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Intersubjectivity as a way of informing teaching design for a community of learners classroom

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Abstract

In this paper, I relate concepts from research (mainly psychological) on intersubjectivity to problems emerging in designing classroom learning environments by considering one of my undergraduate teacher education classrooms, which I designed to run according to an educational philosophy of “community of learners”, and I consider the issues emerging from these efforts. It seems that the notion of intersubjectivity is helpful both for understanding difficulties one can face with a teaching design for a “community of learners” classroom and for improving such a design. I consider three aspects of intersubjectivity corresponding to the teaching design difficulties described here: (1) intersubjectivity as having something in common, (2) intersubjectivity as coordination of participants’ contributions, and (3) intersubjectivity as human agency. The paper is limited to the issues of internal teaching design and does not address institutional constraints. © 2001 Published by Elsevier Science Ltd.

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1. Introduction

According to the educational philosophy of community of learners, which stems from a sociocultural approach to learning and development, the students and the teacher have collaboratively shared responsibility and ownership for guidance and learning where the students are responsible for learning how to manage their learning and the teacher has responsibility for guiding the students in this process (Brown & Campione, 1990, 1994; Cole, 1990; Dewey, 1966; Newman, Griffin, & Cole, 1989; Rogoff, 1994; Rogoff, Matusov, & White,

1996; Silberman, 1971; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988; Wells, Chang, & Maher, 1990). Often this effort goes against educational backgrounds of both students and the instructor who were raised in traditional schools based on an educational philosophy of transmission of knowledge. It is self-defeating to “cover curriculum” in a community of learners because this way of teaching reproduces transmission of knowledge. Therefore, it seems impossible to teach preservice teachers about a community of learners without the instructor trying to practice this educational philosophy him/herself.

Teaching how to teach puts special attention on how instruction is designed. Instructional design of a classroom involves both the teacher’s organization of and orientation toward the activity. Teaching in a classroom is a goal-directed activity of

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designing guidance. In addition to a purely organizational mode, the notion of “teaching design” also involves a dynamic understanding of local goals and global purposes of education, a teacher’s orientation of him/herself toward his/her own actions, an emphasis on building relationships, and so forth.

Viewing the teacher as a learner in a community of students who are also learners redefines the pedagogical value of the instructor’s mistakes (Lave, 1993). Mistakes are inevitable in learning. In a community of learners, the instructor may guide the students by modeling how the instructor deals with difficult situations, how the instructor deals with his/her own pedagogical mistakes, and how the instructor learns from mistakes. This makes the philosophy of “community of learners” a constantly moving target like learning itself.

The purpose of this paper is to depict this movement using an example of my own class. I found the concept of intersubjectivity, developed initially in the psychology of communication, useful for analyzing problems emerging when the instructor and the students with traditional educational backgrounds try to develop a teaching design of a classroom functioning as a community of learners. From the beginning, the concept of intersubjectivity has been used in the context of guidance (Trevarthen, 1979). Although it has proven useful to apply this notion to other domains of human interaction, including schooling (Rogoff, 1990), perhaps it also can be modified to fit needs of educators as a reflective tool for analysis of their pedagogical designs and processes.

In this vein, I will use my examples from a college class, “Instructional strategies and reflective practices”, that I taught for 23 undergraduate education-major students (juniors and seniors, mainly middle-class women in their early twenties). My class had a teaching practicum for the students (i.e., preservice teachers) to attend local elementary schools twice a week to observe and give mini-lessons. The class was on teaching methods in general, with my focus being on the educational philosophy of community of learners, a focus enthusiastically supported by the majority of my students. I concentrate here on difficulties of teach-

ing designs that both my students (as preservice teachers in a teaching practicum) and I (as their instructor) experienced in our class.

These difficulties included (1) a lack of a shared focus in classroom activities, (2) a lack of space for students’ respectful disagreements with each other, and (3) a lack of students’ engagement in a caring practical action. I will present details of three cases—each case corresponds to one of the described difficulties. The first case concerns a student struggling to organize her lesson in her practicum classroom to avoid “disciplinary problems”. The second case is about interpersonal conflicts that some undergraduate students experienced during class group projects. The third case is about my own problems, as an instructor, of organizing the class so students could participate without feeling forced.

I will draw upon research on the notion of intersubjectivity that has emerged in developmental psychology and sociolinguistics (Rogoff, 1990; Rommetveit, 1998; Trevarthen, 1979). This notion seems relevant to understanding how to guide educators on how to improve their teaching design. I consider three definitions of intersubjectivity corresponding to the three teaching design difficulties and the three ethnographies: (1) intersubjectivity as having something in common, (2) intersubjectivity as coordination of participants’ contributions, and (3) intersubjectivity as human agency. Finally, I will discuss how the classroom issues presented here change the notion of intersubjectivity itself.

2. Intersubjectivity as having in common: shared focus of attention

2.1. Setting a teaching problem

One of the problems that teachers commonly face is how to create a common focus of learning activity or discourse in the classroom. This is especially important in a case when the teacher tries to organize a discussion among the students. Lack of a common focus often leads to escalating “disciplinary problems”. Let us consider the following example.

2.1.1. Case #1: group's shared focus of attention¹

A preservice teacher, Kathy, designed her lesson with a group of six second-graders (European-American boys and girls mainly from middle-class families) in the following way. She moved the group of children with their chairs to a corner of the classroom close to the blackboard. The rest of the class was taught by the regular teacher away from the group. Kathy explained to the children that they were going to learn about earthworms in order for the children to work with worms later. The children were excited because the earthworms had arrived the day before and they were eager to work with them. Kathy's intention (according to my interview with her) was to organize children's discussion around a book on earthworms' habitat, with the written lesson plan objective stated to be, "Students will be able to group soil terms and characteristics into one of five soil categories."

First (Phase #1), Kathy stood in front of the children and read a non-fiction book about life and habitat of earthworms. From time-to-time she stopped her reading and asked the children open-ended questions like, "What do you find interesting about earthworms?" The children enthusiastically raised their hands and provided answers. After a child's answer, Kathy moved on in her reading without continuing the topic. Sometimes the children spontaneously asked questions during Kathy's reading without raising their hands and she often provided a quick answer and moved further in her reading. For example, when Kathy was reading that earthworms do not have eyes, one boy exclaimed, "But how can they see?!" "They don't", she replied and moved on in her reading. The children's groupwork was enthusiastic and loud. Although the children were attentive to each other's contributions, there were no opportunities for them to react and reply to them. Some of the children episodically chatted off-topic with each other but it was brief and not too distracting for the group.

The problem fully developed when Kathy shifted to her second part of the lesson (Phase #2). After finishing the book, she presented two prepared charts to the children. One chart had words about soil (e.g., "sand", "water", "glass", "bricks", "air"). The other chart had five (presumably mutually exclusive) categories ("kinds", "what's in soil", "what's made from soil", "looks", and "texture"). Kathy explained that she wanted the children to put words in the appropriate categories. She showed an example and then asked which of the categories the first word on the word list belonged to. All the children raised their hands. Kathy tried to call equally on all the children. If a child was wrong (from the teacher's point of view), she asked the next child. If the child was right, the teacher praised the child and moved to the next word on her list.

The children were very enthusiastic in this activity. They were raising their hands higher and higher, becoming louder and louder, moving closer and closer with their chairs to Kathy—they were competing for the teacher's attention to provide their answer. After awhile, two boys seemed to decide that they could not win the competition and started moving their chairs away from Kathy to chat off-topic with each other. The noise from the group became very high so it disturbed the rest of the class working with the regular teacher. Several times the regular teacher asked the group to work more quietly but after a brief moment the competitive dynamics and level of noise returned back to its high intensity. Kathy was losing more and more children to off-topic chatting that became very disturbing for the group. Her response to the situation was to ask the kids to be on-task and to be quiet. She also accelerated the tempo of her lesson and was openly relieved when her lesson was over.

In my post-lesson interview, Kathy characterized the problem as disciplinary (she said that she lost control over the kids) and asked my advice on how she could better discipline children. In my opinion, she had a problem with creating a shared focus of group attention where the children would be authentically interested in listening and relating to each other's and Kathy's contributions.

The following academic research and definition helps to address the issue of how to design a shared focus of classroom attention.

¹ The presented case was the result of students inviting me, as their instructor, to provide feedback on their lessons. After observing a student's lesson I discussed with the student what went well, what the teaching goals were, and what could have been improved. I developed field notes after my visits.

2.2. Concepts to inform practice

In research on intersubjectivity, several threads of investigation can be identified. One thread emphasizes the *communal and common* nature of intersubjectivity as developing a common (i.e., similar) sense in a joint sociocultural activity (Cole, 1991). Dewey (1966) emphasized the fact that the words “common”, “community”, and “communication” have a shared root.

There is more than a verbal tie between the words common, community, and communication. [People] live in a community in virtue of the things which they have in common; and communication is the way in which they come to possess things in common (p. 5).

Researchers following this thread often focus on different aspects of the activity that participants have in common: attention, understanding, or communicational agreement. Thus, Trevarthen (1979) focuses on mother–infant *shared attention* either on each other (“primary intersubjectivity”) or on an object (“secondary intersubjectivity”). Tomasello, Kruger, and Ratner (1993) argue that the *focus on ways that others approach a problem* (which can be called “tertiary intersubjectivity”) is specifically human and it is this capability that creates the phenomenon of culture.

Wertsch (1979) analyzes the process of mother and child *sharing definitions of the situation* (or understanding) in joint problem solving. Wertsch’s notion of definitions of the situation is similar to Engeström’s (1990) notion of the object of activity. According to Engeström’s activity theory, the notion of object of activity involves participants’ desires, motives, and interests (Leont’ev, 1981). Like Wertsch, Engeström suggests that it is important for a successful smooth activity to have *the shared object of the activity*, which implies the development of common interests and motives.

Rommetveit (1985) expands this focus on sharedness of participants’ subjectivities to include both future expectations and past experiences of the participants in a joint activity. He introduced the notion of *shared prolepsis* as everything relevant for the activity and communication that the participants take for granted (as if they agreed upon that

prior to the communication). A good example of proleptic expectations is Grice’s *cooperative principles* (or “conversational maxims” (Rommetveit, 1989)): a listener expects the speaker to say what is relevant, true, clear, and informative. According to Rommetveit, establishing and supporting proleptic intersubjectivity is a dynamic and *recursive process* in the sense that the participants constantly adjust their assumptions and expectations in reaction to each other’s contributions and feedback. In all these approaches to intersubjectivity, common/similar experiences of the participants are valued. Accordingly, the high quality of an activity requires a high degree of “having in common” in order to achieve intersubjectivity.

2.3. Classroom implications

Applying these theoretical notions to the teaching problem which emerged in Case #1, we can concentrate on three mutually related principles that constitute a shared focus of attention. These principles include the shared object of the activity, shared communication, and authenticity of the activity for all the participants. I argue that the preservice teacher violated all three principles in her design of guidance:

2.3.1. The shared object of activity

It seems that in both phases of the lesson, there were completely different objects of the activity for the preservice teacher and the students. In Phase #1, the teacher’s object seemed to be covering the book by reading (and having students answer questions that mainly served as a check list of their following it), while for the students the object of activity was learning about worms. In Phase #2, the object of the activity for Kathy was correct categorization, while for the children the object of the activity was competition for providing their answer to the teacher (and off-topic chatting, later on).

Of course, the object of activity cannot and should not be completely the same for the teacher and the students (and, probably, never is) (Engeström, 1990). While the students are supposed to be focused on the subject matter, the teacher, besides being enthusiastic about the subject matter, has

also to be focused on how to provide guidance to the students. However, it is essential for developing intersubjectivity that the teacher is *concerned* with what the activity object is for her/himself and her/his students in preparation of and during the lesson (Wertsch, 1979). At the beginning, the teacher can set proleptic expectations (Rommetveit, 1989) as something that the group will try to accomplish together: what the activity is about, why they are doing this activity, and how the students can contribute to the activity. During the activity, the teacher can help the children and her/himself to engage in reflection on what the current object(s) of activity is for the participants.

2.3.2. *Building a classroom community through shared communication*

This means designing a *recursive communicative process* that makes students interested in each other's contributions (Rommetveit, 1989). This was not the case in Phase #2 for the preservice teacher when the students were organized (not deliberately) to compete for her attention. The communicative process was not recursive—the children did not need to listen to each other, the teacher's reply to a child's answer was not important for the child's further contribution. Thus, they did not have intersubjectivity in the sense classically defined by Trevarthen (1979). Even in Phase #1, the preservice teacher did not provide her students with opportunities to build on each other's ideas. As in designing the shared object of the learning activity (Engeström, 1990), to be successful a recursive communicative process has to be designed to be proleptic—it should be explicitly expected and set at the beginning of the activity and reflected upon by the teacher during the activity (Rommetveit, 1989).

2.3.3. *The authenticity of the activity for all the participants including the teacher*

The notion of authenticity is about the engagement of the whole person in the activity and involves *recursivity of participants' interests*—development of the activity generates whole new waves of emotional, volitional, moral, and intellectual reactions in the participant that promote the activity further (Engeström, 1990; Leont'ev, 1981;

Vygotsky, 1978). The notion of authentic activity is based on a relationship between the given activity and other spheres of the participant's life (and, thus, other authentic activities) (Dewey, 1966). A person's engagement is always authentic, but the activity may not be—this authenticity may not have anything to do with the sociocultural goal of the activity (e.g., a person can authentically hate the activity she is doing). Having common authenticity of engagement that, in addition, is crossed with the goal of the classroom activity seems to be very important for promoting intrinsic active learning in the students. In criticizing Montessori schools for teaching children reading and writing only as a mechanical skill, Vygotsky emphasized the relevancy of the activity for a child:

... the teaching [of reading and writing to pre-school children] should be organized in such a way that reading and writing are necessary for something. If they are used only to write official greetings to the staff or whatever the teacher thinks up (and clearly suggests to them), then the exercise will be purely mechanical and may soon bore the child ... Reading and writing must be something the child needs. Here we have the most vivid example of the basic contradiction that appears in teaching of writing not only in Montessori's school but in most other schools as well, namely, that writing is taught as motor skill and not as complex cultural activity. (Vygotsky, 1978, pp. 117–118)

In Phase #1, reading and discussion of the book on earthworms, the preservice teacher designed an activity that seemed to be authentic for the children. The book about earthworms and the teacher's questions were authentically interesting for the children because they sparked inquiries in them (Dewey, 1966). However, for the preservice teacher herself the activity was not apparently authentic. She was interested in neither children's answers nor their questions. That might be why she did not promote further discussions among the children. As we have suggested above, her object of activity seemed to be covering her preplanned curriculum rather than learning about and guiding children's inquiries about earthworms. Phase #2, the activity of categorization of worm words, was

apparently not authentic for any of the participants except, maybe, for some of the children who wanted to win the competition for the teacher's attention. In order to promote authenticity of the classroom activity for all the participants, the teacher needs to focus on a recursive process of the participants' interests: the teacher should start with authentic inquiries and focus on their recursive transformation (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988).

The notion of intersubjectivity as having in common is based on special consensus-based activities (Matusov, 1996). However, not all joint activities are consensus-based and consensus is not always a desired outcome. Even in consensus-based learning activities, the teacher has an important "surplus" of pedagogical goals focusing on guiding the students that transcend the joint learning activities. This non-consensual nature of teaching guidance and learning activities requires a second approach to the notion of intersubjectivity that I will discuss in the next section.

3. Intersubjectivity as coordination: space for respectful disagreement

3.1. Setting a teaching problem

One of the features of the educational philosophy of community of learners is that it promotes different forms of organization of learning activities in the classroom with its specific emphasis on groupwork and projects. For this reason, I, as a college instructor, incorporate group projects in my class for preservice teachers. However, project groupwork can be difficult for students who are not accustomed to working in a group on a classroom project. Specifically, group participants may not know how to handle emerging disagreements and tensions in the group.

3.1.1. Case # 2: group's space for respectful disagreement

In the second half of the semester, a group project was assigned which would take about a month to complete and involved a mutually agreed upon topic that explored a teaching dilemma broadly relevant to students' future teaching. All students

were enthusiastic about working in groups and had had previous in-class experiences with small group discussions of assigned readings. I told my students that the group project would give them an experience of groupwork (including frustration and enjoyment) and prepare them for developing individual final papers for the class.²

Two out of the five groups developed a similar crisis. I will describe in detail the development of one crisis in the group which consisted of four women: Anna, Beth, Tammy, and Kim (all pseudonyms). The relations among the students had been relatively good prior to the group project. However, I had noticed that sometimes it was difficult for them to manage disagreements in discussing the assigned readings, which they "solved" by emphasizing that they had been presenting "just their own opinions" or by switching the topic of the discussion.

The groups began by deciding a topic for their group project and writing a paragraph about their proposed topic. I told the class that initially they could come up with several topics and work out one topic later with my help. I was floating around the classroom, joining each group for a while to facilitate the groups' discussions and brainstorming. I could hear that the women's group discussed three proposed topics: using corporal punishment in schools, facilitating technology use by female teachers and students, and parent involvement in children's education. However, at the end of the class they presented a paragraph describing only one topic: corporal punishment in schools. I assumed that the group had reached a consensus or a compromise.

Later that week, Anna came to my office and asked permission to do her project by herself because she really wanted to explore the gender issue of technology use in school. I validated and supported her choice of the project but suggested using it for the class final paper. I reiterated why, from my point of view, it was important for the students to

² Although the students received a final grade in the class, they knew that their class work was not graded; instructor's feedback was constantly provided to promote students' safe learning from their own mistakes.

experience groupwork and the frustration that sometimes it brings. She seemed to accept my justification but expressed her concerns about the group's choice of the topic. Anna said that she did not like the topic of corporal punishment because it was too non-problematic for her (she was strongly against corporal punishment). She asked my permission to move to another group. I discussed with Anna why some educators support use of corporal punishment in school. I also gave her my permission to move to another group if she could not find anything interesting in the topic of corporal punishment. To my surprise, in the next class where students worked on their group projects, I found Anna enthusiastically working in her own group on the topic of corporal punishment.

In a few class meetings, I sensed negative group dynamics in this group and once I found them arguing about how to coordinate their work. Anna was arguing with Beth, while Tammy and Kim were listening to both but silently aligning with Beth (through non-verbal expressions confronting Anna and supporting Beth). Anna was suggesting having one person (presumably herself) incorporate all four contributions (pieces that each of them had already written through division of the topic) together via use of the interactive class web available for all the students. Beth was resisting Anna's idea. My further involvement led me to believe that Beth, Tammy, and Kim did not trust Anna to do the work of integration but also did not want to do it themselves. By the time I joined the group, they already were very defensive to each other's arguments. For example, Beth said, "It will be too much work." Anna replied, "It won't be work for YOU at all, I'll do everything myself." Of course, that did not address Beth's (and the others') concerns because the rest of the group did not trust Anna and was afraid that she wanted to take the work over and reject other group ideas.

In my intervention, I discussed and acknowledged all members' concerns as valid ones. I asked how each member perceived the next step of their groupwork and helped them find a comfortable compromise. They all agreed to post their pieces on the web. However, although they agreed to allow Anna to put their pieces together "just for Anna herself", they would not consider the product of

Anna's integration as the group draft but rather as a draft that should be presented to the group for approval and further work. They all seemed to be happy with the compromise. My interpretation of the event was that I could model for them how to resolve group disagreements. That was a wrong interpretation.

Some time later, I bumped into Anna in the hallway. I asked her about how their groupwork was going outside the class. Anna replied that everything was fine. She added that she tried to do whatever her partners wanted from her and she did not care that many decisions were made without her presence. However, she again tried to assure me that it was fine with her because she was really enjoying working on her own part of the group project. I expressed my concern that this did not sound like happy groupwork. Anna agreed with me and blamed her partners for unilateral decision-making including their choice of the topic.

I decided to talk with Beth. Beth told me that Anna routinely skipped their group meetings outside the classroom. But she added that they were all happy when she did not come because it freed the group from unproductive arguing. Beth said that Anna did not know what the group decided and did not want to know but instead she insisted on her own ideas. For example, the group decided to present the group paper to the class as a skit in which each of them would have a role. This decision was made in a meeting to which Anna had promised to come but did not. Anna refused to do the skit but instead tried to insist that all members prepare transparencies for their presentations. Beth counter-complained to Anna, accusing her of unilateralism, mentioning that in an integrated draft that Anna developed she changed other people's parts without consulting them. When other group members asked her to change it back, according to Beth, Anna replied that she had already spent a lot of time working for the group and the text did not make sense without the changes that Anna made.

I went back to Anna to learn her interpretation of the story. Anna confirmed that she intentionally missed the group meeting because she was tired of the group's ignoring her suggestions. Besides, Anna added, she thought that her group partners were probably happy that she did not come to their

meetings. She also complained that her partners did not allow her to use transparencies in her presentation but added, “I don’t care. I don’t need their permission. I care only about the quality of our work. I’ll do my presentation with transparencies.” I saw adversarial group dynamics but did not know how to stop it at that point. I asked Anna if the group discussed the growing tension and disagreements. Anna answered that they did not but she added that she really tried to be nice to them and to get along by following their decisions even though she was unhappy.

Anna did not come for her group presentation because her car broke down. However, she sent her paper that showed excellent research on the issue of corporal punishment. Her group members were both happy and angry that Anna did not come (at that point they did not know about the emergency and interpreted the event as Anna’s typical sabotage). In their presentation, they nicely incorporated Anna’s part and acknowledged her work. The presentation was superb—it generated a very productive discussion in the entire class. However, after the class meeting Tammy came to me and complained that in the final draft of the group paper Anna had distorted her part. Tammy said that she had sent a straightforward email message to Anna requesting her to undo her changes.

In the next class meeting, Anna sat away from her group. After the class, she came up to Tammy, and publicly told her, “Do not send me your sneaky email messages but talk to me face-to-face!” All classmates were shocked. Anna came to my office and apologized to me for her behavior, but she did not want to apologize to Tammy. At the last class meeting, we had a class celebration to which Tammy and Kim did not come and where Beth came but would not talk with Anna. All four members of the group submitted their project pieces separately.

Finally, I talked separately with Beth and Anna, asking them to reflect on their experience and to provide some advice for me in order to better help my future students in their group projects. Both Beth and Anna agreed that their experience was very educational because they might have non-cooperative students in their future classrooms like their group partner(s) (implying each other). Both

blamed each other for the conflict without taking any responsibility for what happened. Both described their strategy of dealing with non-cooperative partner(s) as giving up her own position, trying to be “nice”, doing what the other side wanted them to do, stopping arguing, and avoiding the conflict. They agreed that these strategies were not productive but blamed the other side for that. They admitted that they never discussed what to do with their disagreements but tried to convince the counterpart to accept their position by referring to the task, rationality, and the quality of the product.

This case raises a question of how to design students’ groupwork in such a way that group disagreements do not blow the group apart. How should students be guided to avoid emergence of adversarial group dynamics? How can disagreements and misunderstandings be acknowledged and accepted? These questions seem to require a different approach to intersubjectivity than something that participants have in common.

3.2. *Concepts to inform practice*

The second thread of academic approaches to intersubjectivity stresses *coordination* of participants’ actions as defining moments of intersubjectivity (Fogel, 1993). Thus, Matusov has argued elsewhere (Matusov & White, 1996) that *disagreements* and *misunderstandings* among the participants of a joint sociocultural activity can coordinate the participants’ actions in the activity. Katriel (1986) argues that in some sociocultural activities, evidence of disagreement can be a characteristic of the intersubjectivity process. She uses the example of straight speech, called “*dugri*”, in Israel. “*Dugri*” is a genre of how to disagree that still preserves the integrity of the group. Here disagreement is often expressed in an unpleasant form to an authority with the goal not to seek agreement but to state the level of disagreement that the community can tolerate. There is an expectation that there will not be any negative consequences for the subordinate speaking “*dugri*”.

Latour (1996) develops the notion of *interobjectivity* to emphasize the point that people’s *diverse meanings* are coordinated through use of the same objects. Star and Griesemer (1989) introduce the

notion of *boundary objects* to focus on mutual engagement of participants who do not necessarily have similar understandings of the activity. All these authors stress the process of emerging diverse goals in a joint activity. These views seem to direct attention to the diverse and open nature of communal practices such as school teaching and learning.

Sherif and his colleagues (Sherif, 1988) studying conflicts among groups of boys in a summer camp at Robbers Cave, Oklahoma, found that solidarity among the groups was based not on commonality of their experiences but on a shared problematic situation. Similarly, studying school reform movements and innovative schools, Fullan (1993) and Matusov (1999) conclude that the communal fabric is built through space of shared problems rather than through common visions. “As heretical as it sounds”, says Fullan, “reliance on visions and strong shared cultures contains severe limitations for learning from non-linear change” (Fullan, 1993, p. 67).

3.3. Classroom implications

There are several implications for teaching design that can be extracted from this conceptual framework. First, participants’ positions emerge from participants’ concerns. All participants’ concerns should be acknowledged as valid. Second, disagreements and misunderstandings should be expected and managed rather than always avoided and not resolved. Third, groupwork can be coordinated not only through shared vision but through specially designed “boundary objects”. Fourth, splitting a group is not the worse possible event if mutual respect is preserved. In short, groupwork requires creating space where members can disagree in a respectful way, help each other even when they disagree, allow each other to work on alternatives, and even eventually split. In Case #2, these principles were violated and the class instructor did not fully guide the group according to these principles.

3.3.1. Sharing concerns

Emerging concerns of group participants come from participants’ diverse backgrounds, walks of

life, attitudes and beliefs, places and roles in different communities they participate(d) in, and relationships with other people (Gee, 1996; Lemke, 1995). To accept their concerns as valid and legitimate is to accept the group members as valid participants (Lave, 1991; Matusov, 1999). Other members of the group can legitimately disagree and even reject a participant’s solution to a concern but they cannot reject the concern itself if they want to continue to be respectful to each other. Although a participant’s concern may have different meaning for different participants—a boundary object (Star & Griesemer, 1989)—it can introduce a problematic situation for the whole group.

In Case #2, there were no doubts that all members were well intentioned and tried to be respectful to each other at the beginning of their group project. However, they did not share their concerns and did not appreciate each other’s emerging concerns as valid but instead focused on whose ideas about project development would prevail in the group. Although the class instructor tried to introduce the idea of sharing concerns to the group, his approach was ad hoc and not instrumental (and visible) enough for the group members. Also it might have been too late for the group who might have developed adversarial relations by the time of instructor’s intervention and cared less about being respectful and more about the work being done with minimal emotional effort.

3.3.2. Managing disagreements and misunderstanding

Group disagreements and misunderstandings coming from participants’ diverse concerns need to be expected and acknowledged (valued) as points of growth and learning rather than hurriedly resolved or avoided (Fullan, 1993; Latour, 1996; Matusov, 1996; Star & Griesemer, 1989). Disagreement management involves participants’ respectful and open-minded arguing for and against each other’s positions. The outcome of the management is either a resolution of the disagreement or development of alternative positions to clarify and to reveal underlying diverse concerns, values, and approaches as well as the whole web of their relations to each other and other known approaches (Baker-Sennett, Matusov, & Rogoff, 1992). The group has

to recognize that emerging alternatives are a no less valuable outcome of their work than an emerging consensus (Latour, 1987). Also, they should recognize and acknowledge the role of their opponents as necessary collaborators, who pushed them further in their own thinking via disagreement and argument (Latour, 1987).

In Case #2, all members of the group seemed not to accept a mature disagreement as a legitimate outcome of their discussions. They put all their efforts into getting all members to follow one way of doing things (usually, the one that they argued for). They tried to convince each other, pushed others to accept their own position, or gave up their own positions just to “move on” although not being convinced and not accepting the forced solution. The class instructor did not guide the group in how to manage disagreements in ways other than seeking a consensus or a compromise.

3.3.3. *Coordinating participants' contributions by a boundary object*

Shared vision (e.g., consensus, compromise) is not the only way to coordinate participants' contributions in a joint activity (Fullan, 1993). A group can redesign their object of activity to make disagreement a boundary object for their project (Star & Griesemer, 1989).

For example, in Case #2, the group developed a boundary object involving students' fight over whose ideas would prevail. Alternatively, their project could have been a report and discussion of their agreements and disagreements. Instead of treating unresolved disagreements as obstacles for the development of a group paper and group presentation, their work presentation could have involved a report about their unresolved disagreements (perhaps they could somehow have generalized their case to a teaching dilemma in a classroom). In this case, the paper and presentation would be boundary objects for the participants. Unfortunately, the class instructor did not recognize and did not suggest this possibility for the group but instead focused the group (and the whole class) on working primarily through group consensus that clearly was not always possible. The literature on groupwork suggests that by focusing groups on consensus seeking, an instructor may promote conflicts

(Cohen, 1994; Weinstein, 1996; Weinstein & Mignano, 1993).

3.3.4. *Learning through diversity*

Often the highest priority of groupwork is the activity task to be done. Although this is almost always important in joint activity, it seems to be questionable as to whether it should be the highest priority in an educational context. The outcome of students' groupwork is less important than the experiences and learning they are supposed to get out of it (Palmer, 1998). It is rarely the goal of the teacher (and students) to make professional contributions in some field through students' groupwork. Usually, in school education, experience and learning are supposed to be prioritized over the pragmatic quality of the groupwork outcome (Palmer, 1998). In the context of the educational philosophy wholeheartedly embraced by the students and the class instructor in Case #2, groupwork involves learning through building a community of learners (Brown & Campione, 1990). Through spelling out, clarifying, relating, and developing alternative views, approaches, values, and concerns, the group members could actively learn about new perspectives (Piaget & Elkind, 1968). A community of learners develops through respecting opponents as authors of alternative views and acknowledging their contributions in development of proponents' own positions. Although the class instructor in Case #2 seemed to recognize the value of learning through acknowledging group disagreements, he failed to communicate that to the group.

Summarizing all the above points, it is possible to conclude that a teacher should not expect that students who have little experience with groupwork know how to work with each other. For students to learn how to cooperate, collaborate, and manage disagreements, miscommunication, and conflicts, they have to be involved in groupwork on a regular basis to experience consequences of their actions, to have opportunities to reflect on their experiences, and to try new approaches to their groupwork (Cohen, 1994; Johnson & Johnson, 1989; Rogoff, 1998; Slavin & International Association for the Study of Cooperation in Education, 1985; Weinstein & Mignano, 1993). Experience and comfort with, and understanding and mastery of,

groupwork is especially important for preservice teachers because it gives them the framework of why and how to use cooperative learning in their future classrooms. Novice teachers often do not recognize that they themselves do not have comfort with and mastery of managing groupwork but also they are often unaware of the need to teach their students about how to work together. When the teacher and students recognize the need to learn how to work together, unsuccessful groupwork experiences can become learning opportunities in the classroom.

According to the literature cited above, learning how to do groupwork involves at least the following three mutually related aspects: (1) opportunities for the students to experience it on a regular basis (another recursive process), (2) space for public reflection on their groupwork, and (3) a language of talking about means of groupwork and problems emerging in groupwork. Katriel (1986) and other sociolinguists suggest that if a community does not have language (i.e., genre) for respectfully dealing with disagreements to preserve the integrity of the community, either the community integrity or the quality of a community practice in which the participants are involved will be jeopardized. Jump (1999) (see also Penuel, Cole, Korbak, & Jump, 1999) reports about his efforts to teach his elementary school students how to work together by videotaping group projects. He shows the videotape to the whole class asking students to focus on and discuss their behaviors and actions seen on the videotape that hinder or facilitate their groupwork. This practice not only can help his students to reflect on their groupwork and to find better ways to collaborate, but it also helps the students develop a language of how to disagree with each other in a respectful way without jeopardizing their long-term relations with each other, the quality of the learning activity, or the integrity of the group.

The power of the notion of intersubjectivity as coordination is so great that it covers very diverse types of human relations from collaborative to adversarial. In an educational philosophy of a community of learners, not all relationships are desired and thus not all coordination of participants' actions are seen as beneficial. A philosophy of a community of learners prioritizes collaborative

relationships between the teacher and the students and among the students, fostering shared (but not necessarily symmetrical) ownership for guidance, learning, and decision-making in the classroom, and emphasizing caring for each other. The following third definition of intersubjectivity as human agency helps to address these educational priorities.

4. Intersubjectivity as human agency: caring and practical action

4.1. Setting a teaching problem

For people raised in traditional institutions with a one-sided educational philosophy, it is often difficult to learn a community of learners approach to teaching and learning (Matusov & Rogoff, submitted; Rogoff et al., 1996). Having long experience of such traditional schooling first as a student and then as a teacher, I came to the conclusion that I will always be a traditional adult-run instructor who tries innovative ways of teaching and learning to depart from traditional practices. When I face challenges in my teaching, often my immediate response is to draw upon the arsenal of traditional practices. In realizing and accepting this tendency, I am learning to confront it directly and not to be paralyzed, to deny or rationalize that decision. This realization and acceptance helps me to avoid unreasonable expectations from others and myself and complaints when these expectations are not met. Thus, discovering elements of a traditional philosophy in my practice is not evidence of my failure, hypocrisy, or surrender but something that I expect from myself and am willing to work to transform. Similarly, I treat the majority of my students as traditional students with a long history of grades-oriented learning and transmission of knowledge teaching, many of whom (but maybe not all) want to try a community of learners approach.

My major concern, as an instructor, is to facilitate students' desires to transition from a traditional transmission of knowledge to a community of learning approach. Students' focus in a traditional undergraduate classroom is often on how to

survive the class, to get good grades, to successfully guess what the instructor wants from them, to learn disciplinary techniques for their future classrooms, and to deliver all this to the instructor's satisfaction. In a classroom functioning as a community of learners, students focus on what they want to achieve as future teachers, on their own concerns in becoming teachers, and on reflection on their own teaching priorities and long-term goals. The problem of instructional design for me as an instructor is not only to deconstruct the traditional organization of the class based on students' expectations of tests, exams, grades, and feeding with information but also to facilitate the development of students' new intentionality based on reflection and addressing their teaching concerns and dilemmas. The deconstruction of a traditional educational system alone often can lead to students' frustration with and withdrawal from the learning process. Without expectation (or threats) of tests, exams, and grades many students may stop reading assigned literature, doing assigned projects, and coming to class to save their time and energy for other classes and responsibilities, and/or just leisure. They may continue to be guided by the principle of minimizing efforts.

4.1.1. Case # 3: engaging students in a caring and practical action

At the beginning of the class, I explained that one of the goals of my class design was to create a safe learning environment for my undergraduate students where learning through making mistakes was not punished by lowering their grades. I explained that in accord with the educational philosophy that I had embraced personally and which would be a significant part of our academic curriculum, I would not use tests, exams, grades (only the final one as required by the institution), and the attendance roll. I promised not to grade their project assignments but instead to provide supportive, encouraging and critical feedback.

Students' initial responses were both positive and disbelieving at the same time. They liked the idea of "a safe learning environment where a student's mistake is not punished but valued as a learning experience". They expressed their surprise at having such teaching principles—the big majority of the students stressed many times during the class that

they had never experienced such an environment before. However, some students doubted that such an arrangement could work and remained skeptical throughout the class. Their major concern was that some students might abuse the system and avoid learning by skipping classes and not doing reading and project assignments. Moreover, there was a suspicion that I would react to this problem by reconstituting tests, exams, and grades for the assignments in the middle or the end of the class. One student told me that one of her past instructors also tried to abandon grades and tests but after discovering that many students came to class unprepared, he reinstated tests. I tried to reassure the students that this would not be "my way to fail" my own educational philosophy.

As the semester progressed, class attendance dropped to 2/3 and even in some class meetings to 1/2 of the enrolled students. There were also clear signs that some students did not read the articles and chapters assigned for the class. In my observation, there were about 1/3 of the students who regularly attended and the rest attended sporadically. I tried to address the issue by modifying the way the class meetings were organized to make them more interesting. Although students who regularly attended the class and I myself, as the instructor, benefited from some of the pedagogical changes, I found little correlation between success of class meetings (in students' feedback and my own judgment) and other students' attendance. Then, I decided to discuss the issue with my students (of course, with those who were present that day in the class).

In the way that I presented the problem to the students, I tried to discuss constructively the underlying issues and to avoid blaming. For example, I surveyed the students on how many classes they were taking, whether or not they worked, and whether or not they had to take care of their family. The picture emerged that an average student had 5–6 classes and a job (no family on average). It was clear that many education majors were overwhelmed (on average education students have to take 20% more credits than other students in the university to graduate on time). However, as the students told me, some students did not attend the class not because they were overwhelmed but because "they

can get away with it". The students were also concerned that I might change the class organization and thus punish those who are responsible by making the class environment less inviting and safe for those who are not. Here are three postings that students put on the class web after the class discussion:

I believe that everyone should have the responsibility of coming to class. As a teacher, I would feel misrepresented if my students chose not to attend class. However, I would also ask myself, 'who will suffer in the long run?' Of course, the ones who are the responsible learners would. So, overall I wouldn't really dwell on the issue of coming to class. Let them learn the hard way: ^)^³

If you are going to give someone the opportunity to miss out on class and they do, then they should be the ones that should be worried. I know that when I am a teacher and students miss class, I will notice and feel bad for them because they are going to be that much more behind on what is going on in class. The students that do attend class are the ones who appreciate what is taking place and want to learn.

It is up to the student to attend their class. If you don't the only person you're hurting is yourself. What I don't understand though is when students skip class, yet you see them 2 minutes after class is over parading around campus having a good old time without a care in the world. That's fine I suppose, as long as they're not the ones that come running to the teacher at the end of school asking for extensions on papers and tests. Then it's completely unfair to people who have taken the time to attend, especially when teachers do get talked into those extensions. ...

I began being afraid that the students might develop animosity toward each other. So, I discussed possible positive aspects of students' non-attendance such as choice making and learning from mistakes. We discussed the dilemma of what is

better—to do everything only when you are forced to do it by others or to make your own mistakes—and considered cases in the teaching practices that students read about or were involved in.

After that class meeting, I decided to stop discussing the issue with the students. The attendance problem continued to the end of the class with a little change: "the stable body" of the students who attended regularly rose, in my observations, from 1/3 to 1/2 of all students. This was small progress, but progress nonetheless.

At the end of the class, I asked all students to write (on the web) what they had learned in the class and to provide their feedback on the class (all 23 did). The most frequently mentioned items that they learned the most from were (the order is alphabetical):

- *assigned projects;
- discussion and consideration of teaching dilemmas;
- discussions of teaching practicum experiences;
- *interactive class web where students could discuss their issues with each other and the instructor;
- learning about innovative education;
- safe and inviting class environment;
- *teaching practicum, working with children and observing the teachers.

The items marked with a star have a common property of being closely monitored. For example, it was required to make at least two web postings weekly. Every month I provided information about how many postings each student did and about whether the student met my expectations. Despite the fact that a minimum number of web postings was externally controlled, the content of the postings seemed to become a developing part of students' new intentionality with the class progression. Here is what some students wrote about web discussions in their own reflection on their class learning,

My favorite part of this class is the webtalk. I love being able to communicate with everyone and get such personal responses from people I barely knew until this class. As a future teacher it has really opened my eyes to options in the classroom.

³This is a "smilie face" used to express intonations and emotions in electronic writing. This specific smilie face is aimed to communicate sarcasm the student seemed to have. It was rather common for students to use smilie faces in their writing on the class web discussions.

Communicating with the class outside of class was a very interesting component to the class because it was not that difficult, but it forced you to evaluate what you were doing and see what others thought. Having a class web site was definitely the best part of any class I've taken.

Although it was sometimes a pain to go to the computer lab to do postings, I really enjoyed seeing what everyone else had to say. It is an interesting way to interact with each other rather than doing other boring assignments. Now, it just seems routine and takes no time at all. It really has allowed all of us to get to know one another better!

Although web discussion, assigned projects, and teaching practicums were closely monitored, the students seemed to take ownership for these activities.

There were at least two questions for me as an instructor and a designer of guidance. The first question was how to make students come to the class and read assigned literature without causing too much harm for students' active learning and well being. The second question was more fundamental—how to help the students assume the ownership for their own learning. The last question led me to focus on issues of ownership and agency as social and distributed processes, as another definition of intersubjectivity.

4.2. *Concepts to inform practice*

The third thread in research on intersubjectivity can be associated with discussions of *human agency*. According to this thread, the goal of pedagogy is to facilitate development of the self-directed and responsible agency in a learner (Rogers & Freiberg, 1994). Here agency is defined as the final cause (i.e., authority) for an individual's actions (Klag, 1994). Agency involves processes of developing and prioritizing goals, problems and choices, problem solving, and making and realizing solutions (including moral ones). By this definition, the notion of agency has inherently a sociocultural nature, since the final cause of an individual's actions always has a distributed character in time, space, meaning, and among direct and indirect participants of the activ-

ity. For instance, even the most intimate and original ideas of an individual are expressed in words and terms invented by others in the context of ideas of others, responding and addressing other people in material circumstances constructed by other people (Bakhtin, 1990; Wittgenstein, 1953).

Development of the self-directed and responsible agency in a person involves an individual gaining more access to the activity and learning processes—moving from participation on the periphery of these processes to their center. It is going beyond the student's learning to do what the teacher wants the student to do or, even, the student learning to want what the teacher wants the student to want (e.g., reading books to report on the content). It is about the student's learning how to collaboratively redefine the sociocultural practice (e.g., classroom curriculum) and being given the opportunity to do so (Newman et al., 1989).

It appears that the main challenge of educating for agency in a learner is how to engage the person in the agency processes and avoiding the educator (1) taking over the processes (i.e., lack of freedom) or (2) jeopardizing the well being of the learner (i.e., lack of guidance and care). In schooling practice, these two pitfalls are represented by the adult-run and children-run approaches to teaching, correspondingly (Rogoff, Matusov, & White, 1996). In the former, the teacher takes full responsibility for guidance and learning activities—this type of teaching approach is common in many traditional schools. In the latter, the responsibility is delegated to the students while the teacher provides minimal guidance only when asked for help—this teaching approach has been used in some innovative schools as a reaction to the adult-run traditional schooling. In both cases, collaborative engagement of the teacher and the students in defining classroom activities is missing.

The resolution of this dilemma seems to lie in the educator's realization that his or her own agency is constituted by the agency of the student within the context of their relations. This requires that the teacher and the students co-participate in the process of pedagogical goal defining (Davydov & Markova, 1982; Zukerman, 1993). It involves also trust in students' agencies as the final authority responsible for their own learning, management of

uncertainties, expectation of mistakes (both from the educator and the students), and respectful, caring, and collaborative relations (Gordon, Benner, & Noddings, 1996; Klag, 1994; Noddings, 1995).

What is the core of collaborative relations? Traditionally, collaboration has been defined as sharing goals, perceptions, understandings, and actions or building on each other's ideas to accomplish something together (Johnson & Johnson, 1989; Rogoff, 1998). Although certainly, this traditional approach captures important aspects of collaboration—without a doubt, people use each other to accomplish their goals—it seems it also misses the idea of the importance of the unreachable distance that participants of collaboration keep from each other and never can cover.

Matusov and White call participants' focus on using each other in working together "cooperation" (Matusov & White, 1996). Cooperative relations are aimed to amplify physical, intellectual, emotional, motivational, social, and institutional power of the individual but they do not transcend the individual's solitude. As Bakhtin pointed out, losing the distance between the self and others via either using others for an individual's own goals or dissolving the self in others destroys the dialogue inherent in humans' sociocultural nature (Bakhtin, 1990). Describing Bakhtin's position, Morson articulates this point:

By making others a version of ourselves, we transform them so that we learn nothing. It is no less impoverishing to empathize with others so much that we silence our own voice. (Morson, 1986, p. 177)

In collaboration, participants need each other not simply because they help each other accomplish some common goals that, otherwise, they could not accomplish on their own, but because they define a dialogic agency in each other.

4.3. Classroom implications

It becomes clear from this conceptual analysis that the notions of "ownership" and "agency" closely relate with the notion of "care about

others". Caring about others involves deep emotional, motivational, cognitive, and volitional concern about well being and agency in others. Caring seems to be essential for designing sensitive guidance (Gordon et al., 1996; Noddings, 1995). It is not the case that the non-participating students in Case#3 did not care. I think they cared about children and about themselves as preservice teachers but their care was left mainly emotionally and intellectually unfocused, unreflective, private, and non-practical (Noddings, 1992). That was probably why students' ownership for the class and their own learning remained relatively low (from the instructor's point of view).

4.3.1. Focus on students' feelings for themselves and others in the context of education

There may be many reasons why students want to be schoolteachers, some less philosophical than others (e.g., having long summer vacation, societal pressure to enter a dominantly female middle-class profession) (Rogers & Freiberg, 1994). However, becoming a good schoolteacher practicing a philosophy of community of learners involves deep personal care about and commitment to children based on sympathy, attachment, and compassion (Paley, 1992; Palmer, 1998). For some preservice teachers, these sentiments probably sound abstract (Noddings, 1992). To facilitate experiencing these feelings as concrete and alive, it can be helpful to design opportunities for these students "to re-live" moments ("perezhivanie" in Russian; Vygotsky, Veer, & Valsiner, 1994) of their and others' lives when such feelings have emerged (Noddings, 1995; Pinar, 1998). This can be possible through inviting students to discuss critically their own school and relevant non-school positive and negative experiences related to education, and having students work with children as a class practicum (Freire, 1993). A discursive focus on feelings and emotional experiences in the class can be helpful for development of a personal sense of care (Hicks, 1994). Although the instructor in Case#3 made some efforts in this direction (e.g., asking his students to write about their positive and negative school experiences), this focus on emotional experiences related to education was not systematic and clear.

4.3.2. *Reflective doubts about harmful care and caring harm*

There are many mistakes that an educator can make. Making mistakes by itself often does not have pedagogical danger if these mistakes guide the educator in how to improve his or her guidance. However, one type of mistake is rather dangerous exactly because it leads away from caring about a student and, thus, away from sensitive guidance. It is a mistake where the teacher intentionally does harm that is rationalized by the teacher as caring. For example, when a student several times in a row violates instructor's expectations (e.g., not turning papers in on time, not following guidelines, skipping requirements), a feeling of helplessness and anger sometimes overwhelms the instructor. To release this feeling and to resolve the situation, the instructor may develop a deliberate system of harm for the student, ideologically masked as "punishment", "behavioral modification", "facing logical or natural consequences", "painful learning", "hitting the bottom for learning", "shock therapy", "harming for student's own good", and so on (Klag, 1994; Purkey & Stanley, 1991; Rogers & Freiberg, 1994).

Of course, people learn from their painful experiences, however, damage is often done to the student, the instructor, and their relations. In this case, the teacher treats the student as a resisting object of his/her manipulation rather than as a partner in guidance and learning. The instructor rejects agency in the student rather than guiding the student in how to develop it (Noddings, 1992). The harmful care often damages learning agency in the instructor because the instructor rejects considering his or her own expectations and teaching approach as faulty. It also often damages guiding agency in the student because the instructor rejects the student's participation in crafting guidance. Harmful care often starts a cycle of adversarial relations between the student and instructor (Rogers & Freiberg, 1994).

Genuine care seems to prioritize not so much the student's meeting the instructor's expectations but collaboration between them (Noddings, 1995; Paley, 1992; Palmer, 1998). Sometimes not meeting the teacher's expectations can signal that those expectations and guidance are wrong and need to

be revised. Caring harm is pain that is a byproduct of care guided by concerns about facilitating development of agency in the student and collaboration between the student and the teacher. For example, the weekly requirement of the minimum of two web postings was initially uncomfortable for some students in Case # 3. The instructor acknowledged the discomfort as natural and legitimate and discussed with the students both educational benefits and pains of participating on the web at the beginning of the class. The instructor appealed to both the students' trust in a new unfamiliar instructor and to the threat of lowering final grades—a strong motivator of the students (as one student from a previous class put it, "Why do an assignment if there are no grades?!"). Also the instructor tried to promote students' use of specially designed interactive webs that could address their needs such as sharing their teaching practicum experiences with their peers, introducing dilemmas, comforting each other, and so on. Finally, the instructor expected that some students would violate the requirements and built both a system of monitoring students' participation and ways for students to repair their progress record at any moment in the class. It is not to say that the system worked for all students: a couple of the students finished up the class a bit short of the required number of web postings, one student mainly did her postings at the end of the class. However, it was the latter student who reflected and acknowledged in her final posting how much she missed by not participating on the web. Thus, the focus on fostering an agency and responsible self-directed learning in students seemed to prevail in this example. The notion of agency as a center of choice and decision-making implies students' wrong choices and mistakes. Students' wrong choices and mistakes need to be expected, respected, and guided.

4.3.3. *Shared care*

When care is not shared among participants, their efforts are dissipated. Care often expresses itself as concern (Noddings, 1992). So to share care means to share concerns. For example, if the instructor is concerned about a student's learning and the student is concerned about minimizing her efforts in the class, although they are both

concerned about the same person, their care is not shared. Students' concerns about children and themselves (as students and future teachers) in Case #3 were often dissipated because, probably, the instructor did not design occasions for communications about students' concerns. A well-shared care leads to a feeling of clear mission for all participants.

4.3.4. *Regulation by collaboration and not by grades*

It seems paradoxical that without grades—a system of extrinsic rewards and punishments—many preservice teachers would not put their efforts into learning how to be a teacher. It can be expected that those who want to be teachers, have to like education, schooling, being a student and a learner. Yet, it is not the case for many preservice teachers from Case #3. There can be many reasons for that; some were cited above. The majority of preservice teachers only experienced traditional schooling with its focus on extrinsic motivation, the system of rewards and punishments, survival, pleasing the teacher, minimizing efforts, and guessing what the teacher wants. For example, the author's surveys made in his classes show the students rated their participation on the class webtalk as the favorite classroom assignment (i.e., enjoyable and useful). Although the participation on the webtalk was declared by the instructor not to be graded in any sense, 56% of all surveyed students believed that if other students posted very many messages on the webtalk, it might decrease their own final grade in the classroom. It is an unrealistic expectation that people with traditional schooling background can change overnight even if they want to change (Matusov & Rogoff, submitted; Rogoff et al., 1996).

Despite the focus on collaboration and shared concerns declared by the instructor in Case #3, it was not clear how that focus was realized in the classroom activities. For example, many preservice teachers do not have an instructional repertoire other than direct instruction available to them from their own experience: they are concerned how to teach traditional material ("facts," phonics, grammar) required by their teacher leaders in the teaching practicum, they are very concerned about establishing their own order in the class and making the children compliant, how to teach comprehension, and so on. These and many other concerns

surfaced through students' participation in the class webtalk where they had opportunities to discuss issues broadly relevant to the class. When many of these concerns became addressed in the instructor's further classes (via special curricula of enactment of learning activities and problematic cases during class meetings), student attendance dramatically increased to a level that surpassed some teacher education classes with very strict attendance and grading policies. This shows that the instructor's collaboration with the students about the classroom curricula, addressing their concerns, immediate relevancy (in a broad sense), and care for students' well being can successfully compete with grades and attendance rolls.

4.3.5. *Making a difference in the world*

The notion of agency involves choice making, decision-making, and considering consequences for an individual's own actions (Rogers & Freiberg, 1994). This implies that agency develops in practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991a, b). Unfortunately, college education of preservice teachers is often sheltered from such practice. Often, the preservice teachers do not have opportunities to design their own educational environment with the children or to significantly contribute to the design. One of the many institutional reasons for that is that preservice teachers' educational mistakes can be costly in a traditional adult-run school environment where any violation of a teacher's expectation is often viewed as a disciplinary problem within a child (Rogers & Freiberg, 1994). As I mentioned before, this often leads to punishment and development of adversarial relations between the preservice teacher and the children (Rogoff et al., 1996). On the other hand, without having an opportunity to be involved in working with children under guided supervision, many preservice teachers cannot feel that they make a difference in the world. There is no chance for them to safely make pedagogical mistakes. This constrains the development of agency and care in the students. Preservice teachers' practicum participation in innovative classrooms that are run according to a philosophy of community of learners and in an informal learning environment (e.g., afterschool programs) can be helpful in this regard.

5. Summary

In this paper, I have discussed some uses of concepts derived from intersubjectivity research for issues confronting a teacher working within an educational philosophy of community of learners, and trying to design guidance to support and facilitate the development of students as members of a community of learners. After considering difficulties in designing a community of learners classroom such as a lack of shared focus in classroom activities, a lack of space for students' respectful disagreements, and a lack of students' engagement in a caring practical action, it becomes clear that all three definitions of intersubjectivity—as having in common, as coordination of participants' contributions, and as human agency—can be useful in providing both reflective and guiding power for the teacher. I have shared my own reflections here in the hope that these concepts may prove useful for other teacher educators engaged in a similar design enterprise and confronted with similar issues.

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