Introduction

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The developmental-interaction approach is an enduring pedagogy rooted in developmental psychology and progressive education that has informed educational theory and practice since the early-twentieth century. It is identified with, but is not unique to, Bank Street College of Education. This coherent philosophy focuses on human development, interaction with the world of people and materials, building democratic community, and humanist values. It has an explicit purpose: to educate teachers and children within an educational frame that brings together concepts from dynamic and developmental psychologists, and progressive educational theorists and practitioners (Shapiro and Biber 1972). These ideas are compatible and complementary. The concept of family of theories validates the creation of a coherent statement as opposed to an opportunistic eclecticism (see Franklin 1981; Laudan 1977; and Reese and Overton 1970, for discussion of family of theories).

Many of the concepts and practices associated with developmental-interaction are part of current educational thinking but have not consistently been identified with their progressive antecedents. Both psychologists and educators tend to take an ahistorical view with the consequence that many purportedly new ideas have unacknowledged yet informative precedents. In addition, new mandates often challenge established practice. In this volume we revisit the origins

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of this approach and its articulated beliefs for classroom practice and teacher education. We examine its continued heuristic and practical value in the context of contemporary thinking in social science and education, and indicate potential directions to extend its influence.

While current attention to the approach from both within and outside these fields indicates that it remains relevant to professional practice (Bredekamp 1987; Darling-Hammond and Macdonald, in press; DeVries and Kohlberg 1987; Goffin 1994; Hyson 1996; Mitchell and David 1992; Roopnarine and Johnson, in press; Weber 1984; Zimiles 1996), the principles upon which it is based have not been systematically reexamined in light of new ideas in psychology and education.

In reviewing earlier writings on developmental-interaction, we are impressed by the contemporaneity of some concepts, the datedness of others, the omission of yet others, and the way in which some background issues have risen to the fore. Figure-ground perception offers a useful metaphor. Gestalt psychologists have shown that one way we structure what we see is to organize patterns as figures against a background, though figure and ground may reverse from one moment to the next. Some ideas that were simply taken for granted, part of the background, have become foreground. Kessen (1979) alerted us that "child psychology is itself a peculiar cultural invention that moves with the tidal sweeps of the larger culture" (815). Shifts in perspective can uncover previously unquestioned assumptions and also lead to the construction of new knowledge.

In this volume we review the history of the developmental-interaction approach, outlining its essential features and tracing Bank Street College's distinctive role in its evolution. We describe and expand the theoretical framework, reassert the centrality of the social studies in the curriculum, and emphasize the attention that must be given to teachers' personal and professional development. In so doing we follow a metapsychological line of inquiry, one that highlights the way choices about focus and inclusion are rooted in the social and intellectual contexts of their origins (see, for example, Gergen 1987; Stam, Rogers, and Gergen 1987). How did the developmental-interaction approach to education, a set of ideas bound together to make an integrated statement, come to be framed? Who were the key people and what were their questions? What problems might exist with the formulation? What issues were underemphasized or not yet part of the discourse? What can this approach contribute to contemporary education?

Franklin (1981) identified two related pathways for theory building: deepening and widening. Widening and deepening can be accomplished by combining theoretical ideas or by extending al-

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ready existing theoretical principles. Deepening refers to developing more differentiated levels of interpretation, in some cases by introducing compatible perspectives. For example, a complementary contemporary approach might strengthen the understanding of original concepts. Widening means giving greater scope to a theory, for example, by incorporating ideas or practices that were not part of earlier discourse.

More than twenty-five years ago one of us collaborated on a paper designed to present a coherent description of this approach (Shapiro and Biber 1972). The article concluded with the observation that "like all theoretical structures, [it] must be ready to accommodate its principles and practices to . . . new information and understanding." In this volume our goal is to deepen and widen Bank Street's developmental-interaction approach to education—examining, clarifying, and extending the central ideas. As we consider the implications of new understandings for developmental-interaction, we advocate neither a fundamental revision of the approach nor an arbitrary patchwork of old and new ideas. Rather, our goal is to vitalize the approach by providing a framework for assessing the compatibility of new ideas with the theory base and value system.

Part I: Describing and Expanding the Framework. Edna Shapiro and Nancy Nager provide a foundation chapter in which they discuss the history and evolution of the developmental-interaction approach to education, assess key assumptions in light of current thinking, and outline new directions, which are elaborated in subsequent chapters. Margery Franklin analyzes the meanings of play generated by the founders. Play, recasting experience in symbolic form, is not only a mode of expression but a prime means for consolidating, extending, and creating knowledge. She shows how new understandings of narrative, mediation, and the development of self in social collaborative activity support and extend the ideas expressed in earlier formulations. Laura Martin examines the compatibility of Vygotsky's theory with developmental-interaction, concluding that it is consistent with some of the approach's foundational tenets and that a fundamental goodness-of-fit exists between the frameworks. She demonstrates that Vygotskian theory gives theoretical and empirical support to the developmental-interaction approach. Finally, Linda Levine asserts that expanding the theoretical base to include anthropological perspectives is consistent with many of the social and political aims of early progressives. She reminds us that anthropologists concerned with schooling took

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issue with what they considered to be premature universalist claims about human behavior. The discipline of educational anthropology can deepen understanding of how to teach children from diverse backgrounds.

Part II: Social Studies: Enduring Goals and New Understandings. This section draws on historical precedents to suggest both continuity and adaptations of pedagogy. The centrality of social studies to developmental-interaction is illustrated by reprinting a paper written by Bank Street's founder, Lucy Sprague Mitchell, more than sixty years ago. In his introduction to this paper, Salvatore Vascellaro illuminates Mrs. Mitchell's thinking about the significance of social studies and geography for understanding the actions of human beings and human societies. Mitchell's paper exemplifies her belief that what a teacher offers to children is necessarily connected to how she experiences, understands, and acts on pressing social issues of the time.

Since the earliest days of the Bank Street School for Children, both social studies and the arts have been vital to the curriculum. Edith Gwathmey and Ann-Marie Mott draw on and extend earlier insights into the importance of children's experience with visual arts to describe how the teacher can support the growth of children's technical skills while providing opportunities for them to represent the concepts they are learning. Nina Jaffe connects the new yet old forms of folk narrative and story telling to the approach's longstanding commitment to the integration of social studies with language arts and children's literature. She provides stories of teachers using folk tales to help children understand others' beliefs, values, and environments. Concluding this section, Carol Lippman describes how teachers can learn how to talk with children about their difficult social realities to help them engage in powerful social study. Connecting children's lives to the curriculum, the school community, and the larger world is an enduring goal of the developmental-interaction approach. Together, these chapters provide a bridge from earlier understandings and values to issues of contemporary classroom life.

Part III: Becoming a Teacher: Understanding Children, Self, and Contexts. Teachers and teacher education are the focus of this section. Although developmental-interaction is often regarded as an approach to the education of children, it is grounded in educational and psychological principles that apply equally to the needs and capacities of adult learners. The teacher education program at

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Bank Street exemplifies principles to be used in teachers' work with children. Each chapter builds on the critical assumption that becoming a teacher is a process of coming to understand the wide range of developmental variation, one's self in interaction with children, and the diversity of classroom settings.

Eva Haberman focuses on techniques of observing and recording children's behavior, a mode of learning about and planning for children with roots that go back to the early days of the Bureau of Educational Experiments. This deep inquiry into children's behavior provides guidance for responding differentially to each learner in a classroom. Frank Pignatelli describes the advisement process, a distinctive feature of Bank Street graduate programs in education, in which careful attention is paid to students' personal and professional development. This understanding of professional development contrasts sharply with an agenda limited to enlarging a technical knowledge base. Teachers' development is also described by Helen Freidus in her examination of the portfolio, a culminating project. Freidus highlights not the content of any particular portfolio but the potentially deep and empowering value of this assessment tool for teacher education students and their graduate faculty mentors. Jonathan Silin illustrates how he engages students in study of their own childhoods in ways that can and often do offer transformative experiences leading to a fuller understanding of self and children.

The final chapter in this section and volume, deals with a topic that could easily be a book on its own—the relation of school and family, a focus of much recent rethinking. Although seldom explicitly stated, there is often a tension between parents and school people, each tending to see the other as the cause for the child's problems. Eileen Wasow brings a family systems perspective to forming a productive partnership between home and school. Unarticulated differences in values and expectations of school often make communication difficult between teachers and parents. This is compounded when teacher and parent are from different cultural or racial backgrounds. Bringing these issues to the foreground builds on and expands the scope of developmental-interaction.

We hope that a deeper understanding of the developmental-interaction point of view can provide guidelines for thinking about a wide array of educational concerns. Its enduring principles can offer a framework for making sense of new ideas, practices, and mandates.

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