitive psychology foundations of education to the emerging eclectic cultural psychology approaches noted at the outset. Cole (1985, p. 146) has suggested that work in the Vygotskian tradition holds great promise for reintegrating psychology and anthropology. In my field-based quest for a cultural psychology I am finding that the reintegration extends not only to interpretive (e.g., Geertz 1973), cognitive (e.g., D'Andrade, 1981), and educational (e.g., Spindler, 1987) anthropology, but to various directions in philosophy, including the pragmatics of Dewey, James, and Peirce (see e.g., Garrison, 1994), and the interdisciplinary focus of dialectics (see e.g., Gould, 1987, p. 154). Comprehensive tracing of these and numerous other intellectual threads in weaving a cultural psychology of development must await future projects. For the present I can offer only a personal synthesis to date of selected ideas, thinkers, and works stimulating my ongoing construction of a cultural negotiation perspective on human development.

In contrast to the intrapsychic, positivistic, and normative focus of cognitive developmental psychology, a cultural psychology of education is contextualized, interpretive, and participatory. Workers have focussed variously on these complementary components of a cultural approach and indeed they can be arranged in various hierarchies in relation to each other. My brief explication of each will reveal their intrinsically interconnected nature and the remaining need for integration in cultural psychology as evidenced by the current proliferation of construct labels.

Contextualized/Situated. Attempts of psychology to conceptualize the integration of person and environment have been progressing since Barker's proposal of "behaviour settings" in his ecological psychology (1968) and Bronfenbrenner's ecological reformulation of development (1979). Scribner writes of "mind in action" (1986) and Lave, Murtaugh, and de la Roche of "setting" which is "both generated out of ... activity and at the same time generates activity" (1984, p. 27). Both McDermott & Hood (1982) and Rogoff (1992) demonstrate in their work the use of events or activities, the seamless mutuality of persons and contexts, as the appropriate units of

analysis in the study of learning and development. Beyond the psychology of how individual heads work, the question becomes, *What* is going on here, *how* and *why*?

In 1990, Bruner declared that "if the cognitive revolution erupted in 1956, the contextual revolution (at least in psychology) is occurring today" – the recognition that human action could not be accounted for from the inside out in terms of traits, learnings, motives but required for its explication that it be "*situated* ... continuous with a cultural world; ... the realities that people constructed were *social* realities" (pp. 105-106). Probably earlier than this era of contextualization work in psychology, Fortes proposed a distinctly developmental person-context construct from his anthropological perspective: "social space ... the society in its ecological setting seen from the individual's point of view. The individual creates his [her] social space and is in turn formed by it .... In the evolution of an individual's social space we have a measure of his [her] educational development" (1970, pp, 27-28).

Wundt, history, and development. The contextual premise of a cultural psychology concerns time as well as place, an historical perspective. In the early 1900s, Wundt proposed a second psychology – Folk Psychology (Volkerpsychologie) – as distinct from laboratory experimental psychology which he is considered to have founded in Leipzig (1916; and see Cole, 1990b). This second psychology would concern higher human functions and everyday processes which must be studied as part of an historical science. He considered folk psychology to be a genetic psychology concerning both individuals and the human species: "Individual consciousness is wholly incapable of giving us a history of the development of human thought" (1916, p. 3). Despite decades of its rejection and domination by experimental psychology, Wundt's folk psychology is held up as a harbinger of contemporary cultural psychology.

In the work of Wundt and in that of Vygotsky and his school we see the early recognition of the mutual development of person and culture. "Folk psychology ... relates to those mental products which are created by a community of human life and are, therefore, inexplicable in terms of merely individual consciousness, since they presuppose the reciprocal action of many" (Wundt, 1916, pp. 2-3). Change occurs not just in a learning, growing human being but in the full context of persons and environment, the process we have called cultural negotiation. In fact it has been proposed that a cultural psychology takes into account changes occurring simultaneously at all four historical levels of the concept of development: (a) microgenesis, or the development of particular psychological processes; (b) ontogenesis, or the developmental history of individuals; (c) socio-historiogenesis, or the development of culture; and (d) phylogenesis, or development of the human

species (Cole, 1990b; Eckensberger, 1988). (Phylogenesis is as yet the least integrated developmental level in a cultural psychology, but see Merlin Donald's *Origins of the Modern Mind* (1991) for a recent discussion of biology-culture dynamics at this level.) Further, it is a major theme of cultural psychology, traced to Vygotskian roots, that psychological processes ***must*** be studied in transition; a reliance on developmental analysis (Moll, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1985). This historical contextualization characterizing cultural psychology is consistent with the third law of dialectics: the negation of negation, that is, the situation of developmental events within the ongoing movement of time; change, but not reversal, is possible and is in fact inevitable; development is the natural state (Gould, 1987, p. 154; Rogoff, 1990, p. 13).

A succinct précis derived from McDermott and Goffman of the contextual stance in a cultural psychology suggests that the study of any kind of behaviour or thinking must be directed to (historical) moments and their people rather than to people and their moments (McDermott & Hood, 1982, p. 227). Generalizing from people to minds and from moments to worlds, Shweder links this discussion of contextualization to the following discussion of interpretation and intention, asserting that "the mind, according to cultural psychology ... cannot be extricated from the historically variable and cross-culturally diverse intentional worlds in which it plays a reconstituting part" (1990, p. 13).

Interpretive/Intentional. Returning briefly to my indigenous lessons, I was shown clearly the expectation that my learning be culturally contextualized in place and time and relationship. More profoundly I felt, I was also shown that I interpret its meaning seriously in terms of my own and the Inuit survival purposes and developmental goals. Frequently I return to D'Andrade's definition of culture in trying to share this vision of human mind and its development with students and colleagues. He "treats culture as consisting of learned systems of meaning, communicated by natural language and other symbol systems .... Through these systems of meaning, groups of people adapt to their environment and structure interpersonal activities" (1984, p. 116). Here the ongoing development of meaning as a collective activity is equated with human life, change, and survival.

In his important expositions defining an emerging cultural psychology, Bruner (1986, 1990) repeatedly describes a discipline centred on "the concept of meaning and the processes by which meanings are created and negotiated within a community" (1990, p. 11). Development becomes the negotiation of meaning between individual and cultural milieu(x); one develops neither solo nor as a clone of surrounding culture. The process is reciprocal, integrating person and culture. As expressed by Shweder,

> No socio-cultural environment exists or has identity independent of the way human beings seize meaning and resources from it, while every human being has her or his subjectivity and mental life altered through the processes of seizing meaning and resources from some socio-cultural environment and using them .... Cultural psychology is premised on human existential uncertainty (the search for meaning) and on a (so-called) intentional conception of 'constituted' worlds. (1990, pp. 2-3)

From a cultural negotiation perspective, then, development is studied not only in terms of what people do but in terms of what they say or otherwise express about what they do – values, intentions, goals. One theorizes with people about the meanings of their doings, including cognitive doings, and this interpretive reality supersedes a presumed empirical reality. Intentions within the community complex of purposes and world view are critical to the understanding of human action. Wolcott (1985), with Frake (1964) and Goodenough (1976) before him, offers the anthropological contribution to cultural psychology of a commitment to cultural interpretation; of attention to the implicit culture of collective concepts, beliefs, and principles rather than only to patterns of cultural behaviour. Indigenous experiences have confirmed for me that the dialectical relationship between observational fieldwork and interpretation has much to offer cultural psychology.

The current interest in narrative, and young children's apparent "'push' to construct narrative" (Bruner, 1990, p. 77) in making sense of their lives exemplifies the methodological and theoretical potential of an interpretive cultural psychology of development. There is also much interest and ongoing study of humans' use of narrative in constructing and reconstruction their images of self; one's story line is, it appears, under constant revision as events are added to one's life (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 150, and elsewhere; this and the preceding reference can direct readers into the burgeoning field of narrative much beyond the scope of this paper). Such observations are consistent with the second law of dialectics, the transformation of quantity into quality, applicable generally to a cultural psychology in which meanings are more than the sum of accumulated behaviours and cognitions. Development is inherently a creative process, proposes Rogoff, "with people actively seeking meaning and relating situations to each other" a process of cultural negotiation specifically defined as "participatory appropriation" in her formulation (1992, p. 26). Thus we move into discussion of participation and construction, comprising the third and perhaps most critical component of a cultural negotiation perspective on human development.

Participatory/Constructivist. Despite the insistence in emerging formulations of cultural psychology, including many cited above, that human

development is active, continual and distributed, it is still all too easy and common for practitioners and scholars to slip back to familiar cognitive models. Context becomes merely an overlay on internal psychological processes; intention and meaning become merely lists of goals and values to be included in the modelling of such processes; meaning-making reverts to an inside-the-head concept of information processing (see Bruner, 1990, pp. 5-6). Thus I distinguish this third component of cultural psychology as central to our current rethinking of developmental psychology, and perhaps orthogonal to the other two components of contextualization and interpretation. Dewey foresaw our current shifts in psychological thought in 1916 when he wrote: "If the living, experiencing being is an intimate participant in the activities of the world to which it belongs, then knowledge is a mode of participation" (p. 363). Recent work towards reconceptualizing learning and development revives this vision: "Situations may be said to co-produce knowledge through activity" (Brown, Collins & Duguid, 1989, p. 32).

Developmental research in this perspective shifts its attention from a person's possession or acquisition of a capacity or a piece of knowledge to the active changes in an unfolding event in which people participate. As Rogoff illustrates in her "participatory appropriation" work, events are dynamically changing as people participate with others in the whole event, and development is seen as transformation. Very significantly for a new cultural psychology, the direction of development varies locally and does not require specification of universal or ideal endpoints of development (1992, pp. 18, 24). With others including Scribner and Cole (1981) and recently Lave and Wenger (1991), Rogoff pursues the concept of practice and of development as participatory movement into a specific community of practice – with its own particular, nonuniversal, developmental contingencies. Lave and Wenger analyse many forms of apprenticeship in describing the process of "legitimate peripheral participation" through which members move from the edge to the competent centre of a community of practice, and in the process construct their identities as members. Such communities might include a work group, club, profession or discipline, neighbourhood, or even family.

This socially distributed understanding of thought and development certainly owes much to Vygotsky's work, particularly his concepts of "practical activity" and "the zone of proximal development" (Vygotsky, 1978; for analysis not possible here see Moll, 1990; Wertsch, 1985). Vygotsky viewed mind as a characteristic not of a child, or any individual, but of a person-in-social-activities with others. The zone of proximal development can be described as the qualitatively different performance of children in collaborative activity contrasted with their performance alone.

Our distinction between cognition and activity is collapsed and mind is seen as a shared distributed phenomenon. Beyond Vygotsky's emphasis, we must add the nonhuman environment to this distribution of mind as we explore the role of tools and memory devices and material signs of the culture (e.g., Brown, Collins & Duguid, 1989; Donald, 1991). Human development therefore occurs embedded in and in negotiation with a person's cultural medium in all its dimensions.

Collectively these developmental concepts of active, distributed ongoing participation converge with various constructivist approaches current in educational and psychological thought. In exploring the potential and the limits of such convergence, I return to an indigenous lesson in human development, which I have elsewhere called "cycling" (Stairs, 1992), epitomizing a participatory, constructivist view of existence. Both among Inuit I have come to know, and as described with other indigenous peoples (e.g., Chatwin, 1987), there is a need to continually construct and reconstruct relationships with all aspects of the world – humans, especially kin, animals, the land, spirits. Neglect of or prevention from cyclic renegotiation of any of these relationships disrupts development towards *inummarik*, a most genuine person, and threatens identity utterly. A person is not seen as a bounded individual but is her/himself distributed among others and the land (e.g., Lee, 1956/1987).

Our current constructivist approaches move in this direction but remain largely individualized. It is the individual person who actively constructs knowledge and moves through stages of development, whether the emphasis is on cognitive or social processes of construction (see Marshall, 1992). I suggest we may move further in the direction of a cultural negotiation perspective by thinking in terms of a *cultural* constructivism in which both self and culture – together being the distributed self – are continually changing, developing, making meaning, and making culture. Again dialectics may be of some help in opening our thinking, in this case the first law – that of interpenetrating opposites. Culture and self cannot be assigned roles of cause and effect, inside or outside, but rather develop mutually, reciprocally. I believe it is towards this cultural constructivist perspective that Wax intends to direct us by reviving the concept of "culturing," not unlike indigenous cycling, engaging both the young and ourselves "throughout our lives" (1993, p. 109, see opening epigraph).

Closing Thoughts: Towards Teachers as Cultural Negotiators

> We must always remember that culture is something that does not stop still. It develops through challenges and interaction of people and events or it becomes distorted and dies. For the educator, the important thing is that education should be authentic. (Aboriginal educator Miriam-Rose Ungunnerr-Baumann Nauiyu, cited in Stewart, n.d.)

School is a primary forum not only for cultural negotiation between developing students and surrounding culture(s), including the unique culture of the school, but also among cultures in contact in and beyond the school community. Authenticity in education involves deep and continual alertness to schooling as culture-in-the-making, culturing in the moment and over time. Teachers, I suggest with Jacob (in Skomal, 1992; Jacob & Jordan, 1993) and others, increasingly need the skills of ethnographers – students of culture – as well as those of instructors and evaluators. A prerequisite for such skills is a rich sense of culture and of human development as cultural negotiation as it has been presented here. *Understanding culture* is dramatically different from *knowing culture* in the conventional ethos of multicultural education. Multiculturalism and cross-cultural comparative approaches confine cultures within largely static boundaries, ignoring the continual dynamic of mutual culture-person development – cultural constructivism – and offer formulaic prescriptions for culture-specific educational packages. These approaches trivialize culture into discrete piecemeal features, not recognizing the contextualized, interpretive, and participatory nature of a cultural community. And culture thus trivialized supports ethnocentrism and assimilation as discrete cultural features can be absorbed into the mainstream, under the rubric of tolerance and equality, without authentic cultural negotiation.

The challenge to teacher education is to lead students to discover culture, paradoxically, as advocated and practiced by Wolcott (1985), through exposure to cultural worlds dramatically different from their own. In my own teaching I attempt this in two ways, followed by the third step of constructing with the students a working model of culture and the developmental dynamics of cultural negotiation. The first way in to cultural awareness is for the students to locate a local subculture largely unfamiliar to them. Choices have ranged from a senior bowling league to an ice-fishing camp to life in the general aviation pilots' lounge to cattle auctions and bingo halls. At least two visits are required, guided by a basic observation model centring on the when-where-what, the who-how, and the interpretive why of the cultural scene (see Stairs, 1994, for elaboration). My second way of choice towards cultural perceptiveness is exposure to indigenous ways of life

and learning both in Canada and elsewhere through guests, video, reading, and my field experience. Besides the authenticity I can bring from my own encounters, choice of focus on indigenous worlds rests on the richness of alternatives in ways of learning and teaching which can be seen in comparison with western society and formal schooling.

Both experiences aim to demonstrate the particularity versus often assumed universality of schooled ways of learning, and both aim to expand teachers' perceptions of the range of human development and their own repertoires as cultural negotiators. D'Andrade (1981, pp. 185, 189) reminds us that there is found generally across many cultures only small amounts of step-by-step instruction but large amounts of apprenticeship-style cultural learning with occasional correction; that humans infrequently use abstraction by formal symbol recoding (e.g., formal language abstraction) produced by schooling but frequently use content abstraction derived from repeated instances, from experience. My indigenous lessons have included many subtleties of everyday nonschooled learning even beyond the major lessons of seriousness and right context discussed earlier. Offering just a few examples (see Stairs, 1991 for fuller discussion), these include teachers doing their own real work, not demonstration projects; working to task completion not to a time frame; beginning with study of excellent final products and doing finishing touches rather than beginning with first steps; knowing the destination of the project from the outset, whether as a gift or exchange; working and learning within a clear community of practice rather than in apparent independence.

While none of these features absolutely distinguish in-school from out-of-school learning, or western from indigenous society, the emphasis on and acceptability of such practices certainly differs between contexts. When successful, this broadening sense of developmental paths moves students beyond the initial multicultural *what* of culture – content such as historical information, festivals, food, artifacts, and language specifics. Significant as these content features are, they alone cannot sustain cultural negotiation to the developmentally serious level I was seeing in indigenous situations. As we continue to construct a cultural negotiation model, the *how* of contextualization in both human and nonhuman terms and the interpretive *why* of intention and meaning become significant. At best, we also have moments of insight into the nature of active, distributed, continual participation; the cultural constructivism that integrates what, how, and why into a full sense of human development as culturing. It is my intention to continue thinking and working towards the preparation of teachers as cultural negotiators, as familiar with a cultural psychology of human development and education as they now are with cognitive educational psychology. Again with

Wax (1993), it is my hope that the interdisciplinary dialogue this will require is a vital part of culturing ourselves throughout our lives.

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