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Becoming Intimate With Developmental Knowledge: Pedagogical Explorations With Collective Biography

In this article, we draw on postfoundational frameworks to make visible the subjectification processes by which practitioners simultaneously master and become mastered by developmental theories. We emphasize the implication of the entire minded-body in the processes of the developmental worker formation. We show these processes through empirical investigation with data gathered through collective biography in a child development graduate course in a child and youth care program. Often developmental psychology masks itself as "just natural" knowledge that informs our practice. However, the article shows that our relationship with developmental psychology is much more intricate and intimate than we might believe. This intimate relationship can provide new possibilities for resisting developmental knowledge in practice and training.

Dans cet article, nous avons recours à des cadres «postfondationnels» pour mettre à jour les processus de subjectification par lesquelles les praticiens maîtrisent et se font maîtriser à la fois par les théories du développement. Nous soulignons les conséquences sur le corps esprit entier dans les processus de la formation sujet/travailleur. Nous expliquons ces processus par le biais d'une étude empirique lors de laquelle les données ont été recueillies par une démarche de biographie collective dans un cours du niveau supérieur portant sur le développement de l'enfant dans un programme de soins aux enfants et aux jeunes. La psychologie du développement se présente souvent comme des connaissances «naturelles, tout simplement» qui guide notre pratique. Toutefois, cet article démontre que notre rapport avec la psychologie du développement est beaucoup plus complexe et intime que

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nous le croyons. Ce rapport intime peut proposer de nouvelles possibilités pour résister aux connaissances développementales en pratique et en formation.

In this article, our goal is to make visible the subjectification processes by which child and youth care practitioners simultaneously master and become mastered by developmental theories. We describe the subtle ways these processes take place through the body by analyzing data that we gathered through collective biography (Davies & Gannon, 2006) in a child development graduate course in a child and youth care program.

In the Canadian context, child and youth care as a field encompasses a wide range of professional practices such as early childhood education, school counselor, and youth work, among others (Ferguson, Pence, & Denholm, 1993). Developmental practice represents one of the principles under which applied fields such as child and youth care and early childhood education rest; and, therefore, students training to become child and youth care practitioners or early childhood educators are required to learn about child development theory and research extensively and understand the practices that are valued by developmental knowledge. However, developmental discourses have been challenged (Burman, 2008a, 2008b; Morss, 1996; Rose, 1990), and scholars working in these applied fields have demonstrated the limitations of developmental knowledge for the complex work of practicing with children in the 21st century (Blaise & Elsden-Clifton, 2007; Lenz Taguchi, 2007; Ryan & Grieshaber, 2005; Sumsion, 2005; Viruru, 2005). This article contributes to this literature by providing further insights into the complexities of teaching developmental knowledge.

We position this article theoretically in postfoundational theories, including poststructural perspectives on knowledge/power drawing on the work of French philosopher Foucault (1977, 1978, 1991) and his contemporaries; processes of subject formation outlined by feminist poststructural scholars such as Davies (2000a, 200b, 2006) and Butler (1995, 1997); and feminist, Deleuzian-informed perspectives on embodiment, especially the work of Grosz (1993), Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy (2008), and Hayes-Conroy and Martin (2010). Drawing on these various scholars' writings, we explore using our work with students how child development discourses operate in complex, paradoxical, and contradictory ways as a "regime of truth" in everyday practices. We highlight how practitioners/students become intelligible participants through discourses of child development. Further, we show how we come to embody child development and create intricate and intimate relationships with the regime of truth held by developmental knowledge. We argue that this embodied relationship with child development knowledge can create new possibilities for disrupting developmental discourses in teaching and practice.

We begin by situating the article in the broader literature on the reconceptualization of child development knowledge in applied fields in general, and more specifically, in the context of research and writing on early childhood and child and youth care practitioner preparation that draws on postfoundational theories. This literature, in fact, has inspired our teaching as well as research of our teaching. We then outline our theoretical stance, noting the critical ideas that are applied in the analysis of the data. Before presenting our findings, we provide an overview of the context of the data. We conclude by outlining our current thoughts about teaching child development.

Literature Review

Reconceptualizing Developmental Psychology in Professional Fields

Much work today situates developmental theories as politically positioned and neither neutral nor innocent (Burman, 2008a, 2008b; Morss, 1996; Rose, 1990, 1996, 2008). Developmental discourses, it is argued, limit ideas about what it means to be a person and are implicated in the reproduction of existing inequalities. Burman's work has been key to advancing the deconstruction of developmental psychology as exemplified in her two latest books *Deconstructing Developmental Psychology* (2008a) and *Developments: Child, Image, Nation* (2008b). Burman (2008a) offers "alternative readings of dominant Euro-US, or more specifically Anglo-US, psychology" (p. 2). She analyzes "developmental psychological texts, treating these not as transparent reflections of (logical or empirical) 'truths' but as accounts whose specific form can be understood as having wider significance" (2008b, p. 2).

Many scholars working on applied fields such as early childhood education and child and youth care have responded to the critiques of developmental psychology, and this article contributes to this important literature. For example, Dahlberg, Moss, and Pence (1999) present a detailed analysis of how early childhood quality discussions are linked to problematic assumptions about child development. They suggest that child development and quality discourses are part of modernity through:

> the reduction of complexity to simplified and quantifiable representations, and its suspicion, even rejection, of subjectivity and philosophy; a belief in general laws and universal truths, personified by the decontextualized view of development as a biologically determined sequence of stages; a focus on the individual as the centrepiece of enquiry; the strong normalizing tendency; its implication in processes of regulation and control; the very concept of "development" itself. (pp. 102-103)

Walkerdine (1984) worked with poststructural critiques of child development to trouble the contemporary term *child-centered* and examined the influence of Piaget on pedagogical decisions in the early childhood classroom. She states that practices based on developmental perspectives

> are normalizing in that they constitute a mode of observation, surveillance and production of children. Given this critique, it is difficult to conceive of these practices as being the basis of any kind of pedagogy which could potentially liberate children and respect the diversity of the world. (p. 195)

Lenz Taguchi (2006), Davies (2000a), and MacNaughton (2000, 2005) have contributed a useful lens to understanding children's identities through their work with deconstructive, feminist poststructural theories. They have explored the concept of subject formation and processes of subject production (the processes whereby the individual becomes a subject in the world) as alternatives to the rational, conscious, unitary human being described in psychological discourses (Davies, 2000a; Robinson & Jones-Diaz, 2006). We elaborate on these ideas below.

Another useful perspective for thinking about the effects of developmental psychology in the lives of children is provided by postcolonial critiques in early childhood education. Cannella and Viruru (2004) note that the idea of the developmental child emerges through the colonial and imperialist focus on human progress. Children are thought of as less than and undeveloped, "for which surveillance, limitation, and regulation is necessary for their own good" (p. 88). In their book *Childhood and Postcolonialization*, Cannella and Viruru propose a decolonial attitude toward our understanding of the child: "Decolonial possibilities can offer knowledges from the margin, unthought-of perspectives / life experiences, hidden histories, and disqualified voices as positions from which to reconceptualize discourses, individual values, and actions" (pp. 123-124).

Working in the field of child and youth care and drawing on the work of Deleuze and Guattari, Skott-Mhyre (2008) argues that developmental psychology hinders the creative potential of children and youth subjectivities. He notes that developmental psychology, "with its focus on deviance and pathology, risk and resilience" constructs children and youth as "colonial subjects" (p. 13). Therefore, he says, "constructions of [children and youth] that suggest they are capable of offering viable alternative constructions of society or subjectivity are discounted as not meaningful on the basis of the idealism, lack of maturity, or emotional instability" (p. 13) often attributed to children and youth.

Overall, this body of work has placed attention on the role of language and discourse in child development. The introduction of language and discourse analyses of developmental theory has made the field variably aware of the politics of developmental knowledge in everyday practices and brings us closer to creating spaces for meaningfully engaging in social justice (Dahlberg et al., 1999). In this article, we continue the tremendous contributions of this body of work by introducing new insights. Namely, we pay attention to how bodies come to matter in developmental discourses—highlighting the complex materiality of the social.

Teaching Child Development After its Critique

The article also contributes to the work of scholars who have documented how postfoundational theories are taught in educational institutions that prepare students to work with children and families. There is a dearth of writing in the field of child and youth care that examines how child and youth care practitioner education is being revised to respond to the critiques of child development noted above (see Skott-Mhyre, 2008, for a useful proposal of how child and youth care practitioner education could take on the critique). This article attempts to make a contribution to this scarce literature.

In contrast, early childhood education through its reconceptualist movement has made important contributions about how postfoundational theories have been employed in the education of early childhood educators. We found this literature useful for our conceptualization and teaching of child development in child and youth care. Blaise and Elsden-Clifton (2007); Geneshi, Huang, and Glupczynski (2005); Lenz Taguchi (2007); Ryan and Grieshaber (2005); Sumsion (2005); and Viruru (2005) note a set of useful pedagogical strategies that have proved helpful to introduce critical, feminist, poststructural, and postcolonial perspectives into early childhood teacher education programs and challenge dominant discourses of child development that tend to homogenize children and practices. These strategies include reflective practice, situating knowledge, multiple readings, engaging with images, rewriting memories, construction of counternarratives, reading binaries, and uncovering stereotypes, among others.

This body of work also demonstrates the complexities, challenges, and resistances that take place when teacher educators introduce postfoundational perspectives, making visible the political aspects of teaching. On the other hand, the literature clearly shows the liberating and powerful aspects of integrating postfoundational theories in early childhood teacher education. In the words of Sumsion (2005): "I have become convinced that an appreciation of postmodern perspectives can assist prospective teachers to develop and sustain agency to engage productively and optimistically with the uncertainties and ambiguities they will inevitably encounter in their practice" (p. 194).

The work of these and other scholars shows how postfundational theories can be integrated in courses to destabilize the role of dominant discourses in professional fields. This article builds on this literature and also contributes new understandings and nuances to teaching developmental psychology after its critique. In the analysis below, we not only contribute one more way in which the teaching of child development can be reenvisioned in professional fields, but also show, using data collected in a graduate course, how individuals interact with developmental psychology discourses in everyday practices, highlighting the embodied experiences of these discourses. This contribution can have implications for continuing to reinvent what is taught and how we teach in applied fields.

First, however, we provide an overview of how we position our analysis theoretically as well as a detailed review of the context of the data, including methodological and procedural considerations.

Theoretical Perspectives

In this section, we discuss the various postfoundational theoretical perspectives that inspired our teaching, research, and writing. As noted in the introduction, we make use of diverse theoretical underpinnings. As Springgay (2008a) wrote, we "do not make any attempt to synthesize" these theoretical approaches, rather we allow "for their contradictions and tensions to complicate our thinking" (p. 2), and further tangle them with the data that we analyze.

Knowledge, Power, and Discourse

Rather than reifying existing knowledge as truth, we intended to explore with students how child development operated as a "regime of truth" to create a particular image of children and childhood. A regime of truth can be understood as truths "woven together in a regime that governs what is held to be normal and desirable ways to think, act and feel" (MacNaughton, 2005, p. 32). We were interested in how students in coming to understand child development knowledge, continued to sustain and extend the regime of truth held by child development as developmental workers.

When viewed through poststructural theoretical lenses, knowledge cannot be understood as neutral and benign. Rather, it privileges particular theoretical perspectives while silencing others (Foucault, 1980). Simply put, what is referred to as knowledge merely reflects a particular version or understanding of a phenomenon held to be the prevailing truth by a particular culture at a particular time. This view contradicts a modernist perspective, where knowledge exists in the universe and can be demonstrated through by scientific inquiry which aims to provide incontestable evidence of its stable existence and truth.

The understanding of power used here follows Foucault's (1978) concept of power as being exercised and circulatory; as a network of discursive relations that move from numerous points through individuals, rather than being held by a particular group or social class. Key to this definition is that

> power is not exercised simply as an obligation or a prohibition on those who "do not have it"; it invests them, is transmitted by them and through them; it exerts pressure upon them, just as they themselves, in their struggle against it, resist the grip it has on them. (Foucault, 1977, p. 27)

The lens through which we explore our data is one that privileges discursive formation as an analytic tool. We define a discourse as a "relatively well-bounded area [sic] of social knowledge" (McHoul & Grace, 1993, p. 31) that both constrains and enables how we think and talk about a particular social object or practice. Thus discourses allow individuals to interpret particular social situations or phenomena. In the case of our data, child development was a phenomenon that students both experienced directly and found central to their missions as practitioners. In order to make sense of this phenomenon as it affected or was affected by their practices, they needed to position themselves in historically constructed discourses on child development, discourses that circulate in and through contemporary society, and more locally in their professional communities.

Discourses are not passive bodies of knowledge; neither are they immutable. Rather, they assume varied forms and trajectories depending on historical circumstances. Discourses function in association with power relations in that they are both integral to and constitutive of the social relations they describe and in which they are produced (Foucault, 1977, 1978). In addition, discourses are contested enterprises in that meanings are created through the struggle of discourses (Lankshear, 1997; Pratt, 1987; Ryan, 1999). Thus a discursive formation may be confronted or resisted, although clearly those who can be located in the dominant discourse share some privilege, whereas those outside the dominant discourse are often subjected to inequities. As Ball (1990) argues, "discourses are about what can be said and thought, but also about who can speak, when, and with what authority" (p. 2). However, a discourse may gain a dominant position over others in how it is strengthened and launched by individuals and institutions. The endorsement of prominent societal institutions, as well as advocates with credentials, works toward the legitimization of a discourse.

Processes of Subject Formation

One process that we attempted to challenge in our teaching of child development was the idea of a unitary *self* assumed in developmental psychology. Humanist discourses claim "existence 'inside' the individual" (Davies & Gannon, 2006, p. 22). Davies and Gannon explain that in these humanist discourses, "people are who they are either because they chose to be so, or because of their biological/social/economic inheritance—or some combination of both" (p. 22). In contrast, Davies (2000a), following Butler, argues that poststructural feminism proposes that "an individual emerges through the processes of social interaction, not as a relatively fixed end product, but as one who is constituted and reconstituted through the various discursive practices in which he or she participates" (p. 89). In this perspective, human beings are thought of as having multiple, complex, and contradictory ways of being and acting in the world. "Fundamental to this idea is an understanding of the person as process, and of words coming not from an essential core but from the discursive practices through which the person is constituting themselves and being constituted" (p. 38).

The *person*, understood in feminist poststructuralism as a process emerging from discursive practices rather than as having an essential core, requires a different conceptual meaning of agency from that contained in a humanistic perspective. Agency in a humanistic perspective involves an individual with a coherent, unique, continuous, adult identity, able to make rational coherent choices (Davies, 2000a). In contrast, Davies links agency in a poststructural theoretical perspective to the idea of authoring. From this perspective, an agent authors his or her subjectivity from the available discourses. Contained in the discourses, desires may work to subvert rational "choice" (Davies). Through this lens, "stories are the means by which events are interpreted, made tellable, or even livable. All stories are understood as fictions providing the substance of lived reality" (p. 57). We can then understand agency as authority, with an emphasis on author. Thus we (as agents/authors) from within the discourses available to us create the stories that interpret events. In this view, agency lies in the authoring of the stories, the choosing from within discursive possibilities.

Davies (2000a) proposes that the concept of *positioning* can be used to understand the construction of the subject in discursive practices. She defines discursive practice as "all the ways in which people actively produce social and psychological realities" (p. 88). Positions exist in a discursive practice, Davies contends, that may be taken up by a subject. The discursive practice of developmental psychology, for example, presents to subjects particular positions from which to understand a given situation and to guide their actions in that situation. Consider, for example, a parent who encounters a developmental practitioner and requests an assessment of his or her child's development. In this way, the practitioner is positioned and positions himself or herself in the role of expert in developmental psychology. Yet when asked to describe his or her child by another speaker, outside the discursive practices of developmental psychology, that parent may assume the position of expert. In this way, positions are not fixed, but rather are multiple and dependent on discourse practices (Davies). From a feminist poststructural perspective, the subject is not understood as consistent and rational, but rather in response to the positions that are made possible by a given situation. Thus subjects may have multiple and, in fact, contradictory positions by which they know and understand themselves. This process is further complicated by how a subject's positioning "of herself and her positioning of and by others is always tenuous and open to reinspection, both as other and as that which is to be abjected" (Davies, 2006, p. 434). Subjects "are not passively and inevitably shaped according to one set of discursive practices, within a monolithic moral order" (p. 426). Rather, subjects construct themselves from the positions presented in discursive practices that are possible.

Davies (2006) reminds us that the subject, in the process of simultaneously submitting and being mastered by a discursive practice, may actively resist and struggle in the process of subjectification. Butler (1995) explains:

> The more a practice is mastered, the more fully subjection is achieved. Submission and mastery take place simultaneously and it is this paradoxical simultaneity that constitutes the ambivalence of subjection. Where one might expect submission to consist in yielding to an externally imposed dominant order, and to be marked by a loss of control and mastery, it is paradoxically marked by mastery itself … the lived simultaneity of submission as mastery, and mastery as submission, is the condition of possibility for the subject itself. (pp. 45-46, cited in Davies, p. 426)

Davies (2000a) further writes: "The process of subjectification, then, entails a tension between simultaneously becoming a speaking, agentic subject and the corequisite for this, being subjected to the meanings inherent in the discourses through which one becomes a subject" (p. 27). The desire to master the role of developmental worker, for example, may create in the subject a sense of tension if the subject does not feel that mastery is attainable. In this way, the developmental worker wants to take up the position of expert, but the other speaker in the interaction may respond in a way that challenges the developmental worker's understanding and knowledge. This process highlights the evolving nature of positioning. Further, the subject may also resist the act of submission required to master the role of developmental worker.

Through the process of self-reflexivity, the subject may be motivated to resist the discursive practices, yet at the same time desire mastery of the discursive practices of developmental psychology (Davies, 2006). Returning to the example of a parent's request for a developmentally assessment of his or her child, the developmental worker may struggle with conflicting desires leading to the possibility of resistance. The desire to appear as an appropriate or good developmental worker by producing a developmental assessment conflicts with the desire to resist demands to label a child as normal or delayed. In a sense, resistance, as proposed by Foucault (1977) creates the possibility for the subject to reconstruct or change positions in discursive practices (Davies).

In line with the ideas we explore, we conceptualize the subject practitioner as being in a "continuous process of being constituted, reconstituted, and reconstituting herself/himself by and through discourse and discursive practices" in developmental psychology (Lenz Taguchi, 2005, p. 245). In the findings, we show how subject practitioners negotiate developmental knowledge and how through this negotiation they become masters and mastered subjects of developmental discourses.

A Corporeal Politics

Thinking through the lenses of poststructural feminism also involves challenging the binary mind-body that often permeates Western thought. The body, Davies (2000b) notes, "is generally understood as natural, and as such is taken for granted" (p. 15) and not necessarily made visible. Developmental psychology has attempted to separate bodies from cognition. It has defined cognition as non-corporeal and rational whereas bodies are conceptualized as irrational and contained. However, bodies and cognition do not work separately. Grosz (1993) says:

> The body is regarded neither as a locus for a conscious subject nor as an organically determined object; instead … the body is analysed and assessed more in terms of what it can do, the things it can perform, the linkages it establishes, the transformations it undergoes and the machinic connections it forms with other bodies, what it can link with, how it can proliferate its capacities—a rare, affirmative understanding of the body. (p. 171)

From this perspective, we shift our attention from bodies that experience to, as Springgay (2008b) notes, "an understanding of experience *as* bodied" (p. 24). There is an entanglement and interconnection between experience and knowledge.

We find the concept of visceral politics (Hayes-Conroy & Hayes-Conroy, 2008; Hayes-Conroy & Martin, 2010) useful to think about the relationship between mind and bodies. Visceral "refers to the realm of internally-felt sensations, moods and states of being, which are born from sensory engagement with the material world," including "the role of the cognitive mind"; "the fully *minded-body* that is capable of judgment" (Hayes-Conroy & Hayes-Conroy, p. 462). In the visceral realm, "the whole molecular ensemble of the minded body feels the world," and "life processes and events precipitate" (p. 462). Visceral politics refer to "the everyday dynamics of power that emerge in the production of minded bodies" (p. 462) that are always affected and being affected at the visceral realm. Of interest us here is the relationship between beliefs and actions around developmental psychology: how practitioners/students' beliefs about developmental psychology connect with their everyday experiences of practice. This connection between minds and bodies allows us to understand how child development discourses "are actually already material, experienced as part of the visceral body" (Hayes-Conroy & Hayes-Conroy, p. 462).

Methodology

Context

This article is based on data collected in a graduate-level course entitled *Child and Adolescent Development in Context* in a child and youth care program. In this course, we engaged with the challenges that postfoundational theories present to developmental psychology. The course has two main components.

As instructors, we began with the assumption that students enter the classroom with preexisting narratives of child and adult development, created through a lifetime of observing and engaging with developmental theories (Lenz Taguchi, 2005). Therefore, the first part of the course involved students becoming familiar with the constructive nature of developmental psychology discourses by reading texts that uncover the historical, social, cultural, and political underpinnings of dominant developmental theories (Burman, 2008a, 2008b; Fendler, 2001; Lesko, 1996, 2001; Morss, 1996; Rose, 1990; Walkerdine, 1984; Woodhead, 1999). Developmental psychology was investigated in relation to global circumstances, major and minor politics, ethical practices, laws, and economic conditions. Students examined and challenged "normal" conceptualizations of emotional, social, cognitive, and physical development in the context of childhood and adolescence. Some of the questions explored included: What is understood by the term *development*? Who defines development? Who is included in the definition? Who is silenced? How have developmental norms been constructed throughout time and space? (Burman). This first part of the course attempted to bring developmental discourses out into the open and provide opportunities for students to recognize developmental constructions of children and youth. To meet these objectives, students completed a project in which they documented themes from the assigned readings using photography/visual images (Dean, Harpe, Lee, Loiselle, & Mallett, 2008).

We found early in our teaching that in order to make the dominance of developmental knowledge stutter, we needed new and unfamiliar tools. We became curious about the kinds of subject positions that developmental psychology offers subjects and how subjects negotiate, take on, and resist these positions. Consequently, our interest in poststructural feminism emerged. Poststructural feminist conceptualizations of subjectivity allowed us to move beyond the humanist version of a bounded self that, not surprisingly, forms the basis of developmental discourses. Therefore, the second part of the course introduced the concept of subjectivity and processes of subject production (Davies, 2000a; Davies et al., 2001; Robinson & Jones-Diaz, 2006). Following Davies and Gannon (2006) and Lenz Taguchi (2005, 2007), we investigated the effects of subjectivity through an assignment that used collective biography as a learning tool. This article presents data collected through the collective biography assignment that the students completed for the second part of the course.

Collective Biography

> In collective biography a group … works together on a particular topic, drawing on their own memories relevant to that topic, and through the shared work of telling, listening and writing, they move beyond the clichés and usual explanations to the point where the written memories come as close as they can make them to "an embodied sense of what happened." In working in this way, we do not take memory to be "reliable" in the sense of providing an unquestionable facticity, nor do we take what initially surfaces as being truer, or more valid, than the texts that are worked and reworked in this approach. We take the talk around our memories, the listening to the detail of each other's memories, as a technology for enabling us to produce, through attention to the embodied sense of being in the remembered moment, a truth in relation to what cannot actually be recovered—the moment as it was lived. This is not a naive, naturalistic truth, but a truth that is worked on through a technology of telling, listening and writing. In a sense it is the very *unreliability* of memory that enables this close discursive work. (Davies & Gannon, 2006, p. 3)

Collective biography functioned in our course as a pedagogical tool to investigate everyday experiences and the workings of power. Cahill (2007) suggests, "through a process of investigating their own everyday lives and collective reflection, research participants identify their individual experiences as shared, as social and then in turn as political" (p. 267).

As a form of critical narrative research positioned in a poststructural paradigm, collective biography generates memories not acknowledged as an objective truth (Davies & Gannon, 2006). Consequently, we do not hold up the memories as data that uncover generalizable representative knowledge. Instead, we consider our analysis as conditional and specific to our group. Similarly, we do not conceive of the poststructural subject as a definable subject. Rather, we understand the subject as shifting and contradictory (Butler, 1992; Davies & Gannon, 2006). From this perspective, the subject/group existed in a moment in time and space.

Procedures

Students and instructors (ourselves) in the course wrote the memories. Experienced child and youth workers, one fifth of whom were male, made up the class of 15 master's students. One of the instructors/authors is an associate professor of the university, co-teaching with two other instructors/authors who are doctoral students in the child and youth care program. The instructors/authors are female. The doctoral students assisted in teaching the course and writing this article as a component of a doctoral credit course. The professor graded students' assignments and issued the final grades for the course. The class met once a week for three hours for 12 weeks.

The writing assignment instructions for the collective biography work included relating a memory (a two- or three-minute event/*experience*/short narrative) and describing the bodily and emotional sensations felt during that event, avoiding clichés and explanations (Davies & Gannon, 2006). Students and instructors wrote memories and read their narratives to their group. In small groups, each facilitated by one of the instructors, students and the instructors shared and examined written memories related to a particular class topic. Group members listened carefully to others' stories and asked questions when they did not understand or could not imagine being in the situation described. In this way, the group assisted individual writers in rewriting aspects of their memories that appeared opaque to their classmates (Davies & Gannon; Lenz Taguchi, 2005, 2007). Each member of the class then rewrote his or her narrative incorporating group feedback to make visible the corporeal aspects of memory.

Following the rewriting of memories, class members collectively *read* or worked deconstructively with their own narratives using feminist poststructuralist practices (Lenz Taguchi, 2005, 2007). We explored the following ideas: varied meanings that can be made from the narratives; the dominant discourses of development and identity that are present; the kinds of developmental theories represented in the narratives; the subject-positions available for the subject in the story, in relation to child and youth care, or in relation to other children/youth and child and youth care workers; the extent to which the subject in the story is positioning himself or herself or is positioned by others; the extent to which sex, race, class, and sexuality matter in the narratives; and what is thought of, constructed as normal and natural in the narratives (Lenz

Taguchi). Course readings (Davies, 2000a; Davies et al., 2001; Robinson & Jones-Diaz, 2006) provided the conceptual lens that this analysis used.

Through this process, the course offered tools for questioning existing developmental discourses and their implications in the reproduction of existing inequalities and for the continual creation of spaces for social justice. It also made explicit the conceptual *tools* that we bring to our work with children and youth. It asked students to make explicit the assumptions behind their images of children and youth, specifically how developmental psychology shapes our thinking, interpretation, and analysis of our work with children and youth.

At the course end, students were asked if they would allow their memories to be data in a research project conducted by the authors. An administrative assistant made the request for consent, collected the consent forms, and held them until the final grades for the course had been submitted. Twelve of the 15 students consented to their memories being used as data. In addition, the memories of the instructors / authors were included. After the completion of the course, the instructors / authors compiled the relevant memories, deleting those of students who had not consented to be part of the research project. This article reports only on the memories related to one of the several topics worked throughout the course, specifically "first memories of mastering theories of child / adolescent development and being mastered by them."

Analysis

We based our analysis on the theoretical perspectives outlined above. We also drew from aspects of critical discourse analysis and the practice of reflexivity. Critical discourse analysis "foregrounds links between social practice and language, and the systematic investigation of connections between the nature of social processes and properties of language texts" (Fairclough, 1995, p. 96). Fairclough (1995, 2003) explains that critical discourse analysis is a method as much as it is a theory for studying language in its relation to power and discourse. Critical discourse analysis allowed us to pay attention to the productive nature of power emphasized in the theoretical framework. It was used to study the memories so that relationships within and between discourses could be better understood and explained.

The practice of reflexivity consisted of opening on the memories to "come to see what is achieved through particular discourses acts as well as the constitutive means by which the particular act was made possible and interpretable as-this-act-in-particular" (Davies et al., 2006, p. 88). Finlay (2003) notes that reflexivity can be understood as tool to measure trustworthiness in qualitative research where researchers reflect back to understand how they affect and alter their own research. In the poststructural paradigm, Finlay further explains, reflexivity functions not as a backward glance of validity, but rather as a focused analysis of the discursive and sociopolitical agenda constituting and being constituted by the researcher. In our analysis, we used collective biography neither to reveal new knowledge nor to confirm an understanding of knowledge. Instead, the process of collective biography, and the analysis of the memories, worked to make visible to ourselves as researchers and teachers how we have mastered and been mastered by theories of child development. The significance of the method of analysis lies in its ability to resonate with us.

The intent is to leave us with reverberations of disruption in our understanding of children and youth as informed by child development.

In consideration of transparency, accountability, and trustworthiness, three standards of quality in qualitative research, we recognized that we needed to consider our positions and then overtly locate ourselves in our research (Hertz, 1997). Therefore, we began our analysis by locating ourselves in a poststructural and feminist paradigm. By situating ourselves in the research, we strove, as suggested by Creamer (2006) to "weave evidence of our multiplicity" (p. 530) in the text to achieve transparency. We read and analyzed the memories in the anti-humanistic framework found in the work of thinkers such as Butler, Davies, and Walkerdine (Zipin, 1998). In our analysis we did not seek to discover an *originary* agency in the practitioner that assumes an essence universal in all practitioners (Zipin). Rather, we teased out those moments when the participant recalled how child development as discourse constituted and was constituted by the subject. We attended to the moments in which the subject mastered and in turn was mastered by child development to make visible the process of subjectivity. Our analysis was also framed in Foucault's notion of power, and we attended to those moments in which the subject resisted the discourse of child development. In this way, we scrutinized the memories for moments of ambivalence, tension, and unease in the subject.

Limitations

Limitations were taken into consideration in our methodological approaches. Atkinson and Delamont (2005) assert that memories are "constructed and enacted through culturally shared narrative types, formats, and geneses" (p. 825). Further, they claim that memories need to be treated as performative acts and therefore analyzed as narratives. Chase (2005) contends that narratives are stories that are both made possible and constrained by the contextual conditions such as the setting, the subject's position, culture, gender, race, and history. For example, we recognized that the memories were constructed in a classroom setting by students who had mastered a discourse of "the good student." Anecdotal observations suggested that many of the students desired to tell the memory correctly, demonstrating their mastery of the task at hand. In this way, the "good student" discourse positioned the students specifically, making possible certain narratives but not others. Millei (2005) explains that the "idea of 'student' creates expectations towards power relationships and conduct in the classroom. Thus, the idea of 'student' also provides a base for instant evaluation of the young human being as 'good or bad'" (p. 134). The discourse of the good student positioned the students, and any interpretation of the analysis must, therefore, acknowledge the constituting role of that discourse.

In the analysis of the memories, we also attended to the notion that the actions of the subject and the governance of language make possible how the subject can be expressed in both speech and text (Heyning, 2001). The discourse of a subject creates a structural censorship that signifies the set of rules from which the subject can be discussed (Bourdieu, 1991). The students' memories were of mastering theories of child/adolescent development and being mastered by them. From a poststructural perspective, the language of child development is embedded in a value-laden, political discourse that holds a particular view of the child and development. How the students existed in this discourse of child development both enabled and constrained the students' recalling of their memories. The language of child development made possible what a student was able to bring forth as a memory of child development. Further, Rose (1996) contends that the discipline of psychology has infiltrated the public understanding of the human condition such that the norms and standards of the discipline have become naturalized. Thus the memories can be challenged as to what was ignored or silenced in both the collective work with the memories and with the analysis.

Findings

Processes of Mastering and Being Mastered by Developmental Psychology

The memories reflect the idea of submission and mastery in relation to the dominant discourse of developmental psychology. In taking up and mastering developmental knowledge in practice, the developmental practitioner maintains and strengthens the dominance of developmental theory and fully submits to its dominance. In other words, at the same moment in which the subject becomes recognized through dominant discourses, the subject submits to them. In this way, the developmental worker is constructed through his or her use of developmental theory, validating its continued existence as the dominant knowledge of understanding children.

In the memories that we analyzed, we found that mastery and submission takes place at the moment when the subjects become competent practitioners. This competence comes with expertise in developmental knowledge. Expert knowledge translates to good practice, and this knowledge about child development promotes correct analysis of children. *Expert* theoretical developmental knowledge is privileged and desired over other forms of knowledge. The memories allude to the desire of the idea that one correct understanding of development exists, based on rational, controlled, non-emotional thinking and that not adhering to child development knowledge led to failure in practice. Having developmental knowledge provided mastery in practice. Here is an example of how mastering and submission of developmental knowledge happens as Robert feels at ease when developmental knowledge is at his fingertips:

> *He thinks about the instruction he is about to give the children. He is planning to ask them to write down their names and the things they are good at doing. He starts to hand out the pieces of construction paper—it feels thick and smooth between his fingers. He positions a box of markers in the middle of the table, next to the plate holding the remnants of cheese and crackers. He thinks about his developmental theory class—drawing upon the information about stages of cognitive development as he prepares to deliver his instruction. As he recalls the learned information, he feels a calming of his stomach and a loosening of his muscles. He is about to try out some of his learning.*

Robert desires the discourse of developmental psychology. Lenz Taguchi (2005) and Davies (2000a) argue that desires are not necessarily natural and neutral tendencies of the person, but rather are constructed. For Robert, the desire to have developmental knowledge in his professional repertoire is produced through developmental discourses themselves.

A developmental worker who can use and create technologies of developmental theory to know and understand the child is also one who can be in control and feel at ease. Technologies from a Foucauldian perspective are tools that shape, guide or regulate behavior (Foucault, 1977). In using the technologies of developmental theory, the body feels a sense of control and calmness. Susan describes her feelings as she used a developmental assessment tool:

> *She was sitting upright with a controlled gaze as she sat at a table observing a child in the early childhood program. She felt warm inside her body knowing that she had accomplished checking off items on the observation form.*

The desire to become a good professional through having developmental knowledge couples with the fact that others position the worker who has knowledge of developmental theory as an expert. In the following memory, Sabina uses developmental theory to alleviate a mother's concerns, and then describes the pleasure of being the expert in responding to the mother: "*The mother thanked me for reassuring her that everything was fine. I stood up and walked away, taller than I remember before.*"

Expert knowledge of child development allows Sabina to make herself recognizable, able to do important helpful work. Gail also recalls the sensation of standing among a group of children as she assessed their behavior: "*Her mind was racing with thoughts as she moved her head around looking from left to right watching the children. She was alert and aware of her position and the position of the children in the room*."

Developmental theory provides Gail with the knowledge and the script to take on the position of the expert. Davies (2006) says:

> Central to the dual process of submission and mastery in the formation of the subject are the mutual acts of recognition through which subjects accord each other the status of viable subjecthood. Nevertheless, Butler observes, the subject disavows its dependence on that other who 'recognises' it, and in that act of recognition, constitutes its existence through the terms in which recognition takes place. (p. 427)

Davies continues, citing Butler (1997): "Subjection consists precisely in this fundamental dependency on a discourse we never chose but that, paradoxically, initiates and sustains our agency" (p. 2).

Not having expert knowledge, not being recognized by others becomes a serious, risky endeavor and, therefore, to be hidden. I return to Robert's memory in which he is about to provide instructions to a group of children. When Robert fails to get developmental knowledge right, he puts in jeopardy his viability as a subject:

> *He delivers his instruction—the children look to him as they pay attention to his voice. The children continue to look at him—time appears to freeze. The lights get brighter and more piercing. One child says quietly—"I don't understand." Another child says the same. Then another. His hands start to feel wet and clammy. The chair feels hard underneath him as his muscles tighten. He feels a flush of warmth down his face and neck. His stomach tightens and doesn't release. He feels the eyes of the other facilitator looking at him. He imagines a hole underneath his chair opening up gradually encompassing his body. He thinks he doesn't belong here. He realizes it is him that doesn't understand. He got it wrong.*

Frank's, Leslie's, and Allison's memories are other examples of what not knowing can produce: "*He is confused, and unsure what he is looking for. His heart rate begins to increase, his mind races.*"

> *She asked me if I could answer some questions regarding her child. I tensed up. My muscles stopped working. I couldn't say anything. I got hot and started to sweat. Did anyone else notice my face going red? I sat down on the floor in front of her and started playing with her son. Hoping that she wouldn't notice I was near tears.*
>
> *The coach, who is large and much older than her, stands over her claiming the boy isn't "normal." He tells her that the boy doesn't get along with the other children and can't stay on the team. She knows it's true, but it's not completely true, and she wants the coach to understand. The tension, tight like a knot, grows and moves from her stomach radiating outward down her arms to the tips of her fingers and down her legs. Her chest tightens.*

Resistance is also part of the memories. The dominance of developmental theory's explanation of normalcy often challenged and silenced other understandings of what was going on. In some of the memories, the participants reveal the tensions that emerge when the desire to master developmental theory conflicts with submitting to the demands of developmental theory perceived as unreasonable or as in contradiction with the participants' understandings. This tension highlights how the process of subjectification is not passive (Davies, 2006). The subject recognizes the power of the discursive practice as dominant but necessary for the very existence of the practice. Lenz Taguchi (2005) says that in fact,

> whatever practice we choose to take up, and thereby also subject ourselves to, we will also to some extent resist, both as a result of its normalizing effect on us, but also as an effect of our inability to perform and repeat it correctly. (p. 252)

Butler (1997) notes that "the subjection is the account by which a subject becomes the guarantor of its resistance and opposition" (p. 252). Davies echoes these ideas: "the subject might resist and agonize over those very powers that dominate and subject it, and at the same it also depends upon them for its existence" (p. 426). In taking up the role of developmental worker, the subject must submit to its power in order to master its discursive practices.

The process of becoming a developmental worker, as made visible by the memories, involves a complex and intricate relationship between mastery and submission. As we are reminded in the writings of Davies (2000a, 2000b, 2006), Butler (1995, 1997), and Lenz Taguchi (2005, 2007), submission and mastery occur simultaneously. Yet they create in the subject tension and pain. In order for the subject to be created, both submission and mastery must happen (Butler, 1995). In order to take up a position, the subject desires mastery; however, the submission to the practice may be resisted, creating a relationship in which one requires the other, but there exists an inherent potential for conflict.

Visceral Engagements with Developmental Discourses

One of the most common themes reflected in the memories are the visceral reactions associated with being a good/bad developmental worker. Mastering child development knowledge creates bodily pleasure and relief; not knowing creates discomfort and anxiety. As noted above, Susan describes her feelings in an encounter with a checklist:

> *She felt warm inside her body knowing that she had accomplished checking off items on the observation form. Her body felt tight, her arm extended and hand moving fast as she hurried to complete the form while scanning the environment.*

Returning to Sabina's memory, she also describes the exaltation she felt after reassuring a mother concerned about her child's development based on an explanation of a developmental stage theory:

> *I knew this. Erik Erikson, ages and stages. My body started to return to its normal state. My heart slowed down. My muscles started to move. I was able to talk. I didn't feel hot and sweaty. The mother thanked me for reassuring her that everything was fine. I stood up and walked away, taller than I remember before. Smiling, I was floating.*

Elizabeth describes the sensation of anger or rage when her understanding of what was happening was questioned by the discourses of developmental theory: "*She feels a swell of energy bursting forth and she wants to declare out loud "that isn't necessarily true because my teenage son is normal." Instead, she feels small and says nothing.*" And Katherine describes a similar experience:

> *She is quickly brushed off by the instructor who states that will not be speaking of such things in the class. Her immediate physical and emotional response to the instructor's chastisement is to feel embarrassed and ignored, which quickly turns into irritation at being given the brush off.*

In these memories, bodies matter at the instant of power production. They show that bodies and cognition do not work separately, but are intimately intertwined. Furthermore, bodies in these memories are flows, energies, discontinuous processes, and intensities *in constant flux,* forming connections with other bodies (human and nonhuman, animate and inanimate) and social practices.

Through these memories, we can see that developmental psychology is not only a discourse, but rather *bodied* and, therefore, always uncertain and unfamiliar. This approach presents new possibilities for thinking about resistance to the dominance of developmental psychology (both in teaching and in practice). The memories reveal somehow the chaotic and unpredictable ways that minded-bodies "are constantly developing, moving, shifting and working" and simultaneously, "aligning with a movement's socio-political aims and (re)creating them" (Hayes-Conroy & Martin, 2010, p. 278). It is this creative aspect of minded-bodies that have a "revolutionary potential."

Conclusion

In our analysis of how developmental discourses work through everyday professional encounters, we show the intricate and intimate ways in which we become subjects of, and subjected to, developmental knowledge. We highlight that this process is not just a process of cognition, but rather a visceral and material one that involves the capacity of mind and body to judge, think, and perform developmental psychology. Perhaps this account represents a new way to engage in teaching and in practice.

At a personal level, constructing our relationship to developmental knowledge variably has become for us an ethical endeavor. Our reading of postfoundational perspectives committed us to investigate how developmental psychology masks itself as "just natural" knowledge that informs our practice. We were able to make visible, however, the much more intricate and intimate ways that we relate to developmental psychology in our everyday lives. Knowing the kind of relationship we have with developmental psychology makes us view it variably, live with it in varied ways, and teach it diversely. As teachers of child development to current and future practitioners, we emerge from this process acknowledging that resisting developmental psychology in our teaching involves *life* in its entirety. We feel that our teaching has become a way of making "visible the usually invisible and at the same time interrogat[ing] and open[ing] up the apparently fixed" (Davies, 2000b, p. 35).

A broader implication of our work might be to child and youth care and early childhood practitioner education. Treating developmental psychology as not only discourse but as bodied might require a reconceptualization of how we teach in training programs. Perhaps in child and youth care and early childhood practitioner education, we are to take an approach to curriculum "as enfleshed." This approach "offers possibilities for teaching and learning as something complex and discordant" (Springgay, 2008b, p. 94), and more important, allows for spaces of rupture. In other words, because of the creative aspects of the minded-body, by bringing a visceral account to the construction of developmental subjects, we can open new spaces for thinking about the resistance to dominant discourses of development.

Perhaps the significance of this study is its ability to resonate with readers, to cause a stutter in their understanding of child development. We make visible how we created spaces for students to examine (always attending to embodied experiences) their mastery of, their submission to, *and* their resistance to theories of child development in their everyday practices as child and youth care practitioners. We hope to have contributed a small crack in the foundational presence of child development theories in child and youth care and early childhood education. We also hope that this crack in the foundation opens a space for creative responses to the challenges that others face when confronted by the hegemony of child development theory in the education of developmental practitioners.

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